

Autumn 2024 Farm Newsletter

Bluetongue update

Bluetongue is a notifiable disease spread by biting midges. It affects sheep, cattle, deer, goats and camelids. It can also be brought in with infected animals. It's currently affecting a lot of the East coast of England, with surveillance zones increasing in size.

Preventing bluetongue

- Source livestock responsibly
- Look out for signs of disease
- House animals in buildings that keep out biting midges, especially at dawn and dusk
- Maintaining good biosecurity and hygiene
- Not allowing farm dogs or pets to eat, chew on or play with potentially infected material, such as aborted material and afterbirth

Vaccination is currently for controlled areas only, but we hope this will change soon.

Signs in sheep

Sheep are more likely to show signs of bluetongue than cattle:

- **Ulcers or sores of the mouth and nose**
- **Discharge from the eyes or nose and drooling from mouth**
- **Swelling of the lips, tongue, head and neck and coronary band (where skin of leg meets the foot)**

Signs in cattle

- Lethargy
- Crusty erosions around the nostrils and muzzle
- Redness of mouth, eyes and nose
- Reddening of skin above the hoof

Cattle can be infectious for several weeks while showing no signs of disease so are often the source of spread.

It's a legal requirement to report any suspicion of bluetongue.



Included in this issue:

- Bluetongue
- Sycamore poisoning in horses
- BVD scheme
- Gwaredu scab

Gwaredu scab

The scab scheme is back, so if you suspect scab, please get in touch with Gwaredu scab first, to authorise a farm visit. Vets must find a live mite on farm, and then you can get funding for dipping.

New staff member - Toby



Hello all, I'm originally from Llandrindod and have worked for my Uncle at Trawscoed, Llanbister since I was 12. My uncle says I'm obsessed with sheep and I spend most of my spare time helping him. I've had my own flock of sheep since I was 12 and one of my highlights for the year is taking my lambs to Welshpool. In my spare time I enjoy training my Huntaway, going to the gym, shearing and playing rugby. I'm over the moon to be starting at Hafren. I've been lucky to meet a lot of you on placement and look forward to working with you all in the future. I will never turn down a cup of tea or a bacon sandwich!

Hafren Veterinary Group

Newtown

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Llanidloes

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Knighton

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Cross Gates

01597 851500



BVD Scheme Wales

New legislation (the Bovine Viral Diarrhoea Wales Order 2024) has restarted the efforts to eradicate BVD from Wales. From 1st July 2024, cattle keepers are legally required to:

- Complete an annual herd screen by 1st July 2025 – your vet will advise which animals are most suitable to test
- Keep persistently infected animals separate from the rest of the herd for the remainder of their lives. PI's may not be sold unless straight to slaughter

You can book a blood sampling visit at any time, including alongside your annual TB test. Please note that the government are no longer funding BVD testing.

Full guidance can be found at: www.gov.wales/welsh-bovine-viral-diarrhoeaeradication-scheme-guidance

Sycamore poisoning and horses

Sycamore poisoning, or atypical myopathy, is caused by the ingestion of sycamore seedlings or seeds and can be fatal to horses. Although there is a danger to horses throughout the year, it is more common in the spring and autumn months.

The sycamore seedlings can be seen emerging from the ground during springtime. Young horses or horses on bare fields may be more susceptible to ingesting them. Although you may not have a sycamore tree in your field, if there are trees in adjacent fields or in the surrounding areas, there is still a risk that seedlings can be found, as the seeds can be carried by the wind over a large distance.

Atypical myopathy is a muscle disease that can often be fatal, it is caused by the toxin that is found in sycamore seeds and seedlings called Hypoglycin A.

Symptoms to look out for:

- Muscular stiffness
- Reluctance to walk
- Muscle tremors
- Sweating
- Depression
- High Heart Rate
- Dark Urine (Reddish to brown in colour)



How to prevent Sycamore ingestion?

- Remove both seeds and fresh sycamore seedlings from your fields!
- Remove horses from fields that are affected
- Fence around any sycamore trees to prevent horses getting too close
- Feed forage, such as hay in bare fields, from the floor, in haynets or feed racks
- Do not overstock fields, so that all horses have access to good grass
- Mowing your field can help trim the seedlings, but all cuttings will need to be collected and removed.
Note: This will not prevent the seedlings from growing back
- Certified weed killer – if you have a lot of seedlings in your paddock you may need to use a weed killer which will kill weeds and saplings but not harm the grass. Note: Horses cannot be returned to graze on the treated paddock until the plants have completely died back and rotted which can take up to several weeks. Please be sure to ask the sales person about your product choice and its safety for use on pasture grazed by horses.

Check on your horse daily, and if they show any symptoms, contact your vet immediately.