

A close-up photograph of a cow's head, focusing on its nose and eye. The cow has a light brown coat with dark spots on its nose and face. Its eye is visible, and its ear is large and dark. The background is a bright, cloudy sky.

# December 2024 Newsletter

[www.penbodevets.co.uk/farm](http://www.penbodevets.co.uk/farm)



**Penbode**  
Farm Vets Since 1840



# HOLSWORTHY RALLY



Photo provided by Kivells

We were beyond proud to stand amongst our local farming community on Tuesday 19th November and show our support for British farming at the Holsworthy rally.

The rally was organised by Jay from Penbode, alongside Kivells for those who couldn't make it to London, but still wanted to show their support, a chance for voices to still be heard against the changes in agricultural inheritance tax. The rally saw in excess of over 400 people attend, a tremendous turnout. ITV news attended and there was some great coverage of the rally, with some fantastic speakers – many of which most of you probably recognised. The rally has also been covered in local papers.

In line with the London rallies, we also asked for food bank donations, we had over 131kg of food donated, which went to Holsworthy food bank and Holsworthy community fridge.

Thank you to all who attended, thank you to all who donated so generously to the food bank and thank you to Kivells for helping us put on the rally.

## MASTERING MEDICINES COURSE

**With Amy Smyth**

Veterinary Surgeon  
BVetMed MRCVS



**Monday 20th January**

10am at the Kivells Market Hut, Holsworthy

One of the Red Tractor standards recommends that at least one member of staff has undertaken training on a veterinary run course and holds a certificate of competence. **£30pp ex VAT**

For more information or to book your place please call your local branch



# MASTITIS AND METACAM

By Andrew Stokes

Veterinary Surgeon  
BVSc CertAVP (Cattle) MRCVS

The anti-inflammatory drug Metacam (meloxicam) has been licensed for use alongside antibiotic therapy for mastitis for over 20 years. Given the wealth of evidence for its positive benefits, it is probably still under-utilised on our dairy farms.

Hopefully Metacam is always used for severe cases of mastitis where its direct benefits are fairly obvious, to reduce pain and inflammation and fever. But mild and moderate mastitis is also painful and the same direct benefits apply, but there are also a host of less obvious benefits from giving this drug.

Here is a reminder of why every cow with mastitis should receive a dose of Metacam as a matter of routine.

Used in combination with antibiotic therapy for mild and moderate cases of mastitis...

Metacam has been proven to **IMPROVE BACTERIOLOGICAL CURE RATES**, and **REDUCE SCC** of the affected quarter.

Metacam treated cows are less likely to be culled from the herd, i.e. their **LONGEVITY IS INCREASED**.

Metacam treated cows are **MORE FERTILE**.

- 1st service conception rate is higher

- Number of inseminations per pregnancy is reduced

- More likely to be in calf by 120 days in milk

Putting all of this together means that there will always be a cost-benefit to giving every cow with mastitis a dose of Metacam.



Administration - A reminder

**Dose:** 1ml per 40kg, so a 700kg dairy cow needs 17.5ml

**Route:** By subcutaneous injection

**How often:** A repeat dose may be given after 2 -3 days

**Milk withhold:** 5 days

**Meat withhold:** 15 days



# SHEEP LAMENESS: THE FIVE POINT PLAN

**By Kai Sainsbury**

**Veterinary Surgeon  
BVSc MRCVS.**



From contagious ovine digital dermatitis (CODD) to footrot, managing sheep lameness on farm can feel like a never-ending battle. The cost of lameness extends further than the obvious losses through culling, with two thirds of antibiotic usage in sheep thought to be due to lameness as well as the negative impacts on welfare and public perception. Following a few simple steps we can aim to reduce culling and ultimately create a more productive and healthy flock. The following is a summary of the five point plan based on the AHDB recommendations.

## **Cull**

Genetic susceptibility has a role to play in scald and footrot. Sheep that have chronic or repeated outbreaks of lameness should be culled from the flock. This will reduce the spread of disease both by eliminating the genetic lines that have more susceptibility to lameness and decreasing the disease burden on farm. This means there will be less sheep spreading contagious pathogens causing both CODD and footrot.

## **Quarantine**

Biosecurity and quarantine are extremely important to preventing the entry of new pathogens on farm. All sheep being brought onto the farm should be quarantined for a minimum of 28 days in a yard/shed separate from the main flock. Whilst in quarantine the sheep should be foot-bathed three times at 5 day intervals with 10% zinc sulphate or 3% formalin. Quarantine should also be used for any animals within the flock that have been identified as lame, separating them will help stop the spread of pathogens to others.



Quarantine is just as important in the control of parasites and other diseases!!

Tips for bringing new sheep onto farm: check every sheep for early signs of disease, treat all cases quickly and effectively, ensure any transport is properly cleaned and disinfected between batches, try and buy from flocks with strict lameness protocols, seek veterinary advice if you have any concerns.

## Treat

Regularly checking stock ensures prompt treatment to any health issues that may be occurring. All lame sheep should be examined and treated, even though showing very mild lameness. Catching lame sheep early in the disease process allows for a more successful outcome as the severity of damage caused to the foot and spread of disease to other members of the flock will be minimised.

Correctly diagnosing the cause of lameness means we can provide the best treatment plan. The foot should be cleaned to allow any lesions to be clearly visualised. Once correct diagnosis has been made, we can start treatment. Trimming feet is very rarely useful for the treatment of lame sheep as it often results in delayed healing and aids the spread of infectious pathogens. Below are some common presentations of lameness and a treatment plan:

### Footrot and scald

**Presentation** - Red/pink inflamed area between claws, foul smelling horn with possible pus and hoof wall separation

**Treatment** - If the horn is not involved, clean and apply antibiotic spray as well as foot-bathing in 10% zinc sulphate or 3% formalin

If horn is involved treat as above plus antibiotic injection should be used, alongside pain relief





## **CODD**

**Presentation** - Lesion starts at top of hoof and works downwards ultimately resulting in hoof detachment

**Treatment** - Antibiotic injection alongside pain relief

## **Abscess**

**Presentation** - Often due to separation at white line, foot can look normal but appear hot/painful.

**Treatment** - Draining the abscess then covering with topical antibiotic spray, plus antibiotic injection alongside pain relief

## **Toe granuloma**

**Presentation** - Painful red tissue swelling from the point of the toe

**Treatment** - Pain relief and antibiotics if there looks to be infection.

Impacted dirt, stones and trauma to the foot or leg should not be forgotten about as other causes of lameness.

Discussion should be had with your vet about the most appropriate antibiotic to use. Many products are not licenced for use in sheep lameness, your vet can give you the most up to date advice.

Marking and recording the tag of any lame or treated sheep means you can be aware of any repeat and chronic cases that may need culling.

## **Avoid**

If diseases could be completely avoided this would make our job very easy. However, this is not the reality. But steps can be taken to minimise the development and spread of lameness lesions. Grazing management can often play a crucial role in this, with many of the pathogens causing lameness preferring wet and muddy areas, moving troughs and feeders around can prevent poaching as well as avoiding overusing gateways. Having a separate field for lame sheep is also important as it will prevent build up of bacteria where the main flock is grazing.



Following on from this at housing bedding should be kept as dry as possible and again separating lame sheep to a quarantine pen is always useful. Regular foot-bathing should also be carried out, but care must be taken to have the solution at the correct concentration, depth and exposure time. You should also allow the sheep on dry standing for the product to work effectively, these will all vary depending on the product being used so be sure to check labels or give us a ring.

## Vaccinate

The good news is, there is a vaccine to help with lameness!! Footvax can be used to both treat and prevent footrot. It stimulates immunity to the bacteria causing footrot, meaning it can aid in treating outbreaks. With footrot also being one of the main risk factors for development of CODD lesions, vaccination can also reduce the number of CODD cases seen on farm. The vaccination requires six monthly boosters to be effective, but this should not be administered in the run up to shearing due to some sheep having reaction lumps which could cause trauma at shearing. Care should be taken also to not dose around lambing time to minimise stress to the ewes. It should also be noted that the vaccine reacts with the anthelmintic moxidectin 1%.

Using a combination of the topics discussed in this article we can help to increase your flocks resilience to the causes of lameness and reduce disease challenge on your farm.

Don't hesitate to get in contact with us if you'd like any further information regarding your lameness.

AHWP funding is available and can be used to investigate lameness alongside the required anthelmintic resistance.

To start, you will have to register for the review through the government website. If eligible, you will receive an application link. Prior to applying, please speak to your vet, as the visit needs to be completed six months after applying.

<https://apply-for-an-annual-health-and-welfare-review.defra.gov.uk/apply/register-your-interest>

Register here:







# Christmas Opening Times



Tuesday 24th December: Closing at 4pm

Wednesday 25th December: (Christmas Day) Emergencies only

Thursday 26th December: (Boxing Day) Emergencies only

Friday 27th December: Open as normal

Saturday 28th December: 8:30am -1pm

Sunday 29th December: Emergencies only

Monday 30th December: Open as normal

Tuesday 31st December: Closing at 4pm

Wednesday 1st January: Emergencies only

Thursday 2nd January: Open as normal

