

Dear All,

Welcome to our Summer Newsletter. These are regular if you count once yearly so work to be done! As always if you want to discuss anything in this newsletter please do give us a call on the usual number, or you can email me on [ashley.rubens@moorgatevets.co.uk](mailto:ashley.rubens@moorgatevets.co.uk)

Currently the sun is shining and the phone is quiet so I assume everyone is out trying to catch up on field work. As usual the weather dictates our work and we have seen a late spike in pneumonia with the variable temperature and dampness affecting calves still and I expect the fly season will start in earnest soon.

Lambing this year started a bit later than usual, I think due to a combination of a hot summer affecting fertility and a business decision on the viability of early lamb crops, but once it was in full swing it was busy as always. Thankfully we seemed to be spared the worst of the Schmallenberg but I know some farms did suffer. Unfortunately there is no specific treatment or vaccine, so control relies on managing flock immunity and trying to reduce exposure to midges.

We can now check for fluke eggs in house at Bovey on our egg count machine, although this time of year it might be better to screen for immature fluke so as always please ring us and we will be happy to chat. Worm egg counts are still recommended prior to treating grazing lambs as we often find you don't actually need to treat a whole group so there can be significant savings in term of time and cost.

We have been doing more pathway reviews for beef herds and sheep flocks, the lab testing for sheep flocks is a little more complicated than we had hoped (dare I say erring more on the academic than the speedy) but they are still proving useful, and the BVD monitoring for beef herd alone is worth the effort of applying! If you would like to access this funding for your herd or flock please do go online and "register interest" at <https://apply-for-an-annual-health-and-welfare-review.defra.gov.uk/apply>.

Last but not least I'm sure most of you are aware by now that at the end of June Ulli is hanging up his stethoscope and retiring (well almost, you'll still see him at Bovey a couple of afternoons a week). His last official day is the 28<sup>th</sup> of June, and we wish him all the best for his next endeavour which he tells me is sorting out the public car parking situation in Bovey Tracey, to include a one way system. It sounds like 42 years of working with APHA might just have been the warm up!

## CHECS TB accreditation – A way to yearly TB testing?

We have definitely seen an improvement in the TB situation locally, and as we approach a possible change in government we can only hope the momentum is maintained, but unfortunately I think it's still up to us to be as proactive as we can rather than rely on our politicians to always make the best decisions.

I've recently become a 'BCVA Approved TB Veterinary Adviser', which means I can advise on and sign off the plans needed for farmers to join the CHECS TB schemes, because I think these could be useful not only to help improve the TB situation in our area but also to help farms reduce the frequency of testing and possibly improve the saleability of animals as more people join these schemes.

You may be aware of the CHECS TB schemes that are available to join, at entry level these offer a way to improve herd biosecurity through discussion with us and reduce the risk of bovine TB entry, however if you become accredited by working with us to produce and implement a specific biosecurity plan there is recognition and reward from Defra: Herds on six-monthly surveillance testing can remain on annual testing if they are CHECS TB herd accredited and have a score of at least 1. Furthermore, when animals moved into a TB breakdown herd are subsequently removed as TB reactors, the standard 50% reduction in compensation does not apply if the herd is CHECS TB herd accredited.

If you'd like to learn more you can visit [tbhub.co.uk](http://tbhub.co.uk) which is a useful resource. You can discuss joining with us and contact one of the participating CHECS-licensed health schemes listed on the CHECS website. [Ashley.rubens@moorgatevets.co.uk](mailto:Ashley.rubens@moorgatevets.co.uk)

## TB: know your biosecurity basics



 **NEW CHECS TB Entry Level Membership**  
Find out more at [www.cheecs.co.uk/tb](http://www.cheecs.co.uk/tb)

## Tick-borne diseases in Sheep - A Bad Year for Ticks



As the weather warms up following a mild winter, it is likely that we will see an increase in tick activity if you have not already seen it. This year we are noticing tick problems earlier and in new areas – this is likely being driven by a number of factors including a warmer climate, environmental schemes increasing tick habitats, and sheep being dipped less frequently.

Hill flocks are at the greatest risk due to dense vegetation combined with warm, humid conditions but they are also found on low, rough grazing and field boundaries. Ticks can cause significant health issues primarily in sheep through transmitting infectious diseases and/or causing hypersensitivity reactions around bite sites. The common spots you will find ticks are on and around the face and neck as well as the undercarriage of sheep although this is not exclusively where they can be found.

The prominent tick in the UK is *Ixodes Ricinus* which can carry these common diseases;

- Louping ill: A viral disease affecting the central nervous system. It is the most common and economically serious disease risk for sheep, causing death in naive (not previously exposed to the disease) animals. Affected sheep initially develop a fever and decreased appetite moving onto nervous signs including trembling, staggering/unsteadiness, seizure and paralysis. Mortality rates are 5-60% in cases, with a lower, 5-10% mortality rate in endemic areas. Young lambs acquire passive immunity through colostrum but become susceptible to the disease as this immunity wanes.
- Tick borne fever: This disease is caused by a bacteria transmitted by ticks – it suppresses the immune system of naive animals. It presents as a fever with a lack of appetite and depression. It tends to reduce immunity of affected animals leaving them prone to secondary infections. Naive in-lamb ewes are likely to abort and may develop severe metritis. If caught early – this is potentially treatable with injectable *Engemycin* and anti-inflammatories.
- Tick Pyaemia: This tends to affect young lambs (up to 12 weeks of age) causing abscesses within muscles, joints and tendons commonly presenting as a 'crippled lamb' with severe lameness, hindlimb paralysis and death. Up to 30% of lambs in a group can be affected and there is no treatment. Ticks can also cause anaemia, however, this tends to be young lambs with a very high tick burden but it is something to watch for.

Particular care is required when new sheep are brought onto a farm from tick-free areas. Even adult sheep are at risk in these circumstances so they must be introduced well ahead of the breeding season and protected from ticks using an acaricide product.

**Control** is always better than treatment with topical cypermethrin products such as Crovect, Dysect, and Spotinor provide protection against ticks for varying timespans. It is important to repeat these treatments at the recommended intervals. Planning a grazing pattern for at risk stock can also reduce the risk of tick associated diseases. Swaling can reduce tick burden on pasture. Organophosphate dips are a treatment option however present environmental and human health concerns. Moredun institute is working on a Louping Ill vaccination – clinical trials so far have been very promising; watch this space!



If you have any questions regarding control plans please drop by or give us a ring.  
Stijn.brussen@moorgatevets.co.uk

### PRACTICE FACILITIES

24 Hour Service  
In-House Laboratory  
Ultrasound Scanning  
Lambing Club  
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Planning  
Red Tractor Reviews  
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### BOVEY TRACEY SURGERY

Mill House, Station Road,  
Bovey Tracey, Newton  
Abbot, TQ13 9AL  
TELEPHONE – 01626  
833023  
EMAIL:  
admin@moorgatevets.co.uk

### MORETONHAMPSTEAD SURGERY

31 Court Street,  
Moretonhampstead,  
Newton Abbot, TQ13 8LG  
TELEPHONE – 01647  
440441

### CHRISTOW SURGERY

Gidley's Meadow,  
Christow, EX6 7QB  
For appointments/repeat  
prescriptions etc.

### FOR OUT OF HOUR EMERGENCIES PLEASE

TELEPHONE: 01647  
440441

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