ISSUE 90 Summer 2025

Livestock NEWS

www.paragonvet.com

Inside this issue:

farm paragon VETERINARY GROUP

XL Vets Farm

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

Staff News

New Starter

We will shortly welcome Jacob Whitaker to the farm team at the end of July. Jacob hails from near Kirkby Lonsdale in the south of the county and is graduating from the University of Edinburgh where he has developed a strong interest in all aspects of farm animal practice, especially herd and flock health, productivity, sheep lameness and on farm postmortems.

Jacob will initially split his time across all branches in order to get to know as many clients as he can.

Some of you will be delighted to know that he breeds a small flock of Swaledale sheep but confesses that his first 5 figure tup still eludes him! In his free time he enjoys climbing, hiking, fishing, wild swimming, and going to the gym.

He says 'I'm looking forward to getting to know everyone, learning from the experienced team and contributing to the health, productivity and welfare of livestock in the area.'

Welcome Back

A very warm welcome back to Annie Kerr who has been away on maternity leave since welcoming little Margot Grace back in September.

Annie will be returning to the farm team in Mid July and is looking forward to getting out and about and catching up with clients and colleagues alike.

We are looking forward to seeing Annie back at Paragon and we hope you are too.

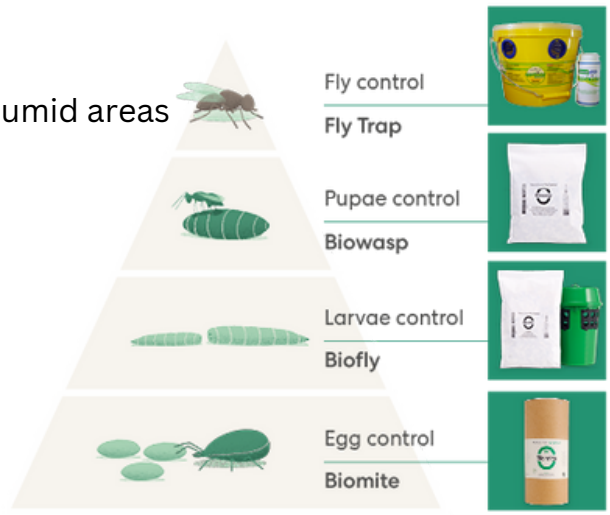
Fly Parasites

By Paul Kirkwood

A very warm and dry Spring means that fly problems are starting to flare up. Flies are a nuisance and can be irritating to livestock leading to reduced feeding times, mastitis, flystrike and disease transmission. Flies breed in moist manure and bedding. As temperatures rise their life cycle speeds up - what once took 21 days can take just 7–10 days. That means a few unnoticed larvae today can turn into a swarm by next week. Flies will hatch under slats, in damp corners and anywhere muck builds up.

Bestico focuses on using insects which kill fly eggs and fly larvae, reducing the number of adult flies and decreasing the reliance on chemical pesticides. Their approach is part of the integrated fly management system, which addresses each stage of the fly lifecycle using different products:

- Biomite
  - Predatory mites that target fly eggs and early larvae
- Biofly
  - Robber fly larvae that prey on fly larvae in humid areas
- Biowasp
  - Parasitic wasps that parasitise fly pupae in drier environments
  - Biowasp builds up gradually so starting early in the year will help to keep fly numbers low throughout the summer months without the intervention of chemicals.
- Appibuster Fly Trap
  - A bucket trap designed to capture adult flies



These products will have a role on all farms with each product usually placed strategically around the farm to maximise their effectiveness and reduce fly infestations. By targeting pests at their source and across all life stages, Bestico's system helps maintain a natural balance as part of a sustainable pest management. If you are interested in any of Bestico products, or to book your free fly control assessment then speak to a member of the farm team.

The Latest Updates on Bluetongue Virus (BTV)

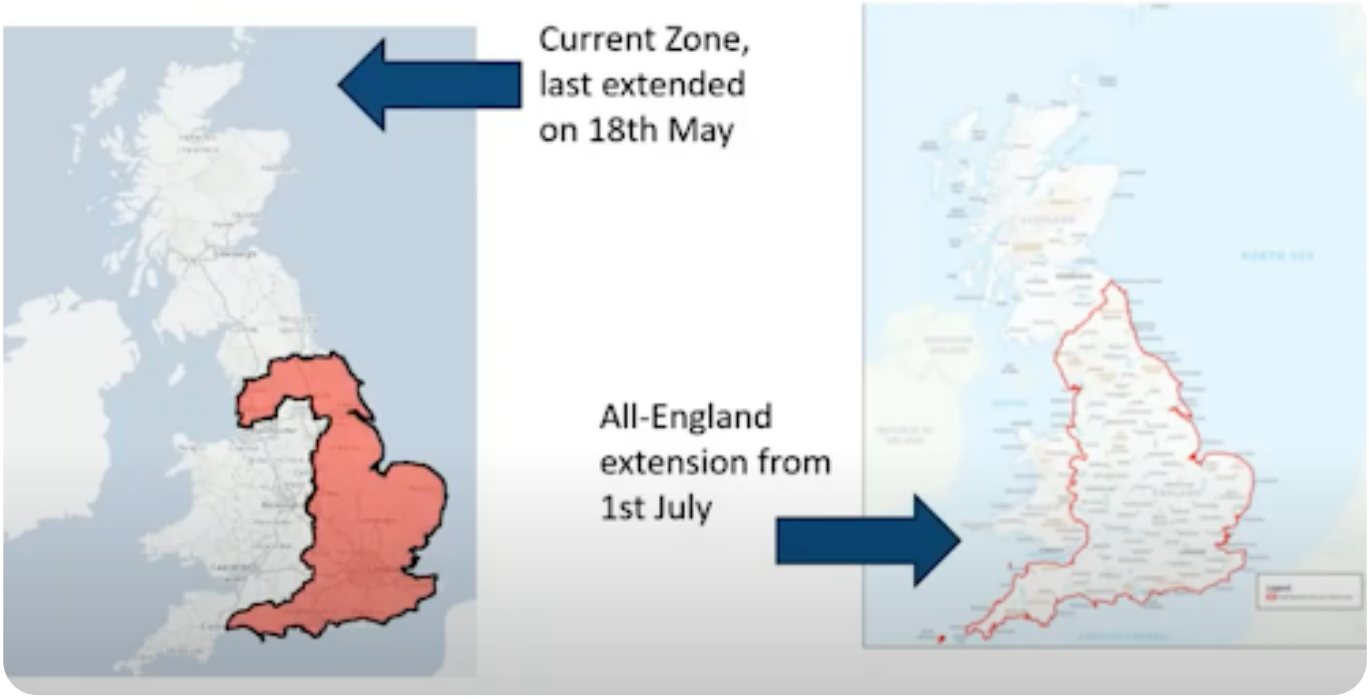
By Mollie Kirkwood

We are encouraging all our farmers follow the Battle Bluetongue Campaign:

1. **ASSESS YOUR RISK**
2. **PROTECT YOUR BUSINESS**
3. **DEFEND YOUR STOCK**

Please be aware of the most recent changes with regards to BTV:

- From the 1st July 2025
    - The Restriction Zone for Bluetongue will be extended to cover the whole of England. From this date, all livestock susceptible to Bluetongue will be allowed to be moved within England without a Bluetongue licence or test.
    - You will need to have a specific licence to freeze germinal products within the restricted zone and testing will be required. Keepers will be responsible for the cost of sampling, postage and testing.



- Vaccination remains to be the most effective long-term option for disease control. Safe and effective Blutongue serotype 3 (BTV-3) vaccines are available.
- All BTV-3 vaccinated animals MUST be reported within 48 hours to Defra.
- Please find all up to date information and guidance on the Government website under ‘Bluetongue, news, information and guidance for livestock keepers’.

How to spot Bluetongue in your animals?

Clinical signs are not always present despite infection.

Sheep:
The classical clinical signs are often seen which include: fever, reddening of the eyes, mucosal membranes &/or coronary band, sores on the gums and around the muzzle area, discharge from the nose, facial swelling &/or tongue depression, lameness, drops in fertility (more barren ewes, extended lambing periods) & mortality.

Cattle:
Clinical signs are less common and production issues are most commonly seen for example:

- reduced fertility (pregnancy rates, increased early losses/abortions)
- 10% drop in milk yields

REMEMBER to report all abortions so it can be differentiated from Schmalenburg virus (SBV)

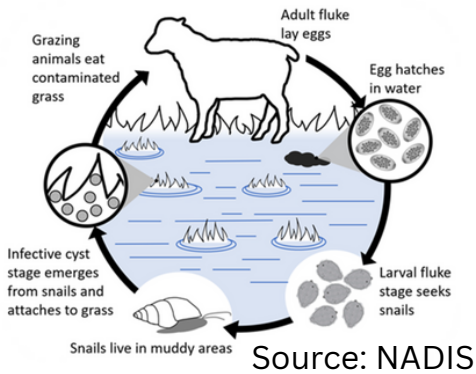
If you wish to discuss Bluetongue further then please contact us to speak to one of the farm team

Controlling Liver Fluke in Cattle and Sheep

Liver fluke (Fasciola hepatica) is a persistent and costly parasite affecting both cattle and sheep, particularly in wetter regions such as the West of England. The impacts are all too familiar and include reduced growth rates, poor fertility, lower milk yields, condemned livers at slaughter, and, in severe cases, animal deaths. With the changing climate increasing risk and resistance to treatment on the rise, it's more important than ever to take proactive control measures tailored to your systems.

By Bruce Richards

Understanding the Life Cycle



Source: NADIS

Liver fluke has a complex lifecycle involving an intermediate host — the mud snail (Galba truncatula) which thrives in damp, marshy areas. After animals shed fluke eggs in their dung, the eggs hatch in wet conditions, infect snails, and eventually release larvae that settle on grass. Livestock become infected when grazing pasture contaminated with larvae.

Wet autumns and mild winters in recent years have helped extend the fluke season and increase the risk to stock. Signs are often seen too late and can exhibit as weight loss, bottle jaw, or sudden deaths in sheep. The economic losses can be significant, and without a reliable control plan, the problem potentially worsens each year.

Testing and Targeted Treatment

The key to effective control is knowing when fluke is present and what life stages it's at. Blanket treatments may feel like the safest option, but they're expensive, can promote drug resistance, and may not even hit the parasite at the right stage.

Testing, such as faecal egg counts, coproantigen tests or blood tests, can guide decisions but has its limitations. Liver damage seen at slaughter can also be a useful feedback tool and give a history of infection. Where practical, farmers should work with their vet to plan treatments based on test results, farm history and seasonal risk.

Triclabendazole is the only drug that kills both immature and adult fluke but resistance to it is a major growing concern, especially in sheep. Farmers are encouraged to rotate products where possible and use alternatives like closantel or nitroxynil when targeting adult stages. Timing is everything and autumn and early winter treatments, ideally after housing, can reduce burdens and limit pasture contamination.

Grazing Management

Avoiding wet, snail-friendly pastures during peak risk times (August to December) is one of the most practical and cost-effective fluke control methods. Draining fields, fencing off boggy areas, and rotating grazing can reduce exposure.
Sheep are especially vulnerable to heavy fluke burdens, so managing grazing access and prioritising safer pastures can make a big difference. Quarantining bought-in animals and treating them before turnout is another step that helps protect the rest of the flock or herd.

Looking Ahead

Using fluke risk forecasts, regular testing, and grazing plans will reduce the reliance on drugs. With resistance rising and no new flukicides on the immediate horizon, this proactive approach is becoming essential.
Controlling liver fluke isn't just about worming, it's about knowing your farm, your animals, and your risk. Taking the time to build a tailored plan, combining test results with sensible grazing and targeted treatments will protect both livestock and productivity.

Q Fever in Cattle

By Catherine Davies

You might not see it, but Q fever could be quietly making its way through your herd—and it's something every cattle farmer should be aware of. Caused by a bacteria called Coxiella burnetii, Q fever can be subclinical in cows, but it can cause problems with fertility, calving, and even human health.

🔬 What Is Q Fever?

Q fever is a disease caused by a bacteria (Coxiella burnetii). It can survive heat, drying, and even some disinfectants. This makes it easy for the bacteria to stick around on the farm for a long time—especially in places like calving pens or dusty yards.
It mainly lives in cattle, sheep, and goats. With cattle being the main carriers, even if they look perfectly healthy.
They can shed the bacteria without any obvious signs—meaning it can spread through the herd (and the farm) without anyone realising. Infected cows can shed the bacteria in placenta, birth fluids, milk, urine and manure.

When Q Fever Does Cause Problems

Although most cows don't get sick, sometimes Q fever can cause:

- Abortions late in pregnancy
- Retained afterbirth
- Stillborn calves
- Fertility problems
- A drop in milk production (though not always)

These problems aren't unique to Q fever, which makes it hard to diagnose without lab testing.

How to Test for Q Fever

Samples can be taken from the following if you're seeing reproductive issues within your herd;

- Bulk tank milk
- Vaginal swabs
- Placental tissue
- Manure or other environmental samples

The tests can tell if C. burnetii is present in the herd. Due to the public health risk, Q fever is a reportable disease if found on your farm.

Reducing the risk on your farm

- Dispose of placentas and aborted material quickly and safely
- Disinfect calving areas

Prevent spread

- Separate cows after abortion
- Keep a closed herd if possible to limit new infections

Manage Milk

- Infected cows can shed bacteria in their milk
- Pasteurisation kills the bacteria, so don't consume unpasteurised milk due to human health risk.

Vaccination Is an Option

There's a vaccine for Q fever. It doesn't stop the disease entirely but can:

- Reduce how much bacteria is shed
- Lower the risk of abortion

Final Thoughts

Q fever in cattle is an important but often overlooked disease due to its subclinical nature. Proactive management—including proper hygiene, biosecurity, diagnostic testing, and vaccination—can reduce risks to both herd health and human safety.

Training Courses

Reserve your place on one of our next courses (Dates TBC):

- **DIY AI and Cattle Fertility**
- **Mastering Medicines**
- **Foot Trimming**

Please contact us at one of the practices (details below) to register your interest!

Paragon Veterinary Group
Carlisle House,
Townhead Road, Dalston,
Carlisle, CA5 7JF
Tel: (01228) 710208
vets@paragonvet.com

Townhead Veterinary Centre
Newbiggin, Stainton,
Penrith,
CA11 0HT
Tel: (01768) 483789
townhead@paragonvet.com

Tarn Farm Vets
Ground Floor Office,
Unit 3 J39, Green Farm,
Shap, CA10 3PW
Tel: (01931) 716024
tarn@paragonvet.com