

Newsletter

May 2025

This month Rachel, Fraser and Andy discuss some emerging disease threats and Jeanne highlights the ever present parasite risk in sheep. Lastly we wanted to highlight the latest information we have regarding vaccine availability.

Schmallenberg update

Schmallenberg virus hit the headlines earlier this year with some early lambing flocks in Scotland having devastating losses to their lamb crop. With lambing and calving in full swing across our patch how have we fared this side of the country?

So far, we have had confirmed cases in both calves and lambs, spread out in East and Midlothian areas. Testing has been performed on both post mortem examinations and also via serology of either the dam proving exposure or the calf. We have also had some suspicious cases of deformities have been tested and come back negative just showing that not every deformed lamb or calf will be due to this virus, there are many other causes out there.

With it getting later into the season there should be lower chances of cases due to lower midge activity later in the back end of 2024. However, given how warm November was we can't rule out midge activity all together so if you do get a suspicious case, it still

would be worth testing.

An example of a suspicious case – contracted front legs and shortened bottom jaw that proved not to be Schmallenberg

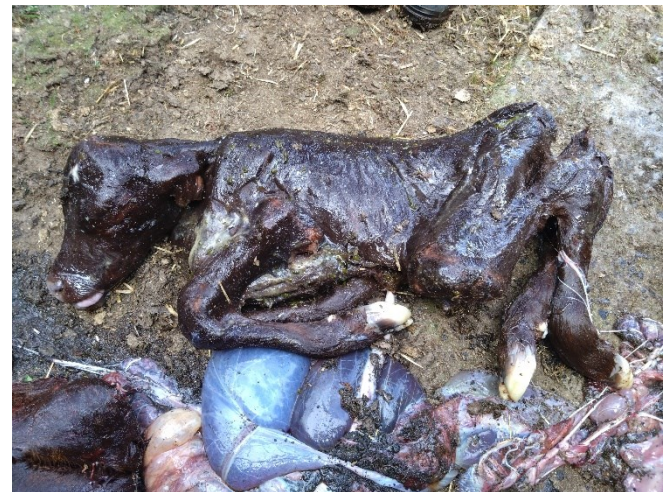


Schmallenberg remains **non-notifiable** unlike Bluetongue virus, therefore you are under no obligation to test or report cases, but the more

information we gather on how far cases have spread the more accurate future predictions of disease trends can be.

Animals that have been exposed to Schmallenberg virus in 2024 will likely remain protected by antibodies against the virus for the next few years. Hence the

cycles of disease we seem to see as the national flock/herd protection wanes after a few years and then improves again with exposure.



Calf infected with confirmed Schmallenberg virus infection born dead.

The hip, stifle, shoulder, carpus, and neck joints were deformed and fused resulting in a difficult calving. Practice vets were able to deliver the calf without injury to the dam.

Bluetongue update

Confirmed cases of Bluetongue are creeping ever closer to the border, although no progression beyond Yorkshire as yet. Bluetongue relies on midges for spread between animals so we are currently in a period of low risk for new cases.

Unlike Schmallenberg, Bluetongue is a notifiable disease so you are legally bound to report any suspicion of the disease.

As of 30th April 2025 the Scottish Government have allowed vaccination of animals in Scotland. There is no requirement to vaccinate and it will be very much on a farm by farm basis. There are a couple of calculators which you can use to determine the cost benefit analysis of vaccinating your own herd/flock:

<https://ahdb.org.uk/knowledge-library/btv-3-vaccination-finance-calculator-sheep>

<https://ahdb.org.uk/knowledge-library/btv-3-vaccination-finance-calculator-beef>

Sheep are more likely to show clinical signs than cattle. Typically signs in sheep will include:

- Ulcers/sores in the mouth
- Swelling of lips, tongue, head and neck
- Occasional swellings around the coronary band

Typically signs in cattle will include:

- Nasal discharge, redness around mouth, nose and eyes
- Reddening and erosions on teats
- Milk drop

As cattle don't show clear clinical signs they can serve as a source of virus for several weeks.

Clinical presentation of Blue Tongue is not too dissimilar to Foot and Mouth Disease which is another important notifiable disease that we don't want to miss.

As always, if you have any concerns or questions, please get in touch with us at the practice.

Parasites

Well, wow. That was a spring like no other! You'd be forgiven for thinking it was summer already - though let's be honest, this might be the only summer we get. If you're not sure whether to fire up the barbecue or grab your swimming shorts, spare a thought for the poor parasites, they're just as confused!

We had a mild winter (meaning fewer parasites were killed off by the cold), followed by an early hot and dry spell. That heatwave might do us a favour - larvae that overwintered could have used up a lot of their energy in this weather. And since not many animals were out grazing yet, worm burdens on pasture might be lower than expected. But let's not get too relaxed.

Nematodirus

If you've checked the SCOPS Nematodirus forecast recently (and if not, definitely go take a look!), you'll have seen that your region will be showing moderate - very high risk levels. Be sure to check your area and take a peek at the "historic data" tab while you're there, it helps put this season in context.

So, what does all this mean for your lambs, especially with many of our client lambing in early April?

Nematodirus becomes a risk once lambs are eating enough grass - usually around 6 weeks old. Later lambs might actually miss the main Nematodirus peak, in that case, we'll need to keep an eye out for an autumn spike instead. If you have early lambs who coincide with being 6 weeks old + and a high forecast, you'll want to look at your risk. If treatment is needed, a white wormer (1-BZ) is still the go-to for Nematodirus, (unless you've confirmed resistance on your farm).

Quick checklist – Should you treat?

- ✓ SCOPS forecast shows a high risk (check especially after a cold snap followed by a warm spell)
- ✓ Lambs grazing and aged 6-12 weeks (younger if ewes have low milk supply)
- ✓ Grazing fields that had lambs last year
- ✓ Lambs under other stress; triplets, coccidiosis, fostered, etc.

Not sure? Give us a shout, we're happy to chat through it.

Vaccine Updates.....

Ali has asked for anyone looking to order Enzovac this year to get orders in as early as possible. There is a chance that there may be some supply issues with this later in the year. If you know numbers now we can order the vaccine and keep it here until you need it, assuming we can get long enough dated product.

At present no issues predicted with Toxovac.