

Dear All,

Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter,

As I write this we have a couple of days break in the weather, and hopefully the harvest is in. They seem to be filling in the road outside the Bovey surgery so hopefully usual access will be resumed shortly, although past experience would suggest as soon as the roadworks signs disappear the water main will burst!

It was nice to catch up with so many people at Chagford Show, I hope it was success for those showing, it's great to see so many sheep especially at the show, it must be becoming one of the biggest one day sheep shows, and feels almost like the breed show for the Dartmoors.

Ulli has now retired, although he has returned already as a locum doing some small animal surgeries at Bovey Tracey and you will still see him at the pony sales. This month we will be welcoming Benedict Pugsley to the team who will return us to full strength. Ben has recently qualified from Bristol university, you may have met Ben already as he spent quite a few weeks with us as a student when he was training, and is a local boy coming from as far away as Lustleigh. Hopefully he will settle in quickly to the new role but for the time being I will be backing him up on call.

In this newsletter there is an article about Blowfly Strike from Robin, maybe one to keep in mind for next year now, and a reminder about biosecurity when purchasing new bulls.

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)

## Biosecurity Protocols for Buying Bulls: A Quick Guide for Beef Farmers

Maintaining herd health is crucial for ensuring productivity and profitability. When introducing new bulls to your herd, robust biosecurity protocols are essential to prevent the spread of disease.

### Sourcing a bull

- Always buy bulls from known or reputable breeders whose health biosecurity standards you trust.
- Request detailed health records, including vaccination history, disease testing results, and any treatments the bull has received. This information is vital for assessing the bull's health status.

### Pre-Purchase Health Screening

- A thorough health check, which could include fertility testing, is important to avoid unexpected issues and can be arranged prior to purchase or whilst the bull is in quarantine.
- Ensure the bull is tested for key infectious diseases such as Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD), Johne's disease, and Tuberculosis (TB). These diseases can have significant impacts on beef production. Locally it may be worth considering if the bull has been exposed to tick borne diseases yet in his current location.

### Transportation

- Use clean, disinfected vehicles for transporting the bull to your farm. Avoid using vehicles that have recently transported other livestock to minimize the risk of contamination. Try to minimize stress, as it can weaken the immune system and increase susceptibility to disease.

### Quarantine Procedures

- Quarantine the new bull for at least 30 days upon arrival. This period allows for observation and ensures that any latent diseases can be identified before the bull joins the main herd. Use separate facilities for quarantined bulls, with dedicated feeding and watering equipment to prevent cross-contamination.

Regular monitoring and careful integration further enhance the effectiveness of these biosecurity measures, ensuring a healthy and thriving beef herd [ashley.rubens@moorgatevets.co.uk](mailto:ashley.rubens@moorgatevets.co.uk)

## PRACTICE FACILITIES

24 Hour Emergency Service  
In-House Laboratory  
Ultrasound scanning  
Lambing Club  
Herd and Flock Health Planning  
Red Tractor Reviews  
Bull Breeding soundness examinations  
Semen Collection

## 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

Old Mines Road, Christow,  
Exeter, EX6 7PL  
For appointments/repeat prescriptions etc.

FOR OUT OF HOUR EMERGENCIES PLEASE  
TELEPHONE: 01647 440441

moorgatevets.co.uk

## Blowfly Strike Season: A Growing Concern for UK Farms

As summer unfolds, the threat of blowfly strike looms large over UK farms. Recent weather changes suggest that this season could extend longer than usual, posing a significant risk to livestock. Blowfly strike is a severe disease affecting over 80% of UK farms, impacting not only sheep but also cows, alpacas, and goats.

### The Impact of Blowfly Strike

Blowfly strike causes immense pain and discomfort, hindering animals from grazing and leading to rapid health decline. Maggots can hatch from fly eggs within 12 hours and start digesting the animal's tissue, releasing endotoxins that attract more flies. With flies capable of laying 200 eggs at a time, endotoxin levels can quickly escalate, potentially leading to septicemia and death.

### Signs to Watch For

Early Signs include tail or skin twitching, constant nibbling at specific body parts or rubbing against fences or other objects.

Severe Signs can include foul-smelling skin, often hidden by dark-stained wool, animals will separate from the group, be lethargic and you may see cases of sudden death

### Treatment and Prevention

#### Immediate Actions:

- Clip the affected area
- Wash the skin with tap water or a disinfectant solution
- Administer anti-inflammatory for pain relief
- Treat wounds with topical or injectable antibiotics
- Apply products to kill maggots around the wound

#### Preventative Measures:

- Use licensed larvicidal products
- Regularly remove soiled wool (dagging and crutching)
- Shear sheep timely to keep fleeces clean
- Consider tail docking in lowland flocks
- Establish a parasite control plan with us
- Promptly treat lame sheep to prevent fly attraction

#### Managing Fly Population:

- Use fly traps to reduce strike incidence
- Dispose of carcasses promptly
- Choose grazing areas wisely during high-risk periods

In severe cases, euthanasia may be necessary on welfare grounds. Preventing blowfly strike is crucial for the health and welfare of livestock. Always consult with a vet for the best practices and treatments.

Stay vigilant this summer to protect your animals from the devastating effects of blowfly strike robin.botermans@moorgatevets.co.uk

