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# Livestock NEWS

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ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

## Staff News

### Fare Well

Farewell to Jemma who leaves us after almost 17 years working for Paragon. Jemma has decided to take up a role working as a Veterinary Investigator at SRUC Dumfries lab. Jemma has contributed greatly to the practice and our clients in the time that she has been with us and for that we are very appreciative. Jemma has assisted clients in many initiatives over the years including grant applications, BVD eradication programmes, training courses as well as being an experienced clinician in the farm team. Good luck in your next chapter Jemma.



## National Johne's Management Plan

From 31st March 2025, the National Johne's Management Plan (NJMP) will enter Phase III, with new requirements aimed at continuing the fight against Johne's disease in dairy herds across the UK.

The key changes of Phase III are aimed to improve disease control, enhance herd management and track progress on a national scale.

Key changes include:

- All herds must obtain an Average Test Value (ATV) annually, as a measure of herd prevalence.
- The 30 cow targeted screen is no longer an available option.
- **The minimum annual testing requirement is now a 60 cow random screen.**
- A national Johne's target of ATV 5.5 to be achieved by 2030.
- A new declaration form must be signed. This remains a Red Tractor requirement.

The ATV is an average of all test values. It gives a realistic representation of the level of Johne's disease in a herd without having to test every cow. Farmers will be able to benchmark their progress against industry standards using their ATV. Simply, if the ATV is falling, the disease situation is improving, if not, then the management plan should be adjusted.

For herds which routinely implement whole herd testing (e.g. annual whole herd test or quarterly testing), the data to generate an ATV is already available, so no changes in management will be required.

For herds which do not routinely implement whole herd testing, ATVs will be generated using a 60 cow random screen, which will be the minimum requirement. Herds which are routinely milk recording can request for a random selection of 60 individual cow milk samples to be tested for Johne's disease during their routine milk recording collections. Herds which do not routinely milk record will need to arrange for milk samples to be collected and



By Diane Watson



sent to a milk recording organisation for testing. This should be under the direction of the farm's vet who will be responsible for signing the annual NJMP declaration.

NJMP reviews completed between 31st March 2024 and 30th March 2025 will remain valid for one year as normal. However, any farm undergoing their annual NJMP review from 31st March 2025 must adhere to the new requirements and a new declaration must be signed.

## **Coccidiosis**

Coccidiosis is a widespread parasitic disease caused by protozoa from the genus *Eimeria*. It affects a wide range of livestock, including calves and lambs. Young animals do initially have a degree of immunity against coccidiosis from antibodies absorbed from colostrum. However as this initial protection wanes, lambs and calves become susceptible to infection. Therefore it's commonly seen in calves 3-12 weeks old and lambs 4-8 weeks old, as they are yet to build up immunity to the disease. It is important to consider that the disease will appear to affect progressively younger ages as the season progresses and building/pasture contamination increases.



**By India Hoey**

### **Clinical signs**

If not properly managed, it can cause severe gastrointestinal illness, impacting growth rates, health, and overall productivity. The clinical signs of coccidiosis can vary depending on the severity of the infection. In mild cases, the animal may not show obvious symptoms but can still carry the parasite and contaminate the environment. In more severe cases, the following clinical signs may be observed:

- **Diarrhoea:** Scour is often seen due to the damage to the gut wall, this can be watery, and sometimes even bloody. Infected animals may also become weak and lose weight.
- **Dehydration:** As a result of diarrhoea, calves and lambs with coccidiosis can quickly become dehydrated, leading to weakness, lethargy, and reduced appetite. Dehydration can be fatal especially in young animals.

- **Weight Loss and Poor Growth:** Animals suffering from coccidiosis may exhibit stunted growth due to the malabsorption of nutrients. Infected calves and lambs may also become thin despite a normal or increased appetite.
- **Abdominal Pain:** The gastrointestinal irritation caused by the parasites can lead to signs of abdominal discomfort, such as bloating and poor posture.

Unlike other causes of scour coccidia are generally species-specific and do not infect humans.

### **Treatment**

Once diagnosed by your vet via a faecal sample calves/lambs should be treated with:

- Oral drenches containing **coccidiostats** such as Tolracol - it may be necessary to repeat this dose 3 weeks later depending on the product used. All animals in the affected group should be treated.
- **Anti-inflammatories** such as metacam to alleviate inflammation and for pain relief.
- **Buscopan** can help reduce abdominal discomfort.

It should be noted that it may take a couple of weeks for the animal to recover/stop scouring as damage to the gut can take a time to heal.

### **Prevention**

The following methods are recommended for the prevention of coccidiosis:

- **Good Hygiene Practices:** The most effective way to prevent coccidiosis is to reduce the parasite load in the environment. Regularly cleaning and disinfecting pens, feed troughs, and water sources helps limit the exposure. Proper bedding management is also crucial - bedding should be kept dry and changed frequently to avoid faecal contamination.
- **Avoiding Overcrowding:** Overcrowding in pens or even around feeding areas on pasture can increase the risk of transmission. Ensuring that there is enough space for each animal can significantly reduce the likelihood of an outbreak.
- **Feed and Water Management:** Ensure that calves and lambs have access to clean feed and water at all times. Contaminated water or feed can be a primary source of infection, so it is important to regularly clean and maintain troughs and feeding equipment.
- **In feed coccidiostats:** In high-risk environments medicated feed and lick buckets containing Decoquinatate can be used to prevent coccidiosis. These require a written prescription from your vet and are then formulated by the

feed manufacturer.



The disease can cause severe economic losses due to decreased growth, increased veterinary costs, and potential mortality. However, through the methods listed above the risk of coccidiosis can be minimised. Early detection and prompt treatment is crucial to preventing the spread of the disease and ensuring the productivity of the animals. With proper

care, coccidiosis is a preventable disease that need not compromise the health or well-being of young livestock.

## **Battle Bluetongue campaign launched for 2025**

Farmers in England and Wales are being urged to consult their vet about vaccinating their herd or flock against Bluetongue serotype 3 (BTV-3) as part of a 'battle bluetongue' campaign which is running across industry. As there is no treatment for the disease, BTV-3 continues to pose a significant threat to both cattle, sheep, goats and camelids, with potential impacts on animal health, productivity, and trade. Therefore, slowing the disease spread through vaccination and restricted movements in affected areas remains the best defence.



**By Victor Oudhuis**

The aim is to increase the level of vaccination against this vector borne virus to stop the spread during the high-risk midge season (April-November). The BTV-3 vaccine will reduce clinical symptoms and/or mortality, but not entirely prevent it. It does however reduce the multiplication of the virus in the animal and therefore the spread of the disease by midges from one animal to the other.

The main risk factors for spread of Bluetongue are the presence of midges (warmer temperatures), wind direction and stocking density in an area, which might decide whether to vaccinate or not. Nevertheless, there might be other reasons to vaccinate (high value stock, buying in animals or attending shows).

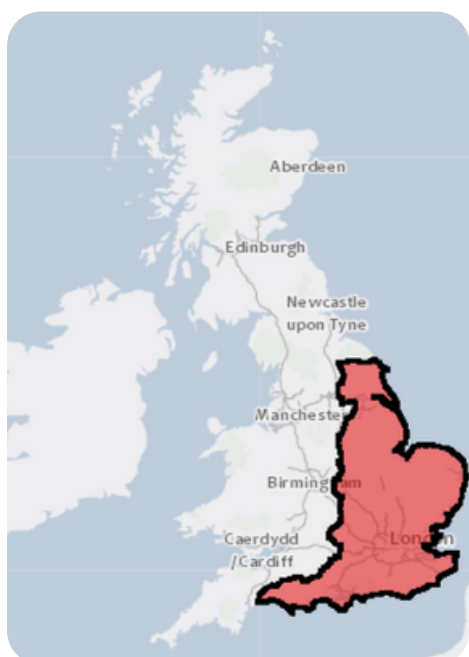
In order to make an informed decision whether and when to vaccinate a “Vaccination decision making tool” (see picture) has been developed, which can be filled in with your vet to see if vaccination is the right thing to do.

## VACCINE DECISION MAKER TOOL

Questions for vets to ask clients to help decide whether to vaccinate against BTV-3	Answers						Comments
	5	4	3	2	1	0	
	More answers in this column indicates there are more reasons to vaccinate					More answers in this column indicates there are fewer reasons to vaccinate	
1. Do you have cattle, sheep and/or other ruminants or camelids?	Yes					No	Clinical signs and severe symptoms are much more likely in sheep than other ruminants.
2. What is the expected value of the lambs/calves/ kids/cria of this flock/ herd?	High-value breeding animals, rare breed, pedigree		Average-value stock, commercial finishing animals				Vaccinating cattle is still worthwhile to reduce the spread of disease.
3. Where are you in the UK?	High-risk, coastal area in south/east England				Remote peninsula off the northwest coast of England, no other ruminants on the peninsula and no imports		If you are not currently vaccinating livestock due to your location, e.g. you are in a low-risk region, keep a close eye on the location of BTV-3 cases throughout the 2025 season.
4. What was the prevalence of disease in 2024 in your region?	There were cases of BTV3 in farms local to me in 2024		There were no cases of BTV3 in our area in 2024				It is expected that BTV3 will be more widespread in the UK in 2025 than in 2024.



It will be difficult to predict if or when Bluetongue will reach Cumbria, but if you have at least had the discussion then a vaccination plan can be implemented quickly.



## \*New Product\*

We are now stocking a range of colostrum products from SCCL. These products can be used as a complete replacer when no colostrum is available as well as a supplement to boost the quality of any colostrum that you may have. For further information please contact the practice and we can provide more details & pricing.

Why Choose Calf's Choice Total® 100?

- ✓ High IgG levels – Ensures strong passive immunity - one of the best on the market!
- ✓ Bovine colostrum-based – Mimics natural colostrum better than serum-based alternatives.
- ✓ Easy to mix and feed – Saves time and effort.
- ✓ Safe and pathogen-free – Reduces disease risks in newborn calves.



Paragon Veterinary Group  
Carlisle House,  
Townhead Road, Dalston,  
Carlisle, CA5 7JF  
Tel: (01228) 710208  
vets@paragonvet.com

Townhead Veterinary Centre  
Newbiggin, Stainton,  
Penrith,  
CA11 0HT  
Tel: (01768) 483789  
townhead@paragonvet.com

Tarn Farm Vets  
Ground Floor Office,  
Unit 3 J39, Green Farm,  
Shap, CA10 3PW  
Tel: (01931) 716024  
tarn@paragonvet.com



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