



We are saddened to have to share the news that Paul Sharples passed away on the 17th March.

Paul graduated with Honours at Liverpool University in 1977. He was offered a position at Harrison & Partners in the Easter before graduation and began work later that year. Paul, along with Barry Dickens and Caerwyn Thomas established Daleside Vets in 1993, and worked hard to develop the business until his retirement in 2010. As well as a dedicated farm vet, Paul was responsible for the Meat Hygiene work at the practice. He had a nimble mind with figures, and no medicines company rep was safe when it came to negotiating a deal!

Away from the practice Paul was a keen football fan and closely followed the fortunes of his beloved Blackburn Rovers. He also enjoyed a good round of golf, and spending time with his family.

Our thoughts and sympathies go out to all his family.

## Low-interest Green Loans for Welsh Farmers

Low-interest Green Loans for Welsh Farmers  
Welsh farms will be able to access finance to modernise their operations and cut carbon emissions, under a new loan scheme to be launched by the Welsh government.

The Sustainable Agriculture Loan Scheme (SALS) will offer incentivised loans at a fixed 3% interest rate, repayable over up to 15 years, to help small and medium-sized farms invest in energy efficiency, waste management and productivity improvements. Up to £5 million will be available during the 2026/27 financial year, with the potential to extend the scheme depending on demand. Farms will be able to borrow between £25,000 and £1 million per project.

A six-month repayment holiday at the start of the loan gives businesses time to see the benefits of their investment before repayments begin. Seasonal payment options are also being considered.

SALS makes a clear policy choice: public finance should be used as a repayable, targeted tool to drive sustainable farming practices, complementing existing Welsh Government grants. The scheme will be aligned to the Wales's Sustainable Land Management duties as well as working in a complementary way with the roll out of the Sustainable Farming Scheme.

Further information, and the opportunity to express your interest, is available from the Development Bank of Wales: [Sustainable Agriculture Loan Scheme - Dev Bank](#).



## Changes to Saturday morning office hours

From April we will be running condensed office hours on Saturday mornings, this will be from 10.00 until 12:00.

We want to reassure you that any visits in between the times of 8.30 and 13.00 will still be charged at the standard visit fee.

# Bluetongue Virus Serotype 3 (BTV-3): Updated Guidance for UK Farmers

## Current UK Situation

Bluetongue virus serotype 3 (BTV-3) remains an active and significant disease threat to UK ruminant livestock. During the 2025 vector season and into winter 2025/26, widespread cases were confirmed in England and Wales, with ongoing sporadic detections. Recent UK cases demonstrate a broader clinical picture, particularly in cattle, including abortions, milk yield losses, fertility issues, and neurological signs in calves.

## Clinical Picture and Impact on Farms

Sheep continue to show the most severe clinical signs, including fever, facial oedema, lameness and increased mortality. In cattle, production-limiting effects are now well recognised, including abortion, early embryonic loss, milk yield reduction, lameness and prolonged fertility impacts.

## Regulatory Position and Animal Movements

In 2025 England and Wales became BTV-3 restricted zones and movement controls changed with increasing dependence on vaccination status. 2026 government policy is yet to be defined but you can keep informed by checking [Bluetongue: latest situation - GOV.UK](#) and [Bluetongue Virus Hub - Ruminant Health & Welfare](#) has lots of helpful information and links.

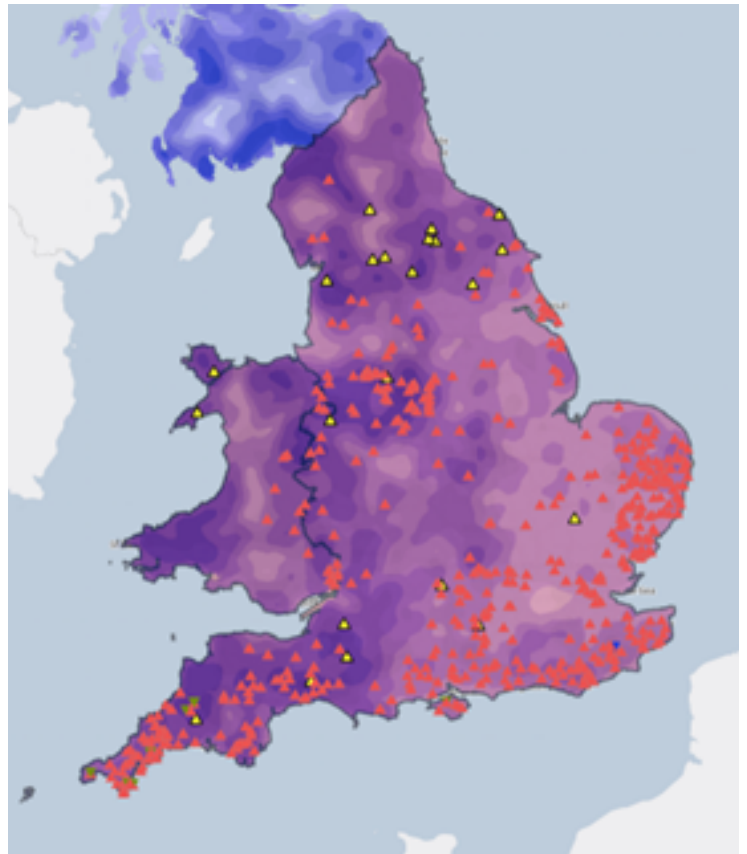
## Vaccination: Central to Disease Control

Vaccination remains the cornerstone of BTV-3 control. BULTAVO® 3 is authorised for use in cattle and sheep and is effective at preventing clinical disease in both species. Ensuring livestock are vaccinated ahead of the risk period is essential to reduce clinical impact and production losses.

## Re-vaccination Guidance for Animals Vaccinated in 2025

For animals that completed a primary course of BULTAVO® 3 in 2025, annual revaccination is strongly recommended to protect against the risk of infection during the 2026 vector season. Annual re-vaccination should be completed before midge activity increases in late spring.

Breeding animals should be prioritised for re-vaccination ahead of mating.



Map of UK bluetongue restriction zones and recent BTV-3 case distribution (red BTV 3 cases, yellow high risk movement) and livestock density (darker colour of map denotes higher livestock density) from 2024-2026

## Farming connect funding

From April there will be a new round of funding available through Farming Connect. Registration will be necessary to access the funding, even if you have previously registered you will need to re-register with Farming Connect. The advisory service will be available again, with 70% funding up to £400 available for animal health testing and technical advice.

## Mastering Medicine Course

We will once again be running a mastering medicine course. To be compliant with Red Tractor requirements a member of staff who is responsible for medicine administration on the farm must have completed a training course within the last 5 years. Our aim is to run the course the beginning of May, but a location and date is yet to be confirmed. Please let us know if you are interested in attending the training course.

