

NEWSLETTER

The latest from the South Moor Farm team

BLUE TONGUE UPDATE

August has been a month of Bluetongue for all members of the farm team, whether it has been vets out sampling and treating sick animals, or the office team dispensing medicines and vaccine, it's been a busy month!

The first cases in North Devon were early July, and the disease soon spread down to Dartmoor and the South Hams. Unfortunately, we are yet to receive any positive results back due to the current backlog in testing and the legislation around reporting. The diagram below gives an insight as to why this takes time, and why none of the practice cases are on the official bluetongue case map. It is a legal requirement to report suspect cases of Bluetongue, but just as importantly, please do speak to us so we can best advise

Bluetongue Disease Reporting process

Call: 03000 200 301 in England | 03003 038 268 in
Wales | 03000 600 704 in Scotland



how to deal with sick animals. We want to make sure other diseases aren't being missed such as Haemonchus and Pasteurella in sheep or the likes of BVD and IBR in cattle. Vaccination has been one of the things that had made us and farms feel

somewhat in control of the situation, that is, when we've had it available! Our office team has worked incredibly hard to get orders out to everyone who needed/wanted it. Mid-August, the whole country rang out of stock and vaccine was being shipped from different European countries. We were fortunate to get a delivery on the 24th of August and are currently able to keep up with orders. If you haven't yet vaccinated your stock, we are strongly encouraging everyone to vaccinate, so do get in touch to discuss this.

The mental health of farmers has been at the forefront of our thoughts, with the drought already meaning that winter rations are being fed to animals out at grass, BTV-3 has added more financial and emotional stress. Many farmers lived through the trauma of the Foot and Mouth outbreak 25 years ago and there have been many similarities with this bluetongue outbreak. The key difference is that BTV3 is not infectious between ruminants, only through the midge vector, and there has been no compulsory culling. We are, however, yet to see the full effects of this BTV-3 outbreak, as it is the fertility aftermath we are reluctantly anticipating.

Recent studies have shown BTV-3 positive rams to have significantly lower semen quality than uninfected rams, with 20% of them having no sperm present at all. There has been shown to be some improvement in the following sperm cycles, but it is unsure how soon or if they will ever get back to normal. In light of this information alongside what we have been seeing on farm, we are running discounted ram fertility testing days and strongly encouraging farms to get rams and bulls tested pre-breeding. If you have any questions about this feel free to give us a call.

FLOCK HEALTH CLUB MEETING



Thankyou to everyone that came to our Flock Health Club meeting on Tuesday 25th August. A brilliant night was had by all.

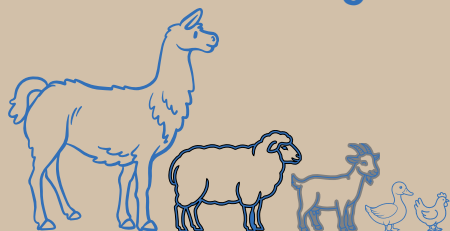
Iralle from Agrimin came down to talk to us about trace elements and how their range of sheep bolluses can make a big impact.

Alice and Sasha two of our vets then did an update on the Bluetongue outbreak at the moment. There was lots of questions and we hope we covered everything. Although, as always if you have any queries don't hesitate giving us a call, we are always here to help.

We will be holding quartley Flock health club meetings where we will cover a range of topics. If you are interested in knowing more or joining up please let us know!

THE LAUNCH OF OUR NEW FARM SMALL HOLDERS CLUB!

Watch this space ... more info on the newest addition to our health clubs is coming soon!



SHOWS

We had another brilliant day at Kingsbridge Show this year- it was fantastic to see so many familiar faces! Next up we have Widdicombe Fair tomorrow. Make sure you pop by our stand to say Hi, we love to see you all and have a chat!



THE DANGERS OF HAEMONCHUS

We have seen a noticeable number of cases of haemonchus contortus or 'barber's pole worm' on farm recently, so it is worth keeping it on the radar.

Unlike many of the other roundworms that we deal with in sheep, haemonchus is a blood sucking parasite that lives in the abomasum. Heavy burdens cause severe anaemia, weakness, weight loss, bottle jaw and in some cases sudden death. Each adult worm can cause blood loss of around 0.05ml per day and with thousands of worms present that can quickly add up, explaining how sheep can become so severely anaemic.

Haemonchus is also remarkably prolific. A single female can produce up to 10,000 eggs per day, rapidly increasing pasture contamination. Weather plays an important role. Warm and wet conditions favour development of the eggs into larvae. A warm spell followed by rain results often in rapid pasture challenge. Recent research from SCOPS shows that haemonchus larvae can survive over winter in the South West so a cold winter cannot guarantee clear up of pastures.

FAMACHA scoring can be a useful tool in detecting haemonchus early in known risk periods. By checking the colour of the lower eyelid, sheep can be assessed for anaemia, with paler membranes indicating more severe anaemia. Bottle jaw is also an important warning sign to look out for. This is a swelling under the jaw, caused by protein loss via the blood.

A faecal egg count is still an important first step but haemonchus eggs look very similar to those of other strongyle worms so further testing and investigation may be needed.

Our advice is to test before treating wherever possible. If you are seeing pale sheep, bottle jaw, unexpected weight loss or unexplained deaths please get in touch with us and we can help.

IVYBRIDGE: 01752 892390 farm@southmoorvets.co.uk

KINGSBRIDGE: 01548 852766

MODBURY: 01548 830210

DARTINGTON: 01803 900181



**South Moor
Farm Vets**

**SEP
2026**