



Summer Shows

It's that time of year again, where we get out and about to support our local shows. This year we will be at the Oswestry show and the Denbigh and Flint show

Oswestry Show
2nd August

Denbigh and Flint Show
21st August

Is your Ram up for the job?

With tupping season only around the corner for the majority of our sheep clients, it's time to give your rams their annual M.O.T before getting to work. We recommend that you follow the five T's;

- Toes
 - Check locomotion, legs and feet
- Teeth
 - Check for under or overshot jaw, gaps and molar abscesses
- Testicles
 - Check firmness (like a flexed bicep) with no lumps or bumps
- Tone
 - Aim for body condition between 3.5–4.0 (spine well covered)
- Treat
 - Check vaccinations are up-to-date (clostridia, pasteurella), parasites, lameness, shearing?

Poor ram fertility is a consequence of soft testicles and poor-quality semen, known as testicular degeneration. Over-heating during July and August is found to be the main cause of this. A ram's scrotum is covered in sweat glands that cool the testicles in the breeze. However, sheep will pant and lie down when they are too hot, this helps them transfer heat away from their bodies through their abdomen. Unfortunately for rams this results in the testicles being too close to their body and over-heating occurs. To help avoid this you should ensure rams are shorn, have adequate shade, plenty of water and are not over-fat.

It's not just warm weather that can impact testicular temperature. An increase in body temperature from as little as 0.5 °C for a short period in the 6 weeks leading up to mating and during the mating period can be enough to compromise their fertility. Illness or even lameness can be the cause of this, prompt treatment can limit its negative effects.

For any new rams entering the flock, ideally, they should be purchased well in advance of the breeding season. This will ensure they are fit and acclimatised to your system, it will take 3 weeks for their rumen to adjust to a new diet. To prevent the introduction of infectious diseases and parasites into the flock it's important that you have a robust quarantine plan.

- On the day of arrival any bought in animals should be placed in a hard-standing pen with no nose-to-nose contact with any existing stock on the farm
- A general examination should be performed, paying extra attention to BCS, lameness, nasal discharge and scouring
- Administer a Group 4 (orange) wormer and keep off pasture for 48 hours post-treatment
- With cases of sheep scab on the rise it is very important to ensure we are not introducing the parasite. This can be avoided by either dipping or using a long-acting Group 3 (clear) injectable wormer.
- Footbath on entry and continued weekly throughout the quarantine period
- Ensure they are up to date with vaccination protocols used on your farm

The quarantine period should ideally be a minimum of 28 days, throughout this time it is important to monitor for signs of illness and lameness.

Examination of sperm samples is a great way to ensure your ram is up for the job. This involves evaluating the morphology, movement and concentration of the sperm. This is a service that we can provide, speak to one of our vets for more information.



Summer mastitis

British summer weather may be unpredictable but summer mastitis certainly isn't. It is a disease that changes little over the years, affecting the same farms year after year. Very few mastitis affected quarters will recover, so any treatment is purely salvage and the main goal should be to avoid the disease, or at least minimise its incidence. The basics are simple - it occurs in summer, it is spread by flies and it affects dry cows, heifers or young calves. It is an acute disease of the non-lactating mammary gland and is mainly caused by the bacteria *Trueperella pyogenes*.

What to look out for?

- An animal standing apart from the others, often lame, dull, and with a significantly raised temperature.
- Teats become swollen and there are often large numbers of flies feeding around them.
- Disease progresses until the whole udder is swollen, hard and producing foul-smelling, thick, yellow secretions, often tinged with blood. Left untreated, abortion or death can follow.

Treatment

Very few affected quarters will recover, and treatment is aimed at saving the animal. Treatment involves antibiotics to combat infection and anti-inflammatories to counter the swelling and reduce temperature. Getting antibiotics to where they are needed is a challenge, as large amounts of pus and dead tissue are present, hence the importance of anti-inflammatory drugs. Frequent stripping is important to remove as much puss-like material as possible, but while the organism is common in the environment, stripping can be a source of further infection. Strippings should be discarded safely and not on to the ground.

Occasionally, the udder may completely slough off in a similar way to gangrenous mastitis. There may also be occasions where it is necessary to split the teat lengthways to drain the udder of infection or the teat may be removed completely.

Prevention

Antibiotic cover

- In high-risk areas intramammary antibiotics should be considered. Selective dry-cow therapy has meant that less dairy cows will be receiving intramammary antibiotics at drying off. Have a discussion with your vet about an appropriate level of antibiotics to use on your farm during the high risk summer months.

Teat skin lesions

- Good teat condition will reduce or eliminate infection particularly as the initial source of summer mastitis is usually by infection tracking into the teat-end

Fly control

- Fly control is a big part of prevention, this is best done with pour-ons or impregnated fly tags.

In summary to minimise the risk on your farm:

- Identify and isolate cases early
- Watch out for teat lesions
- Control flies on cattle
- Avoid areas with large fly populations. Where possible, avoid pastures with sandy soils, tree cover and water

Bluetongue virus

Information for livestock keepers



Visit: www.gov.uk/bluetongue

The total number of BTV-3 outbreaks in Great Britain for the 2025-2026 vector season has now risen up to 7. All cases have currently been in England, however, the risk of transmission via infected midges is now considered to be very high in most of Great Britain.

Here are the latest cases;

25 July 2025

- A ram in Wiltshire was confirmed positive following a report of suspicious clinical signs. The sheep had nasal discharge, a sore swollen mouth with ulcers and generalised facial swelling. No fever was reported.

24 July 2025

- A cow was confirmed positive in Cumbria following a non-negative pre-movement test
- A sheep in Oxfordshire was confirmed positive following a report of suspicious clinical signs - the sheep had lameness, sore feet and a sore swollen mouth with ulcers; no fever was reported

Please stay vigilant and alert the APHA or us on **01978 311444** if you suspect Bluetongue-like symptoms in your stock.

