



December 2023

Exciting News – A New Branch for Castle Vets in Liskeard!

As many of you will be aware, a new Branch of Castle Vets will be opening in Heathland Road, Liskeard. This branch will serve both our farm and pet clients – so you will still be able to order and pick up medications, as well as book appointments to bring in stock for routine and emergency procedures such as lambings, vasectomies or sick youngstock.

We will be open from Monday to Friday from 8.45am to 6pm, with Pet Consultations available every weekday from 9am to 5.00pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday and 10am to 6.00pm Tuesday and Thursday. For pets, please note that all overnight care, surgical and investigative procedures, and all inpatient care will be carried out at our main Launceston Practice at Pennygillam. This is to make sure all the pets under our care have access to intensive care facilities, surgical theatres and our 24-hour nursing team should they require it.

As ever, we provide all our own 24hour care, and farm clients will still be able to bring out-of-hours emergencies into our new Liskeard branch (lambings etc). There will also be a locked medicines box on site, for you to pick up pre-ordered medications outside of working hours. If you would like to register your pets with us at this new branch, please complete the form on our website: www.castleveterinarygroup.co.uk. We will provide more information in the weeks ahead and announce our opening date as soon as we can. Until then, farm service will continue as normal from our existing Liskeard office.

Lambing Live- a beginner's lambing course

A lambing course for beginners, young adults (13-17yr olds) and those just wanting a refresher.

Monday 29th January 2024, 5.30pm – 7.30pm

Hosted by Castle Veterinary Group at Lower Goodmansleigh Farm, Launceston PL15 9QS (next to Homeleigh Garden centre), by kind permission of Derek Broad + Rob Dymond

£40 ex VAT per person

- Preparation for lambing
- Care of the ewe at lambing
- Use of a lambing simulator to practice delivering lambs
- Care of the newborn lamb
- Tagging, castrating and tail docking
- Problems that can occur and when to call the vet
- Information booklet to take away



This is a hands-on and fun evening to help you prepare for the approaching lambing season! Advanced booking is essential, so please call the practice on 01566 772371.

Lambing For Kids!

Back by popular demand, this year we will also be running a lambing course for children 5-12 years old February Half Term 2022

Thursday 15th February 3pm – 5.30pm

Hosted by Castle Veterinary Group at Lower Goodmansleigh Farm, Launceston PL15 9QS (next to Homeleigh Garden centre)

By kind permission of Derek Broad + Rob Dymond

£10 ex VAT per child, accompanying adults go free!

- Use a lambing simulator to practice delivering lambs
- How to care for newborn lambs
- Spotting common problems
- Advanced lamb care - tagging, castrating and tail docking



Christmas & New Year Opening Hours:

There will be duty vets available 24/7 over Christmas and New Year so if you need a visit or advice please phone **01566 772371**. Here are our opening hours:

	Pennygillam, Launceston	Miller Court, Liskeard
Sat 23rd Dec	8.30am-12.30pm	Closed
Sun 24th Dec (Christmas Eve)	Closed	Closed
Mon 25th Dec (Christmas Day)	Closed	Closed
Tues 26th Dec (Boxing Day)	Closed	Closed
Wed 27th Dec -Fri 29th	8.30am – 5.30pm	9:30am – 1.00pm
Sat 30th Dec	8.30am-12.30pm	Closed
Sun 31st Dec (New Years Eve)	Closed	Closed
Mon 1st Jan (New Year's Day)	Closed	Closed
Tue 2nd Jan	Normal opening hours resume	Normal opening hours resume

Support research into Tick-borne diseases in Cornwall + Devon, with potential for follow up on-farm testing

The new 'Optick' research group are looking for farmers who would be willing to discuss their perceptions and practices around tick-borne livestock diseases (e.g. Louping ill, tick-borne fever, Redwater), impacts, treatment options and on-farm control. Several of our farms have already expressed an interest in these interviews. Vet Lucy recently had an interview with research lead, Festus, and was impressed by the desire to really try to understand and help farmers manage this growing threat.



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The interview will only take about an hour and can be scheduled for a date, time and manner to suit you, through the communication platform that you are most happy with. (e.g., phone, WhatsApp, Skype, Zoom). Your insights will help the researcher better understand the priorities for controlling or adapting to the rising impacts of tick-borne diseases in UK farmlands. Festus has also said that following on from interviews, the hope is that willing farms will be able to host researchers undertaking ecology surveys and stock blood sampling, to get an idea of the prevalence of tick and tick-borne diseases on your land.

To sign up directly you can fill out the form here: <https://www.optick.ceh.ac.uk/farmer-and-vet-interviews>, or (if its easier!) call or email Festus from the UK Centre for Ecology + Hydrology directly: fesasa@ceh.ac.uk / 07553617273.

Milestone for Nigel Hicks – a much loved and highly respected vet

Nigel Hicks has reached the amazing milestone of being in Veterinary Practice for 50 years! Before he became a Vet, when he was still at school, Nigel would spend his holidays “seeing practice” at Castle Vets with Johnny Mann. He went on to qualify from Bristol Veterinary School in 1973 and has been in Practice in Devon and Cornwall ever since, meaning many of you will remember him from his days working on the farm side of the practice!

A word from one of our small animal partners, Mark Tucker:

“The world of veterinary medicine was very different to today, there was very little specialization and just about all Vets worked in Mixed Practice and dealt with all species.

I met Nigel in the mid 1990s when he was running a successful practice from Lifton, and worked with him once he joined Castle Vets in Launceston.

Now having “retired” he is as busy as ever. He, with his wife, Sarah, run Ovoid - an International Charity dedicated to providing veterinary care and improving welfare for Orangutan. He still works as a practicing Vet from time to time, having helped the Practice out during the pandemic and other times since in the Small Animal Department. He is always happy to help and has a wealth of experience not to mention some good stories. We would like to add our congratulations at this milestone!”



If you would like to support Nigel's work, please visit www.ovaid.org/donate-ovaid

Calf Pneumonia Season

Why is respiratory disease in calves a problem?

- **Welfare** – the morbidity (how many of the group are ill) and mortality (how many of the group die) of calf pneumonia are often very high, and this poses significant welfare issues in calves. The impact of farmer’s welfare when dealing with sick and dead calves should also never be underestimated.
- **Cost to Farmer** –every pneumonia case will cost the farmer approximately **£43** per dairy calf and **£82** per affected suckler calf, but can rise to **£500** if the animal dies (estimates from MSD Animal Health). This includes medicines, labour, long-term implications (below) and reduced growth rates (which is the greatest cost to the farmer and often goes unseen)
- **Long term implications** – reduced growth rates impact weaning age and age at first calving (in dairy heifers) causing significant long-term loss to the farmer with decreased life-time production (Eastham *et al.* 2018).

What are the risk factors for calf pneumonia?









1. Colostrum → Not enough or not good enough quality → looking for: 55g/L TP (Total Protein – a measure of colostrum quality) – at least 10% of Body weight within the first 2 hours, followed up with a similar sized feed within 24 hours of birth.
2. Stressors → removal from dam, changing groups, disbudding, vaccinations, castration, extreme weather, hypothermia, inadequate nutrition.
3. Housing and hygiene → inadequate ventilation, cold drafts, dust, remember to disinfect between batches.
4. High stocking densities → remember to isolate sick calves
5. Mixing of age groups
6. Buying in calves → try to quarantine buy-ins
7. Concurrent disease

Clinical signs: The University of Wisconsin grading scheme for calf respiratory disease can help you identify clinical signs. With 0 being normal and 3 being very clinically unwell with pneumonia.

Never forget the other clinical sign – **fever!** A normal calf’s temperature is 38.5-39.4C- **meaning a fever is any temperature of 39.5 degrees C or higher!** The increase in temperature can be one of the first clinical signs, so well worth checking the temperature of the calves in the same or adjoining pens to your first coughing calf.

Common causes of calf pneumonia:

Pneumonia occurs when an initial ‘primary’ pathogen(s) (such as viruses or bacteria) invades or colonise the lungs. They cause damage and can interrupt the normal immune system function of the calf, leading to secondary pathogens opportunistically infecting the lungs.

Calf Health Scoring Criteria			
0	1	2	3
Rectal temperature			
100-100.9	101-101.9	102-102.9	≥103
Cough			
None	Induce single cough	Induced repeated coughs or occasional spontaneous cough	Repeated spontaneous coughs
Nasal discharge			
Normal serous discharge	Small amount of unilateral cloudy discharge	Bilateral, cloudy or excessive mucus discharge	Copious bilateral mucopurulent discharge
			
Eye scores			
Normal	Small amount of ocular discharge	Moderate amount of bilateral discharge	Heavy ocular discharge
			
Ear scores			
Normal	Ear flick or head shake	Slight unilateral droop	Head tilt or bilateral droop
			

Primary pathogens:	Secondary pathogens:
VIRUS: Bovine respiratory syncytial virus (BRSV)	BACTERIA: Mannheimia haemolytica (most common)
VIRUS: Bovine parainfluenza 3 (PI3)	BACTERIA: Pasteurella multocida
VIRUS: Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR)	BACTERIA: Histophilus somni
BACTERIA: Mycoplasma	BACTERIA: Trueperella Pyogenes

Diagnosis: There are lots of different testing options for investigating the causes of pneumonia on your farm. These can include respiratory (naso-pharyngeal) swabs and/or bloods, to help us identify the cause of the pneumonia and choose the correct treatment options.

Treatment: Anti-inflammatory drugs such as meloxicam (*Loxicom*) are very useful at bringing down any inflammation that has resulted from the damage caused by both primary and secondary pathogens. The first insult to the lungs are the primary pathogens, which are often viruses. Antibiotics do not work on these but are useful in cases of secondary bacterial infection or if Mycoplasma has been diagnosed.

The best treatment for pneumonia is prevention. Therefore, identifying risk factors and reducing them is very important. **Vaccination** will reduce the number and the severity of cases but does not eliminate the risk factors. There are lots of different vaccines available for calf pneumonia, some are intranasal and can be given from birth. Dams can be vaccinated to reduce the number of pathogens circulating in your herd → BVD and IBR vaccines available.

