



Farm News

April 2016

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Bluetongue update—Be Vigilant

As you may have heard, the Bluetongue virus is currently circulating in France with 220 outbreaks reported so far. APHA has warned that there is a 60-80% chance of the disease travelling across to the south and south east of the UK by the end of summer 2016 with the most likely source of infection being midges blown across from France into southern England.

Signs to look out for in sheep and goats:

- Eye and nasal discharge
- Swelling of the head and neck
- Mouth ulcerations
- Drooling
- Lethargy
- Lameness
- Rarely there may be some discolouration and swelling of the tongue (bluetongue)

Please give your local branch a call if concerned or to discuss prevention strategies. Currently, the use of insecticides and risk-based movements (not importing sheep or attending shows in higher risk areas) are our main prevention tools, however the BTV-8 vaccine may become available if there is enough demand.

Bluetongue is a notifiable disease. Be vigilant and report any suspicious signs to your local branch or APHA office.



!! Compulsory Dog Microchipping Reminder!!

From 6th April 2016, **ALL** dogs in England must be microchipped and registered on an authorised database by law.

Microchipping is available at all of our Penbode Pet branches or alternatively a farm vet can microchip your farm dogs whilst out on farm. Please book an appointment with your local branch before the regulations come into force in early April.



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Reducing the risks of TB transmission at Pasture

The rollout of the badger culls into the North Cornwall/Devon area is looking highly likely this year and as part of this we wish to make all farmers aware of the biosecurity risks posed by wildlife and what practical measures are available to help protect your herd against TB.

Bovine TB (tuberculosis) is a chronic, infectious disease. It is mainly, but not exclusively, a respiratory disease caught by breathing in droplets of mucus containing *M bovis*, for example through close contact with infected cattle and wildlife. Infection is also possible through other routes, for example eating feed contaminated with sputum, milk, urine, faeces or pus from infectious animals.



Infected badger urine is a highly contagious source of TB and grazing of latrines by cattle are very high risk. 1ml of badger urine can contain up to 300,000 Colony Forming Units (CFU) of TB bacterium. As little as 1 CFU has been shown to cause the development of TB in calves, so 1ml of urine could theoretically infect all cattle in Cornwall and Devon! While it may not be possible to stop badgers gaining access to your pasture, it is recommended that you restrict cattle access to high risk areas such as badger setts and latrines.

Transmission of TB at pasture may occur via direct contact with badgers or indirect contact with material contaminated by badger excretions. Supplementary feeding at pasture can significantly increase the likelihood of cattle to badger contact. Raising feed troughs, water troughs and mineral licks to a minimum of 90cm high will minimise badger access. Mineral boluses may be a better alternative in areas of high badger activity.

The importance of these measures will vary between herds and local factors specific to your farm so consider speaking to your Penbode Farm vet to ensure that the right measures are put in place for your herd.

www.tbhub.co.uk is a great source of information on improving biosecurity to help protect your herd from bovine TB. It may not be practical to apply all of the measures described on the website, but taking action to limit opportunities for disease transmission will help to protect your own farm and other farms.



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