



Dear Farmer,

Welcome to the Spring edition of our newsletter – I say spring but as I write this it feels anything but spring-like!

With the ongoing wet weather we have been seeing plenty of problems with young lambs and calves. Coupled with the very good grass season we had last year, we have had problems with multiple births and oversized calves. A timely reminder of the effect the weather can have! If it's any consolation there doesn't seem to be anyone immune to these issues. Hopefully we can look forward to a dry summer and the fact that those animals which do make it to sale should make a good price, if only for rarity value!

In this issue we have some information on the procedures you are likely to perform on farm and how to stay on the right side of the legal aspect. There have also been some changes to the Red Tractor Scheme. The most "veterinary" aspect being the new requirement to reduce antibiotic usage, or to highlight areas on the farm where you are working to do so. This is becoming an ever increasingly important issue and is vital to the marketability of our beef and lamb that we are seen to be proactive in this. If you would like help with health planning to fulfil this requirement please let us know.

**Ashley**

## ON FARM SURGICAL PROCEDURES

Stock-keepers should be competent in a wide range of animal health and welfare skills. Guidelines for some of the surgical procedures that you may need to do on farm are listed below for your information.

**Tail Docking Lambs;** By law: tail docking by application of rubber rings may be carried out in the first week of life by an experienced shepherd. Tail docking should not be done in the first 24 hours of life. Tails must be long enough to cover the vulva in females and to cover the anus in males.

**Castrating Lambs;** By law: castration by application of rubber rings may be carried out in the first week of life by an experienced shepherd over the age of 17. Castration should not be done in the first 24 hours of life. A rubber ring should be applied to the neck of the scrotum and both testes must be distal to the ring after application.

**Disbudding/Dehorning Calves;** By law: disbudding/dehorning can be undertaken by trained and competent stockpersons on calves up to 2 months of age, after which it should be performed by a veterinary surgeon. Local anesthesia must be used, no matter how this is done.

**Castrating Calves;** By law: castration by application of a rubber ring applied to the neck of the scrotum may take place in calves up to 7 days of age by a trained and competent stockperson. The burdizzo method can be undertaken by trained and competent stockpersons in calves up to 2 months of age without the use of anaesthetic. In older calves, the procedure must be performed by a veterinary surgeon.

**Castrating Piglets;** By law: castration should take place by a trained stockperson before 7 days of age. After this age castration ideally should take place at 1-2 weeks of age, by a veterinary surgeon, ideally at the practice where general anaesthesia is available if needed. At the very latest, piglets should be castrated before they reach 2 months of age.

Don't forget.....

- Vaccinate lambs to prevent Pasteurella and Clostridial Disease
- Consider lung worm vaccination for calves being turned out to first grazing
  - Watch out for scouring lambs and calves and get advice about treatment
  - Check bulls before needed for working, consider veterinary MOTs and extra feed
- Plan cow vaccines - BVD, IBR etc.
  - FEC for early born lambs
- Check NADIS for Nematodirus forecast

# INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE RED TRACTOR ASSURANCE SCHEME

Many of our farm clients are now members of the Beef and Lamb Red Tractor Assurance Scheme. The scheme went through a full review in October last year and several new standards were added to the scheme. The new Beef and Lamb Standards can be seen online at:

<https://assurance.redtractor.org.uk/standards>

## How do we fit into the scheme?

Amongst all the other standards there are a few standards that require veterinary involvement.

Members should already have a Health Plan in place for their herd and/or flock, plans should be reviewed annually at a herd or flock health and performance review. It is recommended that an annual livestock health and performance review is undertaken by a vet. A vet will review health records and data, inspect livestock and identify key issues and make recommendations to improve identified issues. New routines must be written into health plans.

Members whose livestock have been given prescription medicines are required to show evidence that a vet has visited the farm in the last twelve months. During this visit we must have seen livestock under our care and discuss and review records relating to the farms purchase and use of medicines and antibiotics.

Members are also required to keep accurate records for all medicines purchased. This includes records of purchasing, administration and compliance of withdrawal periods. For medicines that are purchased from us, our monthly invoices provide members with information to help keep these records accurate.

If you are a member of the Beef and Lamb Red Tractor Assurance Scheme and haven't already done so, contact us to arrange a suitable time for one of our vets to visit so we can help you comply with the scheme's standards. We strongly recommend members look at the new standards and undergo reviews before they receive a phone call from the assessor, as often this is at short notice.

**REMINDER:** Farm dogs are required to be wormed regularly, in accordance with the wormer's manufacturer's recommendations. Evidence of this will be required at your inspection.



## JOINT ILL

Joint ill (Infectious polyarthritis) is a common cause of lameness in young lambs and calves that is caused by a bacterial infection. Usually the route of infection is through the navel, tail or castration wounds. The gut and upper respiratory tract are now thought to be significant routes of infection, which are invaded by pathogenic bacteria from a contaminated environment and travel via the bloodstream causing localised build-up of bacteria in the joints.

Affected joints are swollen, hot, and painful. Infection causes considerable muscle wastage and can result in sudden death. Joint ill can be treated successfully if the disease is diagnosed early. As Joint-ill is caused by bacteria, treatment with high doses of antibiotics is recommended along with an anti-inflammatory injection.

### Prevention is better than cure:

Every effort must be taken to reduce the risk of bacteraemia by ensuring timely adequate passive antibody transfer and reducing environmental bacterial challenge.

- Reduce environmental bacterial challenge by maintaining good hygiene.
- Newborns must ingest sufficient colostrum during the first 6 hours of life.
- Appropriate navel treatments to be used as soon as possible after birth.



Farms that have a problem with joint-ill during lambing or calving time should have their lambing or calving management reviewed and improved as part of the overall Health Plans. Please speak to one of our vets if you wish to discuss this matter further.

## Practice Facilities

Appointment System  
Parking  
24 Hour Emergency Service  
Modern Surgical Facilities  
Nurse Clinics  
In-House Laboratory  
Digital X Ray Machine  
Endoscopy  
Pet Care Plans

## BOVEY TRACEY SURGERY

Mill House, Station Road,  
Bovey Tracey, Newton  
Abbot, TQ13 9AL  
TELEPHONE ; 01626  
833023

## MORETONHAMPSTEAD SURGERY

31 Court Street,  
Moretonhampstead,  
Newton Abbot, TQ13 8LG  
TELEPHONE ; 01647  
440441

## CHRISTOW SURGERY

Old Mines Road, Christow,  
Exeter, EX6 7NS  
For appointments/repeat  
prescriptions etc.  
TELEPHONE; 01626 833023

## FOR OUT OF HOUR EMERGENCIES PLEASE

TELEPHONE : 01647  
440441

The logo for Outback Engineering, featuring a stylized bull's head inside a gear.

**OUTBACK**  
ENGINEERING

Servicing & Repairs  
Welding & Fabricating  
Thorough Examinations  
Heavy Plant & Agricultural

Henry Harvey  
OFFICE - 01626437511  
CALL OUT/BREAKDOWN - 07495139545

Fully equipped vehicle for on-site repairs.

The logo for BITA (British In-Plant & Industrial Trades Association), featuring a circular emblem with a gear and the text 'BITA Lifting, Tracked & Standard'.A small circular logo at the bottom left of the advertisement.