



**CASTLE
VETERINARY
GROUP**

Farm newsletter

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January 2025

Extensive Livestock Farming: emerging challenges + solutions

APHA's Centre of Expertise for Extensively Managed Livestock are hosting a Ruminant Health Day, at the Elfordleigh Hotel near Plymouth.

Tickets here:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ruminant-health-day-tickets-1092350452609?aff=oddtcreator>

10am-5pm approx.

Weds 12th February.



This free-to-attend event is open to farmers and all stakeholders with an interest in extensive livestock farming – a group from Castle Vets are planning on attending too! There will be opportunity for networking, and a hot lunch and refreshments throughout the day will be provided.

The day will focus on the disease and health challenges of livestock grazing extensively.

Topics will include:

- tick-borne diseases (relevant to everyone now – not just extensive farmers!) and the Optick Project
- APHA's tick-borne diseases dashboard
- Animal health projects on Dartmoor and in Scottish Hill flocks
- Best practice control of sheep scab including collaborative control programs
- Rewilding
- Risks of plant toxicity to extensively managed livestock

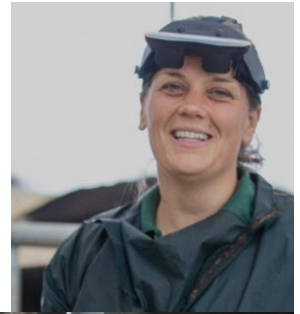
Keeping Castle Vets Up-To Date

All vets must complete at least 35hrs of additional training annually. Here's what our team of vets got up in in 2024, to help provide you with the best service!



Tim, having attended and presented at the national Dung Beetle conference, is keen to 'spread the word' about sustainable farming.

Bekky, alongside 10 of our vets, has trained to become a Clinical Instruction Mentor for the University of Surrey. This allows her to support students and help train the next generation!



James has been getting to grips UK practice, having spent seven years working as a vet in Ireland – the animals are the same, the paperwork, very different!

Helen has trained to become a Clinical Instruction Mentor for the University of Surrey and has also completed 4 sets of OV revalidation.



Natalie has just completed her Royal College vet graduate development program. This means she can begin to gain more in-depth knowledge through training in 2025 – well done Nat!

Richard particularly enjoyed a day of lectures and a farm visit to look into mastitis issues on farms using robotic milking.



Roger attended the National Youngstock Conference where he gained insights in calf health and welfare as well as training to become a Clinical Instruction Mentor for the University of Surrey.

Charlotte completed the 'Intensive Camelid Vet Care Course' allowing her to perform ultrasound scanning for our alpaca + Llama clients. She has also enjoyed several Sheep Vet Society evenings.



Lucy has completed five out of six modules in her University of Liverpool Advanced Practitioner certificate. Specializing in sheep, her last module + exams are coming up soon- eek!

Andy attended the British Cattle Veterinary Congress in Newport this Autumn, as Castle Vet's representative.



In addition, our vet Sarah + her husband Matt welcomed their daughter Chloe into the world on the 19th of July. Vet Katherine and her husband Jo also had a daughter, Elizabeth, on the 25th of September. Both little ones were the stars of our Christmas party and so are very much already part of the Castle Vets team!

Tessa has enjoyed exploring youngstock management – especially through specialist calf rearing webinars.



Animal Health and Welfare Pathway – endemic testing

*From the date of accepted application there is a **6 month deadline** to complete the pathway and for **you to claim the funding**. It is crucial in order not to miss this deadline, that you let us know the exact **start date** of your application – this is the day the agreement number was given to you not the date the vet first visits your farm.*

Many of our farmers are into their second year of using the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway to help fund vet time out on farm!

As with all new government initiatives, things change, so we wanted to **publish an up to date guide for anyone applying, or who currently has an ‘agreement number’ in place for 2024/5.**

- Once you have your agreement number, please ensure you have called us to set up a pathway account. We will ask for the agreement number, SBI number and start date of the application.
 - If you were not asked this, or believe the date given was wrong, please get in contact with us ASAP to update this
- The pathway provides funding for veterinary investigations to take place on your farm. The government have set out minimum testing into endemic diseases, the mandatory testing you must adhere to, to claim, are:

Dairy: BVD – Bulk milk test

Beef: BVD – Young stock screen of 5x bloods taken from 9-18month old unvaccinated cattle.

Sheep: Worm burden +/- treatment efficacy – Faecal samples from 10-15x individual lambs aged less than 12 months.

- If treatment is required, a second faecal sample from the same lambs 7 or 14 days post-treatment.
If you have less than 10 lambs you can still apply, just need to test all lambs.



Pigs: PRRS – Oral fluid samples from at least 30 pigs. Collected on 5x uncoated cotton ropes which the pigs chew upon.



The grant covers additional vet time, where you can discuss any animal health and welfare related topic, as well as topics like biosecurity, medicine usage and Red Tractor health planning.

- The initial grant does not cover any further lab fees, but samples can be taken during free vet time.

Once these investigations are complete, your allocated vet must complete a review highlighting the testing, findings and an action plan. You will then receive the completed review report and a signed declaration, with the information required for your claim. At this point, **you** need to apply for the funding through:

<https://apply-for-an-annual-health-and-welfare-review.defra.gov.uk/claim/endemics>

Please do not wait for our invoice before claiming the funding as this may be too late.

Follow-up endemics

Following on from a completed initial pathway, there is additional funding called 'endemics', which allow for further investigations. This follow-up must be in the same species you complete your review with.

Dairy currently has no follow up endemics, however:

Beef: BVD negative – BVD biosecurity plan // BVD positive – BVD PI hunt of all cattle stock on farm and a BVD biosecurity plan.

Sheep: Testing under one of six focus topics and a biosecurity discussion – very flexible + essentially allows us to test for any area you are concerned about, or needs following up after our health plan! Including mineral blood testing, disease surveillance (e.g. abortion + iceberg diseases), lameness control, vaccination programs etc

Pigs: PRRS – blood sample 30x animals for PRRS testing to gather your PRRS status and perform a biosecurity plan.



You must complete the 'endemic follow up' **within 10months of the initial pathway review date**. You do not need a new agreement number if your number begins with 'IAHW'. We recommend you wait until your initial pathway claim has been approved before starting a follow-up.



As with the initial pathway, once all investigations are complete, your allocated vet will provide you with the required paperwork to claim. This will include a signed declaration, and the information required for your claim. At this point, **you** need to apply for the funding through:

<https://apply-for-an-annual-health-and-welfare-review.defra.gov.uk/claim/endemics>

Please do not wait for our invoice before claiming the funding as this may be too late.

Invoices for both initial pathway and endemic follow-ups will be the full price of the grant that you receive from your claim. We therefore recommend you have an idea on what animal health and welfare topic you would like to spend your vet time on, to get the most out of your grant.

Timings

During the time that grants are open for Animal Health and Welfare Pathway (until 19th June 2027), you can carry out a total of 3 pathways and 3 endemic disease follow-ups

Initial Pathway: Complete within 6 months. You can sign up for initial pathways 10months after the final review date of the previous pathway.

Endemic follow-up: Complete within 10 months of the initial pathway review. Repeat follow-ups must be at least 10months from the previous follow-up.

