



August 2023

Ordering Medication – An Update

To clarify our medicines ordering policy, please be advised the latest time to place an order for same day collection at Launceston is 5.30pm.

In addition, to help you keep on top of your medicine stock, **we also now offer online medicines ordering**. This is available 24hours a day, via our website, and we aim to complete all orders within one working day: <https://castleveterinarygroup.co.uk/farm-vet-launceston/contact-us/request-medication/>

All requests are reviewed by a veterinary surgeon, who may ring you back, if any clarification or discussion is needed before they can prescribe your drugs.

Upcoming Beef + Sheep meeting:

Dung Beetles- understanding their value when worming your stock

At the end of this month, vets Tim and Andy will be presenting with Hannah Jones (from the **Farm Carbon Toolkit**) and Nick Royale (an **associate Professor at Exeter University**). This joint Beef and Flock Club meeting will be held on August 31st at 10:30am on the Davey's mixed beef and sheep farm just off the A38 at Budge's Shop.

Please give us a call to reserve your space. This meeting is free to flock and beef club members, and only £25 per farm (not person) if you are not a member – everyone is welcome!

Why should I care -what do Dung beetles do for me? If you need any more encouragement to attend our meeting, a short video is freely available (link below) in which a farmer discusses the Dungbeetles' value to his farm. To see what they might add to your farm, we suggest playing it from about half-way through: <https://youtu.be/k1fHH4mnIT8?t=154>



Case Study: Dung Beetles with Bruce Thompson

Meeting Details: 10:30 – 14:00
Penquite Park, Trerulefoot
Saltash, PL12 5BN
SX323 593

Ewe Mastitis

Summer mastitis is a common issue at this time of year for those flocks who have not yet weaned their lambs. A significant cause of economic loss, ‘mastitis’ simply means the inflammation of mammary (udder) tissue. Generally, this is caused by bacterial infection. However, the inflammation can also occur due to other conditions – generally ones that change the physical or immunological state of the udder.



Orf

- a parapox virus, best known for causing crusty areas around lamb’s mouths.
- This virus can also enter teats and the udder surfaces through broken skin. The inflammation is painful, and the damage to teats can lead to follow-on infection by opportunistic bacteria
- It’s crucial to realise that if a ewe has orf on her teats, then she, and her lamb(s) are a danger to the rest of your flock.

- The lambs are often hungry and will attempt to steal milk from other ewes – thereby spreading the virus from one udder to another. The scabs that fall off orf lesions are also very infectious.
- Isolation is the ideal prevention measure during an orf-related mastitis outbreak, as you also remove the ewe's lamb(s) that will be spreading the infection.

Maedi Visna

- a lentivirus, most commonly associated with wasting ewes
- The virus also increases the amount of mastitis you will see in your flock, especially mastitis cases that don't seem to heal up with time or treatment (chronic)
- Having mules on farm, lambing indoors, and having a high proportion of older ewes are all risk factors for Maedi visna.
- Exposure to the virus can be detected via an inexpensive blood test.

Both these viruses and most bacterial infections may not cause particularly obvious mastitis. This means they probably contribute heavily to losses in lamb growth rates, as the lambs are not identified and removed. The combination of reduction in milk production (due to damaged tissue) and milk intake (due to pain and reluctance to allow sucking) can seriously knock back your lambs, without being extremely obvious unless weekly weighing is undertaken.



Black Udder

- Often what is thought of when we discuss ewe mastitis, this 'condition' is not associated with one particular bacteria or virus
- Instead, 'Black' or 'Blue' bag occurs when the inflammation in the udder is so severe, its blood supply is affected
- The ewe will generally be obviously sick, sometimes down and generally will not allow her lamb to suck
- Quick treatment with both anti-inflammatories (Metacam/Loxicom/Rimadyl) and a course of antibiotics is crucial to get her to recover. Oral rehydration through drenches is also ideal to support her + ensure the quickest recovery possible

Mastitis Control

Marking affected animals clearly and permanently will go a long way to preventing spread of the disease:

Isolation - to be carried out where possible and appropriate.

- your other ewes are less likely to be affected.
- further testing, such as blood sampling for Maedi visna infection, can be undertaken accurately
- informs culling decisions

Stocking density – mastitis is reduced in flocks stocking their ewes less intensively

Nutrition – body condition scoring prior to tugging is key, give yourself at least a month to increase the nutrition going into your ewes if they need it, so they have enough reserves to produce milk from a strong, healthy, and immunologically competent udder!

- If your ewes are fed concentrates when lactating, then ideally begin to wean these down at least a week before expected weaning date

Culling – key to reducing mastitis levels in your flock overall. All ewes should be checked for lumps in their udders’ pre-tup selection. These small nodules can represent scar tissue or small abscesses, that are likely to burst and reinfect the udder due the next lactation.

Animal Health and Welfare Pathway

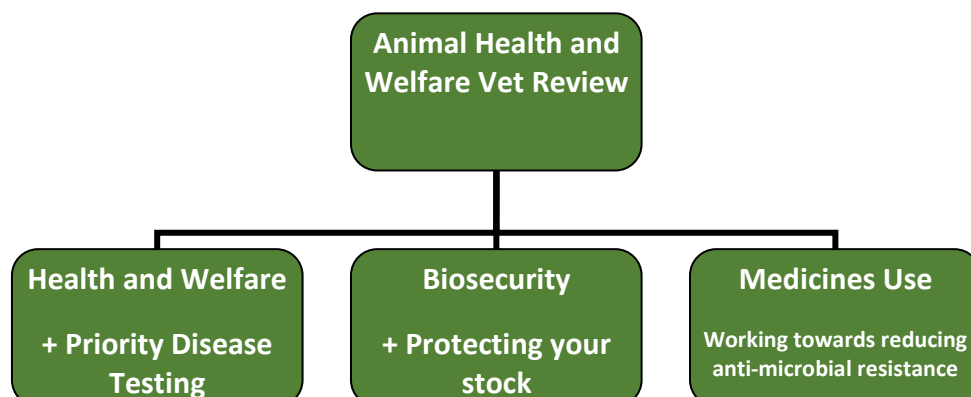
Single farm payments will have disappeared by 2028, and DEFRA is not replacing like-for-like. The way we are managing our animals needs to change- we need to make them as efficient as possible to help make up the shortfall that most will experience. DEFRA is providing funding for you to work with us to improve the health and efficiency of your stock via the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway.

During your funded farm visit(s), we will discuss any flock/herd health concerns, carry out priority disease testing, discuss the biosecurity you have on farm and the antibiotics and vaccines you use. The pathway is an amazing opportunity to get fully funded vet time, to discuss and investigate anything you would like, alongside the ‘priority’ testing.

Currently, **priority disease testing** for each species will be:

- Wormer Check Test for lambs (are your wormers really working?)
 - Dung samples taken pre- and post- worming, to look at the worm levels on your farm + how effective you drench/pour on is
- BVD screens for cattle
 - To reduce the prevalence of the BVD virus nationally, the initial disease investigation (a requirement of Red Tractor) can be funded through this scheme
- PRSV investigations for pigs

In exchange for the funding, some information will be collected during the vet visit and fed back *anonymously* to DEFRA. We are hoping that it will help prove that UK farmers are excellent guardians of animal welfare and responsible users of antibiotics!



This money is part of the Sustainable Farming Incentive, applications to which are open.

Register your interest here:

<https://apply-for-an-annual-health-and-welfare-review.defra.gov.uk/apply/register-your-interest>

You will then receive an email inviting you to 'apply' officially and get an 'agreement number'. You have six months to complete the priority testing and have your vet visit(s) after you receive this number. We will supply you with a review of what is discussed and undertaken, to use as evidence when you claim your funding.



Still feeling overwhelmed about all the new grants and schemes? Don't forget that **Business Information Point** (based in Okehampton) now cover the whole of Cornwall and Devon. They are funded by DEFRA to provide free consultancy to farming businesses, and hundreds have already benefited. There are regular group workshops, or go direct to tailored one-to-one sessions. All the info on upcoming support events can be found towards the bottom of this page:

<https://businessinfopoint.co.uk/ffr/>

