

South Wales Farm Vets

Ty Newydd

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Our Team



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Living And Working In Your Community

August 2021

Hello and welcome to the August Newsletter.

Last month, the weather was a mixed blessing – not the best in full waterproofs at 30°, but still good to have it dry. I hope you all managed to get your hay etc done. There are murmurings of another heatwave later this month – we'll see! It is particularly tough for our animals when it doesn't cool down overnight, no opportunity to cool down at all. This has seen some animals struggling, loosing condition as grazing time has been reduced and with some bulls out with cows not wanting to work. We have seen some original uses of hosepipes and ingenious ways of cooling cows in collecting yards!

Normally at this time of year we would be looking forward to welcoming you to our stand at the Vale Show. Hopefully, this will go ahead next year. Far more exciting this month – Morgan is getting married on 7th August, to one of our dairy clients, another match made through work, bit of an occupational hazard! We will share some photos with you next month.

After the success of the ram vasectomy day last month, we are having a ram fertility testing day on 23rd August. Again, it is to be held here at Tynewydd Farm, and it will be on a first come first serve basis. If you are interested, phone and book your appointment.

Let's hope the rest of the summer is good, hope your harvesting goes well.

Mary

Orf (Contagious pustular dermatitis)

This year has seen a lot of farmers asking us how to deal with orf as outbreaks have occurred in numerous flocks.

Orf, caused by a pox virus, mainly affects sheep and goats though it can infect people. Typical symptoms are scabby lesions around the mouth and nostrils of lambs, teats of nursing ewes or sometimes the lower legs above the coronary band (just above the hoof). Orf can be painful causing reduced sucking if either the lamb's mouths or ewe's udders are affected, causing reduced growth rates.



Pet lambs are often more widely and severely affected, likely due to increased trauma when feeding and spread via shared feeding equipment. The virus can survive off the sheep, if protected from the elements such as in buildings, for a number of years. However it will not survive a winter outside.

The resilience of the virus means once a flock is infected the disease will flare up occasionally, even in some cases following long periods without signs. This unpredictability is often what catches people out and can make vaccination seem unnecessary.



Sian Fuller



Rachel Davies



Sian Lloyd



Helen Dando



Tracey Huntley

Orf facts

- Orf is a common virus infection that causes scabby lesions around the mouth, nostrils and teats of sheep
- Infection normally resolves in 4-6 weeks without intervention. However infection in lambs can affect growth rates
- Previous infection with orf reduces the severity and duration of subsequent infection
- Orf infection requires some pre-existing damage to the skin
- Orf virus can survive many years if protected from adverse environmental conditions
- Lambs born to vaccinated ewes are not immune to infection
- If a lamb has orf there's an 82% chance it's mother had orf on her teats – 14% of these are likely to develop mastitis



Orf at coronary band with bacterial infection

Anything that can break the skin allows orf to establish, so rough food or pasture (often thistles and nettles or stubble grazing) can predispose to infection. Initial stages of the disease are rarely noticed being small blisters or lumps however these develop into scabs which progress to large proliferative structures which can bleed profusely if traumatised. The condition normally resolves inside 6 weeks without intervention, however if secondary bacterial infection occurs the disease can be much more severe and prolonged.

As orf is a virus, treatment is largely unsuccessful. If there is secondary bacterial infection some benefit is seen with topical oxytetracycline spray and injectable long-acting antibiotics. Care should be taken to avoid human infection when handling infected sheep, gloves and protective clothing should be worn.

Cost of orf – a trial found

- Lambs infected with orf weighed 2.2 kg less than uninfected counterparts
- Ewe costs ranged from £1.06-£14.03 depending on enterprise, case severity, effect on lamb growth and replacement ewe costs

A vaccine 'Scabivax' is available to protect against orf. It is a live vaccine which means it causes a small amount of the disease. Subsequently the vaccine should only be used in flocks previously diagnosed with orf and care should be taken to avoid accidental human infection. Unlike most vaccines scabivax is not given by injection but instead by scratching the skin with an applicator that allows the liquid into the damaged skin. For this reason hygienic and correct application is important to prevent bacteria getting in.

Lambs can be vaccinated from 1 day old meaning scratching them when turning out after lambing is ideal. Lambs should not be vaccinated and kept inside as any scabs that drop off will stay in the environment leading to a large reservoir of infection in the shed. Ewes can be vaccinated ahead of lambing but should be done at least 7 weeks before the start of lambing. Vaccinating ewes does not protect the lambs. For further information on the use of Scabivax and it's suitability for your farm please contact the practice.

Ram Fertility Day

Reduced price ram fertility tests at the practice on 23/8/21
 £30 per ram for physical examination and semen evaluation
 Suitable for rams used in single sire groups or synchronisation protocols
 Ring the practice to book your time slot—first come first serve basis



Office opening hours

Monday – Friday
8.30am - 5.30pm

Emergency out of hours service

Weeknights 5.30pm - 8.30am
Saturday & Sunday all day