Daleside
Veterinary Group

FARM NEWSLETTER

February 2026

BVD Order Wales

The next phase of The BVD Wales order is coming into force from the 1st July 2026. This requires cattle keepers in Wales to screen their herd annually for BVD. The results of this test will determine the status of the herd. Any herds which have not been screened or those coming from BVD Not Negative herds will require pre-movement testing before they can move off-farm. Not Negative herds will also need to test their herds to identify any persistently infected (PI) animals. PI animals must be properly isolated away from other cattle on the holding or slaughtered.

How to perform a BVD screen?

- Many farmers find it easiest to test during their annual TB visit
- Five unvaccinated calves between 9–18 months of age are blood sampled per management group
- If this is not possible, we would then move to the next eligible group

Our Vet-tech Llinos has now qualified as an Approved Blood Sampler and will be able to take blood samples on the TB test, along with our vets.

To find out more information or to discuss your latest BVD screen results, please call the office on 01978 311444 and ask to speak to one of our vets.

Changes to Red Tractor Standards

Changes to the Red Tractor Farm assurance scheme are now active. Farmers and their staff will need to refresh their medicine training every five years to keep up with the latest practices in responsible medicine use. At least one person on the unit must have undergone training in the last five years – either a refresher course to follow a course taken previously, or a full course approved by Red Tractor if it's the person's first training in this area.

Our course this month is now fully booked, please get in touch to express your interest for future courses, or should you wish to get further members of the farm team trained. Please email allison@dalesidevets.co.uk to get your name on the list!

RED TRACTOR CERTIFIED STANDARDS

TRACEABLE, SAFE & FARMED WITH CARE

Medicine collection

Just a reminder, when collecting medicine from the practice e.g. antibiotics and vaccines, this needs to be prescribed by one of our vets. Please can you allow us a few hours between ordering and collection to ensure that the order is complete to minimise your waiting time.

Pre-turnout checks

Turnout might still seem like an age away, but February is the perfect time to start prepping and getting things in order for springtime. Before the cows hit the grass, making sure they are up to date with their vaccination ensures the best protection over the grazing period.

For farms vaccinating for Leptospirosis, springtime is the preferable time of year to get this done. This is linked with how the bacteria is transmitted, the bacteria is present in the urine of infected cattle and as they urinate on the grass, grazing cows become exposed to the bacteria. By vaccinating pre-turnout, it gives the cows a chance to mount an immune response prior to being exposed to the pathogen, limiting its undesirable effects.

In dairy cattle, acute disease may be seen as a drop in milk yield in all infected animals. This can be accompanied by transient fever, mastitis-like changes in the milk and sudden loss of all milk with flaccid udder. Recovery can take up to 10 days. In herds being exposed to leptospirosis for the first time, a large amount of the herd may abort with calves infected late in gestation can be born infected.

It's also important to consider the effect leptospirosis might have on farm workers. Leptospirosis is what is called a zoonotic disease and so can be passed to humans as well as other animals. If leptospirosis is proven to be present on your farm we would strongly advise implementing a vaccine programme to limit the risk to human health.

Consideration should also be given to the youngstock prior to turnout. Youngstock are the next generation on the farm so lets give them the best start to the grazing season.

Lungworm is caused by a roundworm called Dictyocaulus viviparus and can be associated with high mortality. First season grazers are the most vulnerable to the disease, but heavy infections in animals of any age who have not previously been exposed is enough to cause serious growth issues and even death.

Clinical signs may vary from occasional coughing to severe respiratory distress and mortality. Typically, the peak incidence of clinical cases occurs in late summer and early autumn (August-October) though can persist until December. In adult dairy cattle, milk drop and reduced fertility may be a typical clinical sign. By the third week of infection, severely affected cattle do little else except stand in a characteristic head-extended position with rapid shallow breathing and frequent coughing.

Immunity can be stimulated by using vaccination, this is in the form of an oral dose given 4 weeks apart with full immunity achieved 2 weeks after the second dose. This reduces the need for application of worming products throughout the summer, but worming against gut worms should still be considered if there is a high worm burden present.

Protection against clostridial disease is also another common vaccination protocol used by many farmers prior to turnout. The most frustrating aspect of clostridial disease is that the first sign is often a dead calf in the field.

Clostridial spores are widespread in the environment, particularly in soil and organic material. Disease in cattle is triggered by various factors which damage body tissues activating latent spores, followed by very rapid multiplication in the animal's body with toxin production, causing death within hours. The response to antibiotic treatment is very poor. Prevention of clostridial diseases by vaccination should be seriously considered in cattle where there is a history of disease on the farm or where risk factors exist.

To discuss vaccination protocols or to place an order please phone the office on 01978 311444.