

May 2025 Newsletter

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Penbode Farm Vets
Since 1840

Penbode Farm Vets Taster Day

For those aged between 15 and 18



**Wednesday 30th July
2025**

🐾🐾 **Farm Vet Taster Day** 🐾🐾

It's difficult for us to accommodate young students for farm vet work experience due to rules and regulations, so in light of this we are delighted to be able to offer a farm vet taster day for those aged between 15 and 18.

This will be a one day taster event to be held at our Holsworthy branch and run by two of our farm vets. **Wednesday 30th July, 10am - 3pm.**

The day will include a mix of practical and theory sessions. It will give those interested in a career as a farm vet an insight as to what it entails.

There will be no charge for this event. However, places are very limited, we are therefore asking all those interested to apply for a space on the taster day by sending a letter of interest to jay.waylen@penbodevets.co.uk. Applications close on **Friday 30th May.**

Bluetongue; The Current Situation

By Andy Stokes

BVSc CertAVP (Cattle) MRCVS



The following is correct as of 30th April, 2025.

We have experienced 2 seasons of Bluetongue infection in the UK; during the 2023 a limited number of cases were identified in the South East. During the 2024 infection really 'got going' with 260 separate cases identified, with a focus in the East and South East of England. Surveillance testing of these cases has revealed 771 positive animals (682 cattle and 89 sheep).

It has been fortuitous that these eastern counties are some of the least densely populated with cattle and sheep, and that infections appeared later in the year so it wasn't long before the midge vectors were no longer active. This has bought us some time to get livestock vaccinated and protected.

Midges are extremely efficient at transmitting the virus. One bite from an infected midge almost guarantees that the animal will become infected and as such, attempts at fly/midge control will **NOT** prevent infection. But, it needs to be warm enough for this to happen; below 12-15°C they may be active but cannot transmit the virus. This has been the situation all winter and spring and is described as the "Seasonal Vector Low Risk Period".

Judging by the number of mowers buzzing around the countryside, you have all noticed that it is warming up, and with that will come the "Vector High Risk Period" when midges will be able to transmit the disease.

Whilst we can't know how the disease will spread, it seems likely that it will be here by the end of the summer, if not sooner. Spread in Germany last summer was rapid, going from 86 cases in July, to 1500 cases in August, to 7500 cases in September.

Please speak to us about vaccinating your cattle and sheep if you haven't already done so.

And, if you are in any doubt about the cost-benefit of vaccinating, the AHDB has produced some very easy to use cost-calculators for Dairy, Beef and Sheep available here

<https://ahdb.org.uk/knowledge-library>

Bluetongue vaccine splitting

Bluetongue vaccine splitting - 7th May and 28th May 2025

What is Bluetongue?

Bluetongue is a notifiable viral disease spread by midges. It can cause disease in sheep, cattle, goats and alpacas. The virus itself can't spread directly between animals, it can only spread via the midge. For sheep this disease has a high mortality rate whereas in cattle it is not often as severe. It causes signs such as:

- | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Ulceration and redness of the mouth and nose● Swelling of the lips, tongue, head, neck, coronary bands● Discharge from the eyes and nose● Dark purple tongue and tissues of the mouth● Ulcerations just above the hoof | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Fever (over 39.5 degrees C)● Lameness● Inappetence● Difficulty breathing● Abortion, foetal deformities and stillbirths● Skin redness● Depression |
|--|--|

The severity of disease in goats is thought to be less severe than that in sheep, but still of concern. For alpacas disease severity can be more variable.

The UK had been free of Bluetongue up until recently. Currently, much of the Northeast, Southeast, East of England and parts of the South of England are within the restriction zone. This is a zone put in place by the government to try and control the spread of disease. This is a rapidly developing situation.

Should I vaccinate?

There are currently three vaccines available for Bluetongue; one of which we offer at Penbode. Syvazul BTV-3 is an injectable vaccine licensed for the use in cattle and sheep. It can't prevent infection, but can reduce the severity of disease. The vaccine is not licensed for use in goats and alpacas but is still thought to be beneficial for these species. Please contact the team to discuss this further.

How is the vaccine given and what is the dose?

Syvazul BTV-3 is an injectable vaccine. For sheep and goats it is a single 2 ml dose under the skin, for cattle it is two doses of 4 ml given three weeks apart into the muscle and for alpacas it is two doses of 2 ml given three weeks apart under the skin. If you need assistance administering the vaccine this can be arranged.

How can I get the doses I need?

If you would like to vaccinate your stock please get in touch to have a discussion with a vet who can prescribe this for you. For the first time Penbode will be offering a vaccine splitting service for those who do not need a whole bottle.

How does the vaccine splitting service work?

Syvazul BTV-3 is available in 80 ml or 200 ml bottles. For most of our smallholders this is simply too much which is why we will be offering a vaccine splitting service.

	Doses for sheep (2 ml)	Doses for cattle (4 ml)*
Syvazul 80 ml bottle	40 doses	20 doses
Syvazul 200 ml bottle	100 doses	50 doses

Simply ring in and speak to a vet to confirm how many doses you will need. **On the 7th and 28th May** we will be splitting bottles between everyone who has ordered doses and they will be ready for collection during the day. Unfortunately due to the nature of the vaccine we must limit the opening of a bottle to one day. If you are unable to attend on this date and if there is enough demand we may be able to arrange another splitting day in the future.

Within 48 hours of administration of this dose you must fill out an online government form detailing your address and the identification of the animals vaccinated. A link to this form can be found here:



For further guidance please speak to one of our team.

*cattle will require two 4 ml doses 3 weeks apart so will need doses on both 7th May and 28th May

Your Worm Egg Counts and the Ovacyte machine

By Lewis Wosnitzka
MRCVS



What is a worm egg count?

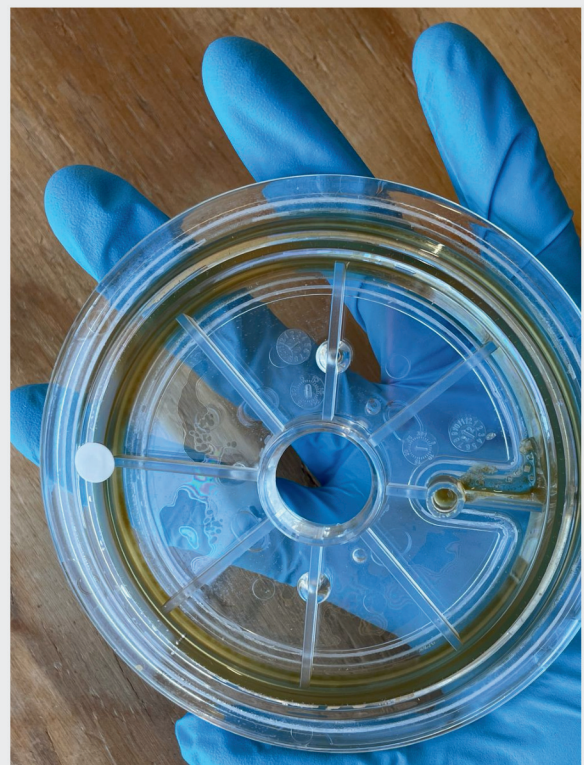
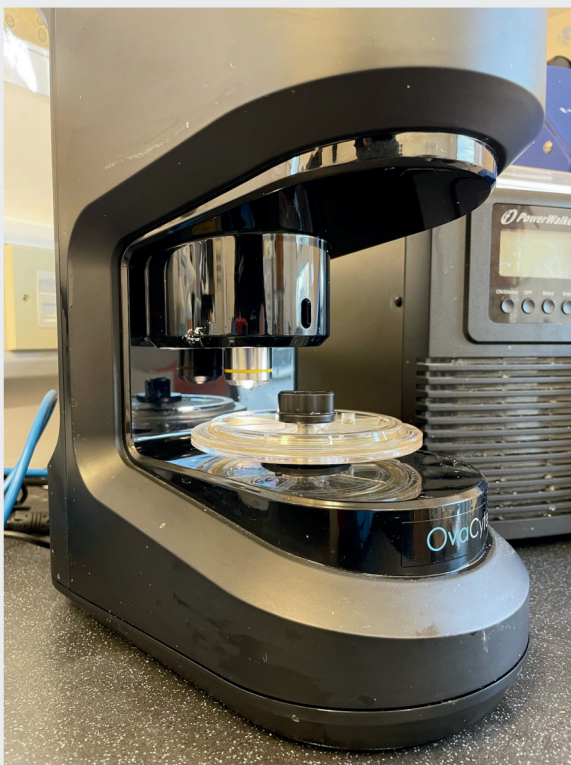
Worm egg counts (WECs) are diagnostic tests we run on faecal samples that we either collect ourselves or you bring in yourself. When we do a WEC we are looking for the oocytes or eggs of various worm species and intracellular parasites like coccidia. Different species have different looking eggs, and we can differentiate species which may or may not need treating and with what. We now use an Ovacyte machine which has replaced the old method of looking at the faeces after preparation down a microscope and individually counting and speciating the various eggs. We prepare the sample and place it in the Ovacyte machine which takes hundreds of microscopic photos and uses its software to analyse which eggs and how many are present. This process now takes less than half an hour and we can get the results to you ASAP.

How do you take the best samples?

The Ovacyte results are only as good as the samples that we receive. The perfect sample; which we know is not always possible, is 10 samples from the same production stage group that are as fresh as possible. A small sample from each is then combined by us in the lab to produce a pooled sample if you want a general idea of worm burden or can be individually run if you want to know the status of individuals (however these must be run and therefore charged individually). These can be brought in any sealed container whether it's a sample pot, a tied glove, a jam jar or even ice cream tub. Most samples only require about 20 grams. Samples that are mostly liquid are more difficult to interpret as the eggs are 'watered down' and are less likely to be completely representative of how many eggs and therefore worms are present in an animal.

What we can learn from the results?

The ovacyte machine can tell us exactly which eggs and therefore worms or coccidia are present, what the burden is and therefore if they need treating and what product would be the most effective. The sooner worm issues are identified the less production losses they will lead to. Consistent WECs allow you to check if drenching is required, if worms are on the rise or decreasing and allow targeted timing of dosing; all of which save money, time and worm resistance. Finally. It can be used to test the effectiveness of your wormers by doing a Worm Egg Reduction Test with two separate samples a couple weeks apart to see what percent of worms have been removed.



When the Ovacyte machine is not enough

The Ovacyte machine is unable to confirm the presence of viruses like rotavirus, bacteria like E. Coli or cryptosporidium; for this we can use scour snap tests. The Ovacyte machine is also unable to differentiate coccidia species, the only time this is an issue is if there are low numbers of coccidia, no other issues and scour is still present; in this case a sample needs to be sent off to be speciated. Similarly, it cannot identify Haemonchus or "barbers pole" worms which are responsible for anaemia but high numbers of Trichostrongyles are suggestive of barbers pole but to be sure this can again be sent off for speciation.

Mastitis Bacteriology and Milk Sampling

By Clodagh Tanner
MVB MRCVS



Why do we want to take milk samples?

By collecting milk samples produced by cows suffering with mastitis or from cows identified as having high Somatic Cell Counts (SCC), it enables us to identify which pathogens are to blame in order to select the most effective treatment and avoid antibiotic resistance. The bacteria identified will indicate if it is an environmental or contagious infection, to help guide us on which control measures can be implemented on the farm to reduce the incidence of disease. With more milk contracts having tighter rules on which categories of antibiotics can be used, selecting appropriately has never been more important.

Why do we need to collect milk samples aseptically?

To get an accurate diagnosis of bacteria and avoid:

- Contamination of the sample
- Misleading results
- Wasting time
- Wasting money

Items needed to take a sterile milk sample are:

- Sterile sample pot
- Marker Pen
- Clean disposable gloves
- Teat disinfectant
- Disposable paper towel
- Cotton wool
- Surgical spirit

How to collect a sample

 <p>1</p> <p>Put clean gloves on.</p> <p>Clean teats and udder with warm water and dry thoroughly. Any bits of dirt should be removed.</p>	 <p>2</p> <p>Pre-dip or disinfect teats with rapid-action disinfectant, leave for 30 seconds and wipe dry.</p>	 <p>3</p> <p>Wipe teats with cotton wool soaked in surgical spirit.</p> <p>Strip the teat five times and wipe again with surgical spirit.</p>
 <p>Do not touch the teats with dirty hands after this stage; if any dirt is splashed onto the udder, repeat the above steps before taking a sample.</p>	 <p>4</p> <p>Strip the teat four times horizontally into the sterile pot – the pot does not need to be filled.</p>	 <p>5</p> <p>Put the lid on straight away and label with cow ID, quarter and date.</p>

For further information on mastitis, QuarterPRO and the Mastitis Control Plan, visit ahdb.org.uk/mastitis

Top Tips:

- The teat end needs to be spotless!
- The sample tube should be held at an angle under the teats so that material cannot fall into the opening.
- Nothing should be allowed to come in contact with the mouth of the tube.
- Use the Californian Mastitis Test (CMT) paddle to identify the quarter in a high SCC cow.
- If you are sampling from all quarters, disinfect starting at the teats furthest away from you, moving to the teats closest to you. Two or three squirts of milk from each quarter should be collected, starting with the closest and working toward the ones farthest away.
- Don't sample a cow for culture and sensitivity if she has been treated with antibiotics in the previous four weeks.
- Milk samples can be frozen and stored for up to four months without any negative effect on most major mastitis pathogens.

Mastering Medicines Course



Tuesday 3rd June 2025

**Penbode kiosk, Holsworthy Market, EX22 7FA. 2pm start.
£30pp + VAT**

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**

Holsworthy Vintage Rally



We're excited to announce that Penbode Farm Vets is sponsoring this year's Holsworthy Vintage Rally on the 28th and 29th of June at the Killatree showground!

Some of our team, including our friendly farm vet Oli, will be there showcasing their classic vehicles.

If you are at the event pop over and say hello.

First Aid for Feet Course



On **Thursday 22nd May 2025** Stratton farm vet Dan Forrester and Dave Rowe from Total Hoof Care will be running a first aid for feet one day course.

We will be covering the following:

- When to trim
- Identifying lame cows/mobility scoring
- Examination of the foot
- Identification of major causes of lameness
- Equipment and restraint
- Preventative trimming and the 5-step method
- Treatment of different lesions
- Application of blocks

After attending the course, candidates will be confident in identifying and dealing with common on farm foot problems.

The cost of the course is £150pp (ex VAT). Funding may be available, for more details please speak to Jay.

For more details or to book your space, please email jay.waylen@penbodevets.co.uk or call your local branch.

Vaccines Reminder

At all times of year but especially as the weather warms up, please remember to bring suitable containers for collecting vaccines to ensure they stay at the correct temperatures.

Vaccines are available for pre-order for the next working day.

