

Broughton Veterinary Group

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Newsletter March 2010

1. Bluetongue Update

The following information attempts to collate the current information and advice regarding Bluetongue.

The incidence of Bluetongue in Northern Europe and particularly France was vastly reduced in 2009 compared to 2008. Also, there has been no evidence of circulating Bluetongue virus in the UK in either 2008 or 2009. If no circulating virus is found in the UK in 2010, the UK would become a Bluetongue Free Area.

However, the number of vaccinated susceptible livestock in the UK is likely to be significantly lower than previous years, therefore if the virus does reach the UK, there will be large numbers of susceptible stock for the virus to infect, replicate in and spread and multiply the virus.

If the virus does reach the UK and demand for BTV vaccine rises significantly, it is very unlikely that sufficient vaccine stocks will be available quickly enough to protect non vaccinated susceptible livestock (non vaccinated cattle need 2 doses 3 weeks apart and are not fully protected until 2 weeks after the second dose).

Therefore, the decision to vaccinate this year is very much an individual choice for each livestock owner based on the risk above, and the value and practicality of vaccinating each livestock group.

The cost of vaccination remains relatively low (around 70p per dose for 50 dose bottles). Sheep only require 1 dose but un-vaccinated cattle need 2 doses. Therefore, we would advise that previously vaccinated cattle are vaccinated again this year as this is a relatively inexpensive way of ensuring they are protected and vaccinating cattle in the face of an outbreak in the UK may not be possible (see above)

In general, we would suggest that the priority animals to vaccinate should be breeding animals as they are arguably the most valuable animals on farm and will also be on farm throughout the risk period (summer & autumn).

Vaccination of youngstock (store cattle, calves, finishing cattle, lambs) depends on the practicality of vaccination and risk of disease for each group. For example, replacement heifer calves are valuable animals that will be on farm during the risk period (summer & autumn) whilst fat cattle and lambs due to be finished during the summer will be less at risk and hence the benefit of vaccination for these groups is lower.

2. Locum Vet

We have a temporary addition to our Veterinary Staff joining us for a 5 week period from Mid March.

Ian Dennis has over 20 years experience primarily in farm animal veterinary practice and will join to help us get through our ever expanding TB workload.

3. Easter Opening Hours

Over the Easter Holiday period, the surgeries at Broughton Astley and Lutterworth are open as follows;

Good Friday 2nd April - Surgeries open 8.30am -> 12.30pm

Easter Saturday 3rd April - Broughton Astley 8.30 ->12.30pm; Lutterworth 9.00am -> 12.30pm (as normal)

Easter Monday 5th April - Closed

As always, we are available for emergencies out of office hours on 07711 434290