



# SHROPSHIRE FARM NEWS

# Happy New Year

As we head into 2024, full of hope for a better (or at least drier) year, there are some threats lurking not for off. Bluetongue has been found at several more units in the South East over the festive period – thankfully, so far these are all confined to NE Kent and Norfolk. Typically, transmission occurs only in April-Nov. This is because the virus only replicates inside the midge which spreads it, when the ambient temperature is above 15 degrees C. There is no vaccine for BT3 as yet, but with any luck, there will be a vaccine when the risk of transmission returns with warmer weather, and hopefully onwards transmission will have been minimal. We will keep you updated.



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As we head towards spring calving and lambing, it is worth a timely reminder about calcium supplementation. Whilst an animal that is unable to rise with milk fever requires calcium by injection (1ml/Kg of 20% calcium borogluconate s/c for a ewe or 1 bottle of 40% calcium borogluconate i/v or s/c for a cow) only the minimum to treat the milk fever should be given by injection. The rest should be provided orally, allowing the animal's calcium metabolism to normalise. She needs to increase uptake from the gut and release of calcium stored in her bones. An excessive dose of injectable calcium will interfere with both these processes and often result in a relapse into clinical milk fever, or a prolonged period of subclinical hypocalcaemia, which can contribute to RFM, metritis, mastitis, reduce DMI, increase ketosis risk and inhibit milk production. For dairy cows, supplementation can be simple and straight forward, with calcium chloride provided with a Bovicalc bolus, Calcivit drench bottles, Selekt "fresh cow" or "off feed " powders. For ewes, we provide "Ewe-go" drench, which also contains propylene glycol.

After clinical milk fever, animals may often be uncomfortable and NSAIDs may be indicated to help recovery and ensure animals return to a good feed intake. It is always sensible to review your milk-fever prevention policy with nutritionist/vet/mineral supplier. What is the DCAB of your forages, are you using a restricted calcium strategy, or a full or partial DCAB ration? Refining plans now can pay dividends.

As per the last newsletter, we now are providing a bovine embryo transfer service – should this feature in your plans for the new year? Feel free to speak to Sean or myself to find out how this may help you achieve your breeding goals – it is just one part of an overall strategy and often a useful discussion point for gaining perspective on areas for improvement and growth on a farm.

**James**

## Shropshire Farm Vets

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## Animal Health and Welfare Pathway – Watch this Space

A good number of our clients signed up to the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway last year, and received funding for on-farm BVD or wormer efficacy testing, as well as their annual vet health review. While claiming the funding carried the usual amount of superfluous online box-ticking, most farms reported that they found the process straightforward and were paid within 10 days of finishing the process.

The next phase of the funding will roll out this year, and will include financial support 'to prevent and reduce endemic diseases', as well as for 'climate change mitigation, slowing antimicrobial resistance and improving biosecurity'. We are currently waiting for the finer details of how this will work in 2024 (the specifics are due to be released early this year), and we will be sure to publish new information as it comes out.

2024 will also see the trialling of the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway's 'Payment by Results' system, which is initially likely to reward beef and dairy farms for putting 'best practice' policies in place for pain relief following disbudding and castration. We will watch this trial closely and advise as this system becomes publicly available- it is likely that many of our clients already have gold-standard policies in place for pain relief following these procedures.

Watch this space!

**John**

### 3. Disease eradication and control programmes (from early 2024)

Farmers will be able to apply for financial support to prevent and reduce endemic diseases and conditions, building on the initial advice given in the Review.

The programmes will:

- focus initially on cattle, pig and sheep farmers, aiming to maximise the delivery of public goods, including climate change mitigation, slowing the rise of anti-microbial resistance and improving biosecurity
- target our initial priority endemic diseases – BVD in cattle and PRRS virus in pigs
- tailor health investigations for sheep

#### What's new

We are working through the steps needed to get the endemic disease programmes ready to be delivered.

## Forage – Analysis is key!

It's around this time every year that I write an article extolling the virtues of carrying out a forage analysis, and how it is impossible to efficiently feed housed ewes in the pre-lambing period without knowing the quality of the conserved feed. This year, of course, I will be continuing to bang this drum. However, having immortalised all the important points in a YouTube video, you now have the opportunity to listen to me explain why you should analyse your forage, over, and over, and over again. Whenever and wherever you like. Forever. Have a look at it on our YouTube channel.

I look forward to receiving all of your forage analyses this winter, so we can formulate a proper ration for your pregnant ewes!

**John**

**You Tube**

**SILAGE AND WINE - Analysis is Key!**

Shropshire Farm Vets  
82 subscribers

Analytics Edit video

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## Bluetongue

**As you may already know, there are about 27 confirmed cases of Bluetongue in England, and hopefully this number will not grow any larger. While the midges that spread the disease may still be active, the virus generally can't replicate itself when the temperature is below 15°C.**

Bluetongue is a viral disease that affects all ruminant species, with sheep being the most severely affected. The main vector of the disease is the *Culicoides* biting midge. Cattle and goats which appear healthy can silently carry high levels of the virus, and provide a source of onward infection.

The disease cannot be diagnosed definitively on clinical signs alone, but symptoms include:

- high temperature (up to 40°C)
- nasal discharge
- swelling of the neck and head
- runny eyes
- swelling in, and ulceration of, the mouth
- swollen teats
- saliva drooling out of the mouth
- lameness with swelling around the coronary band
- abortion

Bluetongue is a notifiable disease in the UK. There are no human or public health issues, as this is a disease of animals and not humans. However, if you see animals exhibiting suspect symptoms, you must let us know immediately!

### *Mihail*





# Beef Club Meeting

The next meeting of the Beef Club will be on Wednesday 31st January at 6pm, and will cover two topics:

**Infertility in the beef cow**  
**Pneumonia in beef calves**

Please call the practice on the usual number to book your place!



## TB UPDATE

Last month we TB tested 10,788 animals over 60 TB tests. There were 27 reactors and 18 inconclusive reactors.

## EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

ALISTAIR MACPHERSON	07909 517184	CHLOE DAVIES	07813 826333
TIM O'SULLIVAN	07909 517479	CALIN BOGDAN	07425 314090
ROEL DRIESEN	07813 833385	KATE MARTIN	07534 812696
JAMES MARSDEN	07876 443950	CHRIS SHINGLER	07903 864086
NATHAN LOEWENSTEIN	07815 543546	DREW PLUSE	07376 617477
JOHN HEMINGWAY	07496 305412	RYAN LUNT	07939 851860
SEAN HUGHES	07973 567367	KATHY JONES	07377 043596
MIHAIL STOICA	07948 475669	ANNABEL CHESTER	07944 674229
DUARTE MONTEIRO	07481 128686		

Please keep a note of the mobile numbers for the vets should you ever need them

Find us on social media



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[www.twitter.com/ShropFarmVets](https://www.twitter.com/ShropFarmVets)

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