



alnorthumbria
farm vets

Newsletter

August 2026

Many of our clients will have their minds on hay, silage and harvesting but there are a few stock-related tasks to mention.

The recent weather has predisposed us for flies - keep on top of **fly product** administration in sheep to prevent blowfly strike and in cattle to help prevent summer mastitis. As we look ahead to the breeding season it is really important to get your **Enzovax/ Toxovax** orders in. For cattle, the preparation for the **pneumonia** season is also on our minds; for injectable vaccine users, August is the time to be getting the first dose of vaccine in so that the 2nd dose can be given 3-4wks later, which should be completed at least 2 weeks before housing.

Often worming for **lungworm** is given at the same time as one of these doses on farms known to be at risk, but remember never to worm cattle at the same time as giving Huskvac (lungworm vaccine) as the wormer will kill off the live vaccine.



Advice for Warm Weather

If the weather continues as it has been in July into August there are a few extra things that we should be watching for in livestock and farm dogs.



Heatstroke is a sometimes fatal condition that can occur when dogs overheat. **Dogs** cool down by panting, but in extremely hot weather they are sometimes unable to do so. Signs of heatstroke in dogs include excessive drooling, lack of balance or coordination, lethargy and vomiting. If you suspect that your dog has heat stroke move it to a shaded cool area with access to water and call your vet. You can dampen the fur with cool water but don't cover them with damp towels as this can lock the heat in. Another thing to watch for is **ulcers** on paw pads due to extremely hot ground e.g. concrete yards and sheep pens. Please check your dogs paws regularly as working dogs may not notice when they are focused on a job.

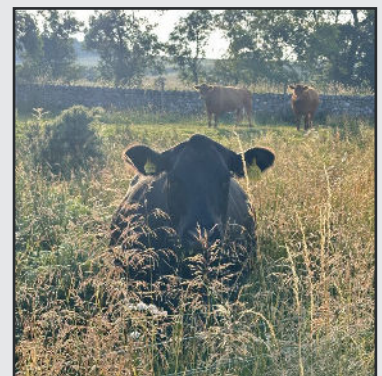
Heat stress makes **livestock** more reluctant to eat. This reduced food intake can affect fertility and growth rates. Heat stress can be especially harmful to high yielding dairy cattle due to their heightened metabolism, causing milk production to drop. Again, providing shade can help. Make sure housed animals are well ventilated, reduce stocking density if possible. Avoid moving animals if temperatures reach 30°C.

The warm weather dries out forage this can make **poisonous plants** more palatable than usual, keep an eye out for signs of poisoning and contact your vet if you suspect it.

Poisonous plant consumption (St. John's Wort, buckwheat, or certain clovers) as well as light skinned livestock are more prone to **sunburn (photosensitisation)**, so be mindful of signs of lesions on livestock.

Over this time water consumption by livestock can increase by up to 70%. Please make sure that fresh water is available at all times and be aware of the extra demand at this time of the year. Water deprivation can result in reduced feed intake, lethargy and death. Provision of shade can help reduce the water demands.

Blowfly Strike: To prevent strike take care with fleece management and worm control to prevent dirty back ends, as well as using preventative pour-ons as needed. The NADIS forecast alert is currently at **high risk** for Northumberland at time of writing. Make sure to check your stock daily for any signs.



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Haemonchus contortus-Barbers Pole Worm

We have seen an increasing number of cases of *Haemonchus contortus* (Barbers Pole worm) over the past month.

This worm is a blood sucking round worm that lives in the abomasum (stomach) with an adult being able to remove 0.05ml of blood per day. Even a small burden of worms can have an effect and they reproduce quickly (female produce large numbers of eggs and the life cycle is only 20 days long). As *H. contortus* is a subtropical parasite it generally struggles to survive the winter on pasture, however due to the rapid rate of reproduction they have started to adapt to a cooler climate. *H. contortus* primarily overwinters within the sheep in an inactive form, but there is now evidence to suggest that the parasite is evolving to overwinter on pasture too.

While the worm is susceptible to many wormers when active, the inactive form has to be treated with specific wormers. It is therefore advised to treat confirmed cases with **Closantel** ideally when its at its coldest to to reduce the chances of surviving worms on the pasture, as well as grazing management. The first animals to fall ill are usually young lambs during late summer, but the other sheep in the pasture are often affected as well in the naïve flock, between spring and autumn.

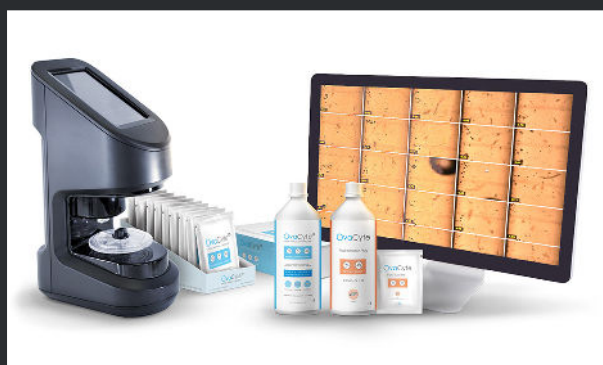
Acute signs are: pale mucus membranes, weakness/lethargy, sudden death, increased respiratory rate and struggling to breathe, constipation.

Sub acute cases develop bottle neck (swelling under the jaw) similar to liver fluke.

Chronic cases tend to be weak, have poor body condition scores, be lethargic, have bottle jaw and have low iron, leading to anaemia.

The diagnosis can be made on these clinical signs, by worm egg counts, which we can speciate using our **Ovocyte** machine, or by a laboratory agglutination test specific to *H. contortus*. It can also be confirmed on post mortem when the worms are seen in the abomasum.

If you suspect that you have *H. contortus* on farm or would like to discuss treatments please call you local branch to talk to one of out vets.



Bluetongue Update

As of July 1st 2026 we have entered into the 26/27 Bluetongue period. Between then and the time of writing there have been 84 cases of BTV-3 and 0 cases of BTV-8 which have mainly been found in the South West of England and Wales.

The closest cases to Northumberland were cases found in West Cumbria last year, the closest case so far this year is near Manchester.

Bluetongue has multiple strains with originally BTV-3, BTV-8 and BTV-12 have been detected in the UK since 2024. BTV-3 and BTV-8 vaccines are available. Bluetongue can affect fertility and milk production as well as more severe cases causing morbidity and death.

Clinical signs include: swelling of the head and hooves, ulcers around the mouth and coronary band, lethargy, fever, death. Infected dams may also produce dummy calves. Bluetongue is primarily vector-spread but is also found in germinal articles such as embryos.

Please call to discuss any suspected cases other cases or vaccines with a vet.

Don't Forget to Use!

- **Enzovax** and **Toxovax** in sheep, for prevention and control of abortion. Please get your orders in ASAP to help ensure the vaccine is ready when needed. These must be given at least 4 and 3 weeks pre-tupping respectively.
- **Clik**, **Clik Extra**, **Clikzin**, **Dysect** or **Crovect** in sheep, to prevent blowfly strike.
- **Swish** or **Dectospot** in cattle, to reduce fly worry and other fly related problems such as summer mastitis.