

# White Lodge Farm Clinic

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## Welcome to our Spring Newsletter!

Welcome to the Spring edition of our newsletter. Our vets have been kept busy recently with lambing, calving and kidding, and it's just starting to look more spring like seeing the young in the fields with the sun on their backs!

After hoping we were heading back to normality at our last newsletter, we've again had to adapt back to COVID-19 lockdown measures, and thank you again to all of our clients to being so understanding with us. Hopefully it won't be too long before we are able to return to normality for good!

In staff news, Matteo has left us to pursue his interest in equine stud medicine, and Hannah May Martin BVM BVS MRCVS started with us in March. Hannah qualified from Nottingham University in 2019, and has been in mixed practice (with a focus on farm animals) in Oxfordshire since qualifying.

Hannah will be working mainly within our Farm and Equine practice, and we're really excited to have welcomed her to the team.

Hannah has moved down with her horse, and is a keen eventer in her spare time, as well as enjoying netball and rugby.



## NEW HYDRATION PRODUCT FOR SCOURING CALVES!

Continuing milk feeding during calf scour is very important to maintain calf strength and aid recovery. However, Hydrafast is much more effective than milk at rehydrating the calf and preventing metabolic acidosis, keeping the calf bright.

At first signs of scour feed 2 litres of prepared Hydrafast solution twice daily and continue for at least 2 days.

Also continue milk feeding the calf or allow calf to suckle as normal if possible. Ongoing nutrition from milk is important for the calf's recovery. If milk feeding, ensure a 3-hour gap between Hydrafast and milk feeding.

Administer Hydrafast orally, preferably using a feeding bottle with teat. Alternatively, bucket or tube feeding can be used.

## SHEEP SCAB!

There seems to have been a significant rise in cases of sheep scab in the surrounding areas within the past few months.

- Scab is spread by contact with live mites - this can either be sheep to sheep or via fencing/clothing/transport/shearing equipment etc. (The mites can survive about 17 days off the sheep)
- Sheep can take 40-50 days to develop clinical signs (itching, wool loss)
- The mild itching/restlessness can quickly develop into severe itching, with large areas of baldness/wounds and significant loss of condition
- Really badly affected sheep can develop pneumonia or hypothermia, and can have seizures, especially if moved

The mites cannot be seen by the naked eye (unlike lice), and a diagnosis by a vet under a microscope is important so that the correct treatment options and management of the whole flock can be discussed with us. Incorrect treatment can lead to increasing resistance to drugs of both sheep scab mites and worms, as well as a failure of curing the itchy animals!

The National Sheep Association are running a project on sheep scab this year and along with the Exmoor Hill Farming Network we will be part of this sampling a number of our farms, so watch this space!





## FOCUS ON: REDWATER IN CATTLE

Babesiosis ("Redwater") is a disease caused by a single cell (protozoan) parasite passed to cattle by ticks (*I. ricinus*), and is rare in most of the country except known

tick areas (such as Exmoor!). We normally start seeing Redwater cases around April/May, as the ticks start to become more active.

The parasite is passed to the cattle via a tick bite, and invades red blood cells, causing them to rupture. Affected cattle show signs about two weeks after being infected.

### Clinical signs

- Diarrhoea for 2-3 days, followed by constipation
- Fever
- Increased heart and respiratory rate
- Off food
- Muscle tremors
- Anaemia
- Off legs
- Red urine due to haemoglobin in the urine after blood cells have been ruptured
- Can cause abortion in pregnant animals
- Can cause death in severe cases

### Diagnosis and Treatment

Redwater is diagnosed by clinical signs, a recent history (normally of cattle being moved), and the

parasite can sometimes be seen on blood samples under a microscope.

Although mildly affected animals may recover without treatment, badly affected animals will need veterinary intervention.

### Prevention

Tick control and identification of risk areas is key to controlling this disease.

Ticks have specific environmental requirements of high humidity (> 80%). Ticks can be found mainly in woodland, rough hill grazing, and poorly-drained low-lying land. Well-maintained permanent pasture seldom provides adequate conditions for ticks, but unimproved undergrazed pastures and land adjacent to hedges may harbour tick populations.

Pour-ons can be used to protect cattle from ticks, and various products are available for this.

There is also a preventative treatment (Imidocarb) that will prevent clinical disease for 4 weeks. This can be useful if naïve cattle are going to be grazed on pasture that is known to be infested with infected ticks.

### Vaccine

There is a vaccine which can be imported under special licence in certain cases.

## GOAT CAESAREAN!

Vet Carly had a busy Sunday morning recently with a pygmy goat had that been struggling to kid since the middle of the night. As pygmy goats are so small, it's very difficult to have a good feel inside, and reposition kids if needed. However it was clear that this goat had a single kid that was too big to fit out naturally, so a caesarean was recommended.

Goats are very susceptible to the toxic effects of local anaesthetic, and as this was such a small goat, a general anaesthetic at the small animal clinic was decided to be the best option!

Unfortunately as expected the kid was dead, but the nanny goat is doing very well at the time of writing, and is hopefully feeling very privileged to have been allowed into the small animal clinic!

