



## Latest on Farming Grants - only six months left of consultancy funding

Castle Vets are again teaming up with Business Information Point consultancy to let our farmers know how best to access the Sustainable Farming Initiative Funding. This funding includes the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway - having your herd/flock health plan paid for, alongside testing for certain diseases.

The workshop will provide the very latest information as the government funding for farm consultancy draws to a close. It will be one of the last chances for farmers to have this info contextualised and presented by local experts who can answer questions specific to farmers of the SW. These experts can then provide free one-to-one advice on your farm, to help you get to grips with the new grant systems, what to claim for and how, and the single farm payment is phased out.



Please register with Business Information Point via the link below. The meeting is 7-10pm, free to attend, with food provided.

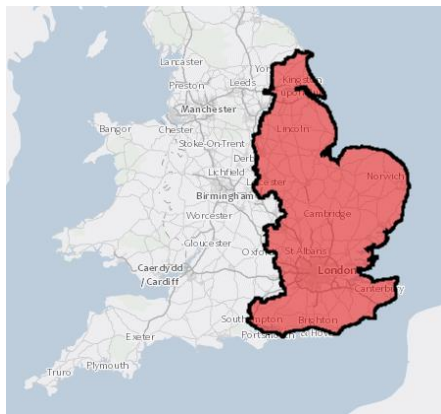
27 November @ Callington Town Hall, PL17 7BD

<https://businessinfopoint.co.uk/workshops/the-latest-farm-grants-update-23/>

## Bluetongue Virus spread + vaccine availability:

The spread of BTV-3 can be seen via this map (a copy of which was taken on the below picture on 11<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2024):

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=514ec88edec74575958d860f0196d2ea>



The government has approved the use of three bluetongue vaccines in the UK. Vaccination has previously only been available for high-risk counties (shown on above map) due to limited supply. However, it is now possible to apply for a special license to vaccinate your stock, even outside a restricted zone, should you wish to do so.

Thankfully, the vaccines have been classed as safe to use in pregnant animals, however, there has been no specific trial work on whether they are safe in breeding males. DEFRA are constantly

modelling the likelihood of midge movements + disease transmission and updating these risk zones accordingly.

The vaccinations specifically target BTV-3. They have been given to around 95% of all sheep in the Netherlands, the country that has been worst affected over the past year. The vaccination has reduced the severity of the disease, and the number of deaths in infected animals. However, it does not prevent animals being infected, or animals passing on the



virus to midges that bite them. Therefore, vaccinated animals are still classed as 'vulnerable to infection' This means that they are still being tested pre- and post-movement out of restricted areas, and vaccination does not facilitate international trade.

Around 2/3rds of infected animals will not show any clinical signs. Where there are clinical signs, sheep unfortunately tend to be much more ill than cattle. The disease is not spread from animal to animal. An infected animal has around 2-3 days after infection during which it can pass the virus back to any midge that bites it. It is these infected midges that spread the disease. For this reason, DEFRA is not currently imposing any form of mass-culling on farms where BTV-3 is found. Individual culling of infected animals (not 'contact' animals) has taken place however, if there is reason to believe the local midge population is not yet infected.

The ability of midges to pass on the virus is strongly related to temperature, with consistent falls below 12C reducing the disease spread. DEFRA is conducting midge trapping and studies in all the affected areas. The 'vector transmission period' (i.e. when midges are most active, tends to finish around November. However, this will not be declared by the government until less than five active ('pigmented') midges are caught in the risk areas every week for more than 3 weeks. The government, therefore, aren't just looking at the temperature and wind patterns, but directly at midge activity before deciding the risk of BTV-3 is low.



We would suggest that concerned sheep farmers, in particular, consider applying for a special license via this link (which also contains guidance on applying):

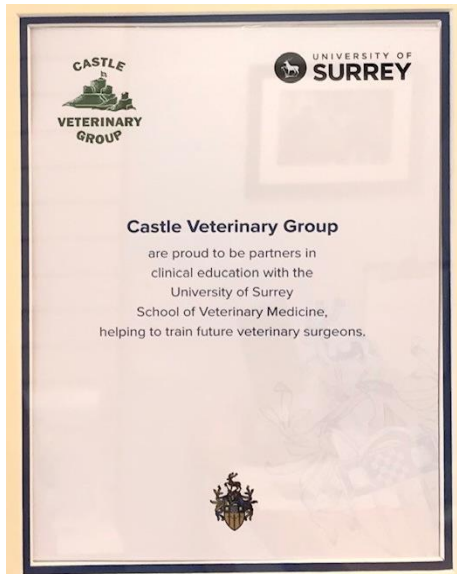
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66faa63fe84ae1fd8592eb5f/BTV-3\\_vaccine\\_specific\\_licence\\_application\\_form\\_EXD700 .pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66faa63fe84ae1fd8592eb5f/BTV-3_vaccine_specific_licence_application_form_EXD700.pdf)

This is also accessible though searching 'EXD700 bluetongue' on your browser. Only after this license is granted will we be able to prescribe you the vaccine.

*Cost : A 50 dose bottle of 'Bultavo3' is £160 with 10% off for cash*

Please give us a call to discuss the details further, should you wish to.

## Castle Vets Partners with Surrey University



Over the past month, many of you may have met either Talia or Emily, final year vet students from the University of Surrey. In addition to our regular vet students on placement during their holidays, Castle Vets is now hosting final years from Surrey at various points throughout the year. Their month placement with us constitutes their production animal teaching 'module' during their last year at University.

To be able to provide training to future vets is possible due to the high standards and experienced team here at Castle. It would not also not be possible without your continuing support! We hope to encourage more vets to specialise in

production animal practice, so we can continue to supply our services for years to come.

Thanks again to everyone who allows us to train students whilst on their farm, you really do make a difference.



## Successful Sustainability Meeting



A great afternoon's learning was had at Wonnacott Farm in late September. Alternatives to external parasite control in the form of parasitic wasps were discussed, alongside the benefits of tailored worm management on farm. The benefits of Dungbeetles to farm's soil and ecosystem were discussed, and the event included a 'dung beetle' safari. Vet Rob Howe lead the search for signs of biodiversity on farm, challenging the attendees to do the same on their land.

