



SHROPSHIRE FARM NEWS

Shropshire Moves to 6 Month Testing

As you are no doubt aware by now, Shropshire and Staffordshire are in the High Risk Area and have moved to six month testing for all herds. This will fully come into force from March 2021 as the six month window rolls around for herds tested in September 2020.

A couple of points of which to take note.

There is no contiguous testing in a six month testing area. This means that if a neighbour has a positive test, you will still remain within your testing interval and not have it brought forwards because of your neighbour. Additionally, you have the right to move your six month windows (once I think as nobody can confirm) to a time scale that suits yourselves. If, for example, your cattle are away during the summer months, you may want to change your window to say April and October to avoid the summer period when handling etc may be a lot more difficult.

We have also previously mentioned that there are certain exemptions to six month testing that are in place and I wanted to add some more details -

1. If you have not had a positive test for over 6 years and have been trading for all of that time without any gap of keeping cattle that is over four months, you should automatically go on to an **"Earned Recognition Status"** list. This list is produced by APHA twice a year meaning that allowing for timings/delays etc, you should stay on twelve month testing regardless of what happens in the region. Please note that we are not the arbitrators and any decision to remain on twelve month testing can only come from APHA. Obviously if you subsequently have a positive test, this status will be revoked.



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2. If you are a signed up member of a TB Health Scheme, such as the CHeCS TB Accreditation Scheme, you can stay on 12 month testing so long as you meet a minimum score, in this case 1. CHeCS transfer information to APHA so again, if you meet the requirements, you should automatically remain on a twelve month testing regime.

Full details of the scheme can be found at <https://www.checs.co.uk/bovine-tb-herd-accreditation/> which is the main CHeCS TB Accreditation site, and <https://www.checs.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/FINAL-Handbook-for-CHeCS-bTB-Herd-Accreditation-281116-1.pdf> for the handbook, and, <https://www.checs.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/CHeCS-bTB-Herd-Accreditation-programme-technical-standard-FINAL-281116.pdf> for the technical standard booklet.

It is fully acknowledged that these programmes will not suit everybody but those that may find it most beneficial are

- those who have not gone six years and remained TB free,
- farmers within high risk areas with low-risk holdings who sell livestock and want their status to be acknowledged,
- farmers buying in livestock who want to minimise the exposure of their herd to TB infection,
- farmer members of CHeCS schemes who would like to include TB in the diseases they are controlling proactively.

Working with a CHeCS accredited Health Scheme and their vet, cattle herds may improve through a scoring system from 0 up to 10, depending on implementation of general CHeCS requirements, specific preventative measures taken, and progress made in controlling TB. Homebred animals marketed from these herds can then be sold with that status. To move up through the scores within the programme, herds must be operating with a CHeCS accredited Health Scheme

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and be deemed to be implementing CHeCS standards. As well as this, the herd needs to avoid TB breakdowns. This is obviously not always possible, but helped by applying CHeCS guidelines and observing the supplementary quarantine and testing requirements, status can be regained quickly following a second consecutive clear short interval test.

Full and comprehensive details of the scheme can be found online at the links above, but mandatory aspects for participating herds include a focus on -

- Biosecurity – full details at www.tbhub.co.uk/biosecurity this is fundamental
- TB Testing – you must be clear, and in the event you are not, positive cow's milk must not be fed to calves and other aspects in order to regain status asap
- Buying in animals – includes aspects on quarantine periods and post-movement testing unless purchased from another CHeCS accredited herd
- Some restrictions on showing animals that include post-movement testing
- Isolation facilities – real isolation(!)
- Grazing practices including boundary requirements preventing nose to nose contact with neighbours.
- Water and feeding practices
- Housing and feed stores

- Badger active areas
- Slurry and muck
- Transport

Additionally, a health plan covering the control of TB must be in place as part of the requirements for the CHeCS TB Herd Accreditation Programme. It must be updated annually and signed off by both the herd's veterinary surgeon and by the herd owner/manager. The health plan must cover the mandatory control elements listed in the guidelines and must be made available to the health scheme provider on request. The herd's veterinary surgeon must detail in writing within the health plan why any particular guideline has not been followed.

Much of the above you may well be doing anyway and perhaps this suits you and perhaps not? You won't just be handed a TB Accreditation status/score, and you will have to balance the time, cost and effort to meet the standards against the benefits of staying on twelve month testing (plus actually decreasing your chances of infection/reinfection in the future).

Six month testing is here to stay and for those that do not automatically qualify through Earned Recognition Status, through this scheme, maybe you can remain on twelve month testing. But this should not just be the only reason. If you wish to look at a pro-active approach to TB rather than just take it, I would encourage you to look further and see whether this scheme suits you and your farm.

Alistair

Pre-Treatment Fluke Testing

As cattle are housed and sheep go to the tup, treating for fluke is a staple part of many people's parasite control regime. Frequently this is carried out without any prior knowledge of whether the animals have been exposed to the parasite, and, if so, when they might have encountered it. Without this information, not only is it difficult to justify treating the animals, but also difficult to know what product would be most effective to use in any given circumstance.

With the advent of cheap, quick, and widely available tests to detect the presence of fluke, the recommendation is now firmly that we should test for the presence of the parasite before making the decision to treat. The now widespread and rapidly increasing level of resistance to the key flukicide triclabendazole (Fasinex, Combinex, Fasimec Duo, Cydectin Triclamox, Endofluke) provides real justification for abandoning presumptive, blanket use of this drug in favour of a more targeted approach.

The simplest way to test for the presence of fluke in sheep or cattle at this time of year is to collect 10 fresh faecal samples from the group, and submit them for **pooled fluke coproantigen testing**. This test only detects the presence of live, active fluke in the animal, and at this time of year is very reliable. Not only does this test allow us to use triclabendazole more responsibly, but at a cost of around £20, constitutes a significant saving in the (not uncommon) event that treatment is not necessary.

John





Stormy Weather

The apples are coming down and so are the acorns. I've been called out twice in the last 2 weeks for a suspect acorn poisoning. As it happened one animal died and on post-mortem I could confirm it wasn't. Not 1 acorn in the stomach. True acorn poisoning isn't common. Livestock will in general only eat acorns when there is a shortage of food. Only once have I seen an adult cow that had developed a liking for the bitter taste of acorns. A gluttony she paid for with her life (even though adult cows tend to be more resistant to acorn poisoning than calves).

Autumn, September through to November, is the most common time to see this intoxication. Stormy weather and heavy winds cause a sudden abundance of acorns on the ground, an easy snack if you're hungry.



Symptoms can show within hours to 6 days after ingestion. It starts with constipation and colic that turns in to diarrhoea, often bloody. Animals lose appetite and are depressed. The rumen stops turning. They become dehydrated.

When livestock eat acorns, the tannins are converted by rumen bacteria into metabolites that cause ulceration of the guts (and therefore the bloody diarrhoea). These metabolites also stop the kidneys from working and the build-up of the body's own toxins ultimately cause death in up to 70% of the cases.

When signs are seen it is often too late. However, we can support the animal to improve its chances. Remove the source of acorns. Fence off the trees or move stock to different field. Supply plenty of water to help flush the kidneys. With high value animals surgical intervention is an option. Opening the rumen, removing the acorns, washing the rumen out and replacing the gut flora with those of another animal through transfaunation.

As always prevention is best. During autumn keep animals well fed and if possible away from oak trees.

Roel



SHROPSHIRE FARM VETS

The government has changed the rules about who can test cattle for TB in England. This no longer has to be done exclusively by vets but there are some strict criteria to which everyone has to meet and maintain. As a result, Shropshire Farm Vets Ltd are looking to employ one, possibly two Approved TB Testers (ATT).

This role has government-set requirements including a minimum of six months previous livestock handling experience and a minimum three GCSEs (or equivalent) in Maths, English and a Science subject/ Food production. You must also be over 18 years of age.

If you want to join an active and well regarded farm veterinary practice, work four days a week, and be willing to be trained under a programme set by the government, this job may suit you.

If you want further details, please contact Tia on **01743 860920** or at tia@shropshirefarmvets.com

Walford Block Calving Webinars Nov 2020

In the October newsletter I discussed the exciting developments going on at Walford college and the plan for some webinars looking at performance reviews of and management of the herd; their move to block calving; and important things to consider ahead of the breeding season. I presented one of the sessions looking at the importance of having a tight, front-loaded 11-12wk breeding season and the means by which to achieve this. The webinars will be launched online on Monday the 9th of November at 7.30pm, and there will be a Q&A session from ~8.30pm with the speakers involved.

As I have said before, I believe that this closer working relationship between the college, LIC and ourselves has the

potential for great benefit to not only the college, but also to many of our other block calving dairy herds. These webinars should appeal to anyone currently block calving; anyone considering making the transition and anyone interested in getting more milk from forages.

We will be posting a direct link to the webinars on our FaceBook and Twitter feeds, closer to the time. For further information please consult the LIC website to see these and previous webinars at <https://www.licnz.com/walfordcollege.cfm>

Nathan

TB UPDATE FOR OCTOBER

This month we TB tested 11022 cattle over 75 tests.
There were 50 reactors and 22 inconclusive reactors.

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTERS

From the middle of 2020, we will only be producing electronic newsletters for delivery by email, or download from the website. In order to keep receiving the newsletters, please make sure that we have your email address/addresses that are appropriate.

We will be giving monthly reminders so at the moment there is plenty of time to organise this.

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

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