



OCTOBER 2025

Bluetongue Update

As we write this part of Monmouthshire has been put into a restriction zone due to cases of Bluetongue occurring in the area. The zone may change, but as it stands the rules are that a person may not move any animal or germinal product on to or off premises in the zone except in the accordance with a licence issued by a veterinary inspector or by an inspector or officer of the Welsh Ministers acting under the instructions of a veterinary inspector.

Bluetongue susceptible animals, which show no signs of clinical illness will be permitted to move to and from the TCZ in Wales in accordance with a licence. Any holding that is partially within the TCZ is treated as if the whole holding falls within the TCZ. Animal movements within the holding will be allowed without any conditions, but movements off the holding will be subject to the licence. Animals will be able to move to slaughter and to England on a licence and vaccinated animals will be able to move to other parts of Wales. For full details go to <https://www.gov.wales/bluetongue-virus-temporary-control-zone-tcz-guidance-animal-movements-html>

Please call us to order vaccine and remember to upload details of your vaccinated animals

Acorn Poisoning

This year is described as a 'mast year' with a high acorn crop predicted, so awareness is relevant as the impact in individual herds and flocks can be significant with high mortality. Cases are more likely following stormy weather resulting in high numbers of acorns falling on the ground in a short space of time. Clinical signs can be seen 3-7 days after ingestion of green acorns in autumn and include anorexia, depression, excess drinking and urination, blood in the urine, jaundice, and constipation followed by diarrhoea. Feed restriction before exposure plays a crucial role, enhancing susceptibility. Mortality as high as 70% may be seen. Malformed calves and abortions have been reported in cows that consume acorns during the second trimester of pregnancy.

Consumption of a pelleted ration supplement (1 kg/head per day) containing 10%–15% calcium hydroxide plus access to more palatable feeds may be used as a preventive measure if exposure to acorns or oak leaves cannot be avoided. Removal of fallen acorns from the grazing area may also be helpful. We can also supply activated charcoal in a liquid form which can be helpful early in the course for disease. Fluid therapy and rumen tonics can help in some cases, but those which suffer severe kidney damage may not survive.



Usk Show



We had a fantastic day at Usk Show. It was really lovely to welcome so many of our clients to the marquee, even if it did get a bit cosy during the rainstorms! The winner of the ADGC Draw was Mr Moulton, and congratulations to all the raffle prize winners. We managed to raise another £347.76 for Alzheimer's to add to our total for this year.

Store Cattle Purchases

We are amid the weaned calf sale season. The nature of the trade already predisposes the animals to rapid spread of viruses including BVD and IBR, but there are other diseases to consider as well.

Signs of **pneumonia** such as nasal discharge, inappetence, and fever can occur up to 2-3 weeks after purchase in these stressed and therefore immunocompromised animals. Some farms will implement a vaccination programme soon after arrival to prevent outbreaks over the winter. Vaccines are available to prevent IBR, Histophilus, Pasteurella and Mycoplasma, all of which are likely to be important in this age of cattle. Rapid isolation of animals showing clinical signs of pneumonia, may help to prevent an outbreak.

Persistently infected BVD animals may appear healthy but shed the virus constantly, therefore testing all incoming cattle or purchasing from BVD-accredited herds can protect farms from this disease

Bluetongue will also be on the mind of many farmers, as we have seen the first cases in Wales. Signs to look out for include redness, ulceration and crusting of the nose, watery eyes, teat lesions, mouth ulcers and redness around the hoof. Purchasing vaccinated animals, will reduce the risk of this disease being brought in, as well as vaccinating existing stock on the farm.

Digital dermatitis is another common disease that comes in with purchased cattle. It is, caused by Treponeme anaerobic bacteria which thrive in mucky, wet environments and are highly contagious among housed animals, particularly if overstocked. Painful lesions can be spotted anywhere on the foot, but especially at coronary band where the hoof meets the hair.

Parasites are another area to consider. Quarantine treatments should be given before turnout on to pasture to reduce the risk of resistant parasites becoming established on your farm.

Quarantine of new stock for at least 3 weeks to minimise disease spread and ensure all animals are healthy before mixing. Buying from as few sources as possible can also reduce the introduction of different diseases as well as buying from reliable sources.

Preparation for Tupping

Some farms will already be tupping their sheep, there is still time for the later lambing flocks to prepare. Effective preparation of ewes and rams for tupping is essential to ensure high conception rates and a productive lambing season. Ideally, preparation should begin at least 6–8 weeks before the planned tupping date, allowing time to correct any health or nutritional issues.

Rams should undergo a full pre-breeding soundness check, often referred to as the "5 Ts": teeth, toes, testicles, tone and treat. Teeth should be checked for damage or wear that could affect eating. Feet should be sound and free of lameness, and hooves trimmed if necessary. Testicles should be firm, symmetrical, and free of lumps, with a scrotal circumference of at least 34 cm for mature rams. Body condition score (BCS) should be around 3.5 to 4 to ensure stamina through the tupping period. Rams should also be tested and treated for external and internal parasites.

Ewes should be in good health and body condition. A BCS of 3 to 3.5 is ideal for lowland breeds. Thin ewes may struggle to conceive, while overfat ewes risk metabolic issues during pregnancy. Ewes should be checked for lameness, mastitis, dental issues, and any reproductive tract abnormalities. Vaccinations should be up to date, especially against clostridial diseases and enzootic abortion. Trace elements such as selenium, cobalt, and iodine should be checked where deficiencies are common.

Flushing, the practice of increasing feed to improve ovulation rates, may benefit thinner ewes or those on poorer pasture.

There is Farming Connect funding available in Wales to fund any of the above work. Even if you have had 2 claims, you may be eligible for a third due to the change in rules.

Upcoming Meetings

Thursday 16th October 7pm - Feeding the Flock

Monmouthshire Livestock Market, NP15 2BH

Please phone the office on 01873 840167 to book.

Medicine Collection Boxes

We have medicine collection boxes in 3 sites to help save you time and fuel travelling to the practice.

**GLANGRWYNEY/
CRICKHOWELL**

NP8 1EF

W3W:

princely.unscrew.corrosive

MONKSWOOD/USK

NP15 1PW

W3W:

selling.teardrop.allergy

**LLANISHEN/
DEVAUDEN**

NP16 6NW

W3W:

diamonds.teams.lyrics

If you would like to take advantage of this service, please let us know when you order your medication.

Joke of the Month

**WHAT DO YOU CALL A
COW THAT HAS JUST
GIVEN BIRTH?**

DE-CALF-INATED

