



**CASTLE
VETERINARY
GROUP**

Farm newsletter

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March 2024



Lambing for Kids – a great success

Many thanks to Rob Dymond for hosting vets Roger, Natalie, Charlotte and Lucy in February, with the kind permission of Derek Broad. Many brilliant budding farmers attended – not afraid to get stuck in using our lambing simulator or watch a lamb postmortem, whilst asking all the most gruesome questions of course! Castle Vets will be talking to over 1,500 children at the Royal Cornwall Showground **Farm + Country Days** this year - [Farm & Country Day 2024](#). Jo Perry is still looking for volunteers to help on March 20th + 21st – if you can, contact her at: education@royalcornwall.co.uk



More Members of Castle Vets' Team to Train as SQPs

When you walk into Maunders or Mole Valley to purchase a wormer or fly repellent, you will be served by an SQP, or 'suitably qualified person'. These individuals have trained with AMTRA, the Animal Medicines Training Regulatory Authority, and passed exams to become an SQP.

At Castle Vets, two of our reception team (Jo and Sami) are SQPs and keep their knowledge up to date with mandatory ongoing training with AMTRA. Their depth of understanding is a real asset to both farmers and our vets! We're pleased to announce that two more team members are currently undergoing their training, funded by Castle Vets – Charisse and Charlotte.

Over the next 18 months, both will be studying animal husbandry, medicines legislation, drug mechanisms of action, how worms become resistant to drugs and the rules governing prescribing medications, and much more! If successful in their examinations, they will be able to advise on, as well as prescribe certain medications, enhancing their roles within the Castle Vets team. Make sure you wish them luck if you see them in the office!

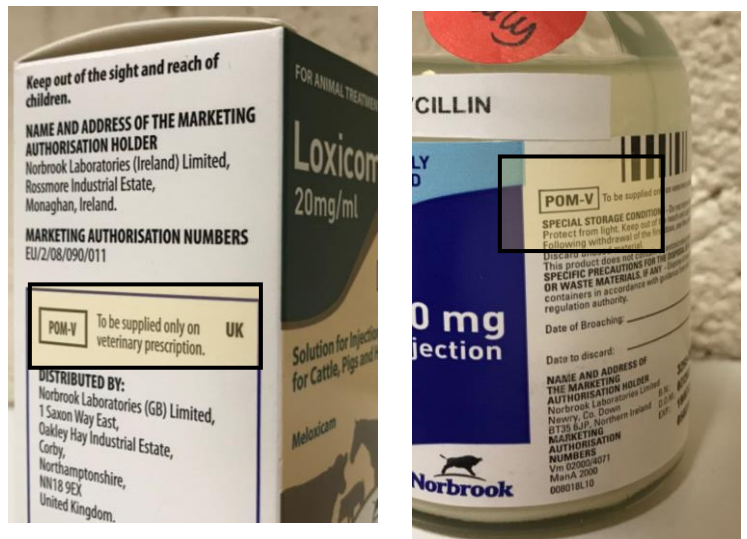
Prescribing medications – the laws governing veterinary drugs

Since 2019, all Red Tractor Assured farms have had to undertake a medicines training course, and around 150 of you have attended since then! In the UK, farmers can stock medications, including antibiotics, on their farm. Medications including fly pour-ons, wormer drenches, and certain vaccines are often sourced outside the vets. This is because they can be prescribed by a 'Suitably Qualified person' (SQP) employed by companies such as *Maunder's* or *MoleValley*. Medications like these are **POM-VPS** products, and this should be clearly printed on the product.



However, any medication with the letters '**POM-V**' on the label **MUST** be prescribed by your registered vet. In the UK, all antibiotics, most pain relief medication and many vaccines are '**POM-V**'.

If you are Red Tractor assured, your registered vet must regularly check and certify your medicines usage. These checks are a safeguard, helping to ensure that vets can continue prescribing medications for you to hold on your farm, rather than having to refer to a vet every time you want to use a POM-V medication (such as antibiotics or pain relief). **You help keep the common sense in the UK farming industry by being aware of the laws surrounding medicine prescribing, and using medications in a responsible way!**



Bluetounge – an update

As you will all be aware, active surveillance of Bluetounge has been ongoing in the East of the UK since late last year. **From 19th February all temporary control zones have been lifted**, as we are now in a seasonally low period of vector transmission (meaning there aren't many midges circulating currently!). In total, 116 bluetongue cases (110 in cattle and six in sheep) have been identified in 67 separate premises across Kent, Norfolk and Suffolk. There is still no evidence that bluetongue virus is currently circulating in midges in Great Britain, nor that the virus is passing animal-to-animal.



There have been no clinical cases - all positive animals have been identified via increased frequency and breadth of blood testing, due to the risk of the new strain of Bluetongue virus emerging in the Netherlands. For a detailed review of what bluetongue virus is, how it is spread, and why the government have increased surveillance, please see our November 2023 Newsletter, available on our website in our 'Farm' → 'News' section.

An interactive up-to-date map of any current and confirmed cases is available here: <https://defra.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=514ec88edec74575958d860f0196d2ea>

Warm + Wet Winter – beware fluke and worms!

The lack of consistently low temperatures across a lot of Cornwall and Devon this year has meant that parasite lifecycles, normally halted during winter, may have continued, unchecked. We advise being particularly vigilant when turning lambs + ewes out onto pasture grazed by lambs the previous year, as they are likely to harbour higher burdens of worm eggs than usual. As ever, we can run worm egg counts quickly and accurately in house, as well as checking for coccidiosis. Our new laboratory machine requires only 2g of dung to give you an idea of the worm burden of your stock. Regular weighing of lambs (particularly weaned lambs) gives the best indication of the presence of worms, as they generally begin to have an effect on growth rates, before egg counts increase, or scour is seen.



The fluke lifecycle depends on mud snails, and there is certainly plenty of mud about on most of our farms this year! You don't need to wait for abattoir feedback to see if your stock has been exposed - a new type of dung testing can detect exposure more accurately than fluke egg counts, costs around £15 and you can expect highly accurate results in five days.

