



Farm newsletter

April 2023

May bank holidays – book your TB test now!

Due to several extra bank holidays across May we are already close to our TB testing capacity for the next few months. If you have received a letter or think you will be due to test soon, please ring us to arrange your test.

Animal Health and Welfare Grants

The first window to apply for Animal Health and Welfare grants has just opened. These grants, of between £1,000 and £25,000, go towards the cost of items from a list which are designed to improve the health and welfare of your livestock.



On March 23rd DEFRA published further details via their blog, which can be accessed here:

<https://defrafarming.blog.gov.uk/2023/03/23/animal-health-and-welfare-grants-apply-now/>



Items that qualify include various handling systems, crushes, head scoops, EID readers, weigh crates, calf housing, infrared lamps, calf coats, lamb creep feeders and enrichment aids.

The full list of eligible items can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/farming-equipment-and-technology-fund-fetf-2023/annex-4-fetf-2023-animal-health-and-welfare-eligible-items>

Castle Vets Collaborate in Sheep Research Project

Since June 2022, vets Lucy and Tim have been involved in a research project held at Trefrank Farm, St Clether. We have worked with the Moredun Institute (who are the UK's biggest small ruminant research facility, based in Edinburgh) and the Centre for Innovation and Excellence in Livestock to explore the concept of breeding worm tolerance into sheep.

<https://cielivestock.co.uk/project/worm-tolerance-sheep-farming/>

The project aims to investigate the feasibility of breeding animals that can 'tolerate' a high pasture worm burden, and more information can be found by clicking the above link.

Worm tolerance is generally achieved by the lambs either fighting worms off internally ('resistance') or by having the ability to live with them, without it affecting their growth rate ('resilience'). Breeding worm tolerant sheep could lead to improved growth rates and financial returns, improved animal welfare and production, while reducing anthelmintic use and associated labour costs.



We are delighted to invite you to join us for an event in May to discuss the results of the pilot study and invite your feedback to understand if the new approach is of interest. There will be discussion stations with vets, farmers, world-leading researchers and practical demonstrations to enjoy. A complimentary lamb roast and other refreshments are provided. Please note, the stations will be running to a schedule, so we encourage prompt attendance at 10am.

Invitation

Farmer Awareness Day: Breeding for worm tolerant sheep - an innovative approach to tackling worm resistance.

Tuesday 17 May, 10am-2pm

Trefrank Farm, Saint Clether, Launceston, Cornwall, PL15 8QN

[Register for the day](#)

[Tickets for this event are free](#) and available on a first-come-first-served basis through clicking the above link (which takes you to the *EventBrite* website). Participants are invited to make a voluntary donation for the Farming Community Network. This is an incredible charity supporting farmers and families within the farming community. You can find out more about them **[here](#)**.

Lambing in Full Swing – and Here Come the Calves!



Turn-out is on the horizon for many and the days are (hopefully!) getting brighter. Spring is the busiest time of year here at Castle Vets as with the wider farming community. We know how hard you are all working and the upset that comes with a sick ewe pre-lambing, or a calving complication. So far, in the first twenty days of March, our vets have helped with 38 lambings and 30 calvings, on top of our routine work, TB testing, call outs to sick stock and other

‘normal’ emergencies. We have performed 15 sheep caesareans and 10 cattle caesareans during that short period and attended numerous other birthing-related issues, such as prolapses or umbilical hernias in newly delivered lambs or calves.

In addition, this is also the time of year when diseases can affect very young stock, and we have been working with many of our farms to intervene early and minimise losses. Spring can be tough, so please remember that the Farming Community Network provides support to over 6,000 farmers a year (over 15 people a day!). If you’re feeling particularly stressed or overwhelmed, they are around 7am-11pm to have a chat should you need it- **03000 111 999**.



We want to thank you for your continued support – at this time of year it is amazing how much a kind word can mean! We are always here to help you 24hours a day, with our vets or nurses holding the out-of-hour phones. This means you will get through to who you need to as quickly as possible, to get you the help you need. **Good luck** for those of you at the beginning of your lambing or calving and **keep going** to those of you that are in the middle of it!

Sudden death worm – Nematodirus battus

With the weather and temperature varying between hail and balmy sunshine, it is worth assessing the risk of early *Nematodirus battus* hatch on your farm this spring. This worm generally affects lambs once they are >4-6 weeks old and unfortunately results in sudden death, rather than the more typical ‘wormy’ signs of diarrhea and weight loss. *N. battus* eggs lie on pasture over winter, and hatch when a cold snap is followed by mild weather.

The SCOPs website has a map which shows you the current risk in your area. Remember, this risk will vary field to field on your farm, as last year’s lambs have to have grazed the pasture in order for *N. battus* eggs to be present.

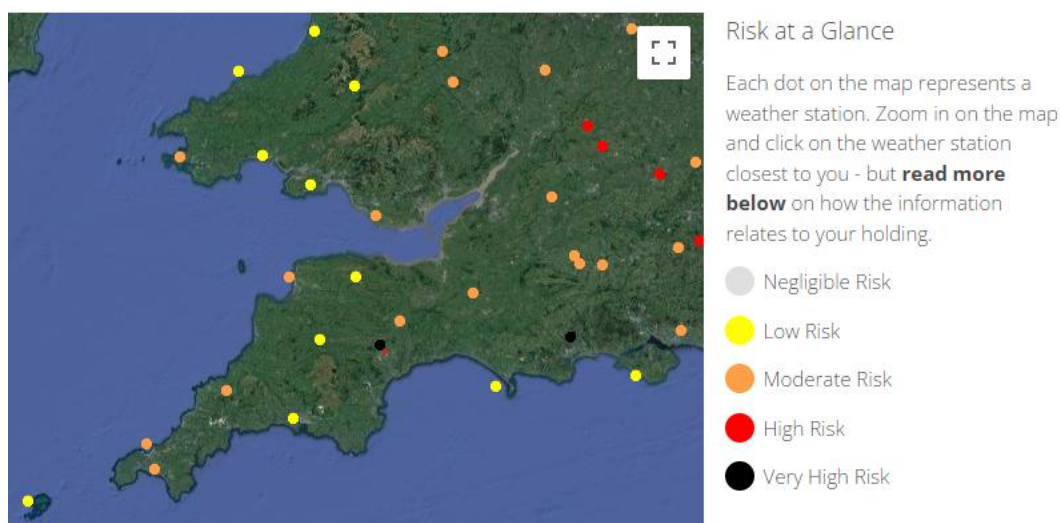
Main risk factors

If your lambs are grazing pasture that carried lambs last spring **and** you answer yes to one or more of these questions, your lambs are at risk:

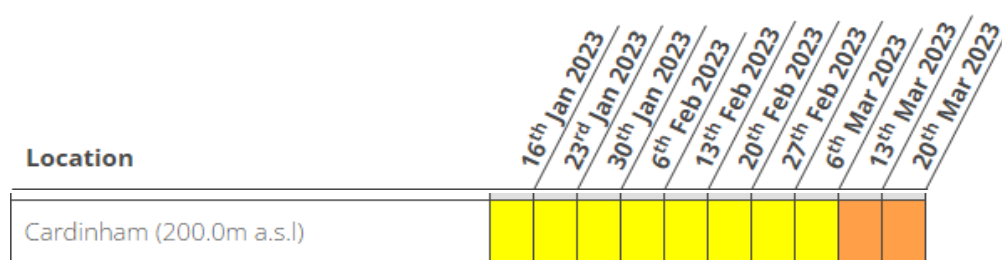
- Are they old enough to be eating significant amounts of grass? (generally, 6-12 weeks of age but may be younger if ewes are not milking well)
- Do you have groups where there is also likely to be a challenge from coccidiosis?
 - For example, mixed aged lambs are a higher risk
- Has there been a sudden, cold snap recently followed by a period of warm weather?
- Have you got lambs that are under other stresses?
 - triplets, fostered, on ewe lambs or older ewes

To find out about the weather conditions + parasite forecast, you can also use the weather station map at: <https://www.scops.org.uk/forecasts/nematodirus-forecast/>

This risk map is from the week of the 20th March 2023, and is updated every week:



The Bodmin station has been showing increasing hatching risks over the past month:



Though most GI worms show resistance to white wormers, fortunately *N.battus* is still very susceptible. This means we recommend drenching lambs with a white wormer during their at-risk period (generally an Albendazole product – ‘Benzimole’ / ‘Albacert’). Please give us a ring if you want to discuss your farm risk in more detail with us – we are happy to help!

TORR FARM, MENHENIOT, LISKEARD PL14 3PW

FARM CORNWALL 

OPEN FARM DAY


SATURDAY 8TH
APRIL
12PM – 4PM

EASTER EGG TRAIL, FARM
WALK & LAMBING TALK

Tickets to be paid on the day either by cash
or card.

Adult tickets include tea, coffee and cake.

Childrens tickets include squash and a
chocolate Easter egg (please let us know of
any dietary requirements).

Hot dogs available at additional cost.

Farm yard and lambing shed are pushchair and wheelchair friendly, but the farm walk will not be accessible for pushchairs/wheelchairs. All funds raised will be donated to Farm Cornwall/ Cornish Ladies in Wellies. **07388 138240**

