



alnorthumbria
farm vets

Newsletter

April 2026

Spring has sprung with lots of new life, and it is lovely to see fields filling with new lambs. As always hygiene, colostrum and navel dipping ideally with an iodine-phenol combination or NoBacz Navel is the best advice to keep your calves and lambs healthy this spring. We can blood test calves in house as a marker of colostrum provision. As the season progresses keep an eye on the latest SCOPS forecast for nematodirus hatching.

Watery Mouth Prevention

Watery Mouth is caused by an overgrowth of bacteria (*E. coli*) in the intestines of newborn lambs.

The bacteria go onto produce toxins causing clinical signs such as dullness, excessive salivation, refusal to suck, hypothermia, dehydration and ultimately death. Watery Mouth is more commonly seen in triplet lambs, those with low birth weights, lambs born to thin ewes with inadequate colostrum or lambs born into a dirty environment. Preventative measures for watery mouth are key:

- Sufficient intake of good quality of colostrum
- Good hygiene in lambing pens
- Dry bedding

Historically, antibiotics were used for every lamb before cases arose to prevent watery mouth, and this is known as prophylactic antibiotic use. However, due to historical overuse of antibiotics and current antibiotic stewardship they are no longer recommended to be given to every lamb before cases of watery mouth have arisen. Current prevention methods focus on improvements on the areas mentioned above. Improvements in ewe nutrition can really improve colostrum quality, as well as improving hygiene at lambing time will make an impact. There are some products on the market that encourage suckling in lambs and give an energy boost, but the appropriate volume of good quality colostrum is still essential.

Arkguard Lamb is a new product on the market which is designed as a preventative measure for watery mouth. It is made up of IgY antibodies specific to multiple common *E. coli* strains associated with Watery Mouth. It should be given to at risk lambs as soon as possible after birth, alongside good quality colostrum with the aim to reduce the risk of developing watery mouth. The antibodies will remain within the lambs gut and bind to the *E. coli* bacteria reducing the risk of developing watery mouth. This cannot be given as a treatment but is designed as a preventative aid.

We would be interested to hear of clients feedback with this new product, if you would like to try Arkguard or have issues with Watery Mouth please contact us to discuss further with one of our vets.



Bluetongue Webinar

On the 7th April 2026 at 5pm NBA and IAAS are hosting a webinar with a bluetongue update with a focus on information for farmers in the North East of England and South East of Scotland.

We are encouraging anyone who is available to register to join using the link or QR code:

<https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/b0b2cf9f-818d-49a0-9269-df4a497198fd@749dd3b3-46d7-40d7-a042-73a523576e14>



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CVS Farm Quality Improvement Programmes

Our farm programmes focus on preventative health, strengthening herd and flock resilience and delivering tailored, proactive care. By prioritising robust health planning and improved welfare, we help farmers reduce disease risk, optimise productivity and minimise antibiotic use - supporting sustainable, responsible livestock management for long-term resilience and industry-wide wellbeing and success

Our Programmes are:

- **Improving testing and treatment of calf respiratory disease:** Respiratory disease remains a major challenge in youngstock, often triggered by stress. Through increased use of diagnostic testing, we can identify the specific causes present on each farm. This allows us to create tailored prevention plans, particularly refining vaccination schemes as well as improving ventilation and strengthening calf immunity, rather than relying on reactive treatment. Diagnostic testing has increased significantly in the past year, helping make preventive herd health planning part of everyday practice.
- **Improving Mastitis decision making through rapid diagnostics:** Mastitis is a common, costly and painful condition in dairy cows. With the introduction of rapid in house testing, results are now available within 24 hours, allowing more informed treatment decisions. This means cows receive the right care at the right time, while encouraging the use of anti-inflammatories first while awaiting results. Data shows that a significant proportion of cases do not require antibiotics, by targeting use protects the long-term effectiveness of high priority antibiotics.
- **Strengthening sustainable parasite control through evidence based sheep faecal egg counting:** Parasites continue to impact sheep health and productivity, and overuse of wormers is leading to increasing resistance. By promoting faecal egg counting, we can assess parasite burdens accurately and only treat when necessary. Uptake of testing has increased threefold, enabling more targeted treatment plans and helping preserve the effectiveness of existing worming products. This approach supports healthier flocks and more sustainable parasite control.
- **Looking ahead: Sheep lameness initiative 2025-26:** A new initiative is focusing on reducing lameness in sheep through structured on-farm assessments and tailored action plans. By combining practical management changes with targeted treatment, the aim is to significantly improve flock welfare and reduce reliance on antibiotics prescribed remotely.



Don't Forget to Use!

- **Clostridial vaccinations** - Heptavac P (or Covexin / Bravoxin for certain farms) in ewes for boosters 4-6wks prelambling; Ovivac P in lambs for clostridial disease and pasteurilla pneumonia
- **Stalosan** disinfectant / drying agent for lambing / calving pens (organic version available).
- **Lice Treatments** - Spotinor - for lice problems in housed cattle. Crovect or Dysect for lice problems in sheep, and ticks in areas known to have Tick Borne Fever. These will not treat sheep scab so if concerned contact us.
- **Calf scour vaccination** - Rotavec Corona/Fencovis for late spring calving cows to protect calves from scour (3-12w pre-calving).
- **Bovela and Spirovac** - Cattle vaccinations for BVD and leptospirosis respectively, pre-turnout.
- **Ewe Boost** - Treatment and support for ewes with twin lamb disease.
- **Baycox** - For treatment of coccidiosis.