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Livestock NEWS

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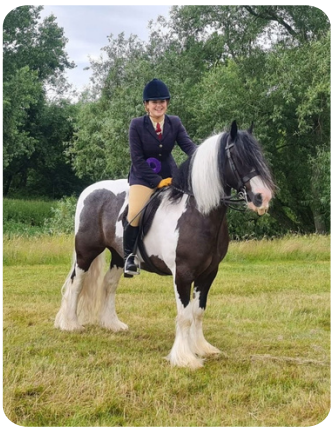
ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

Staff News



Welcome to Catherine Jenkinson who joined us back in October working as a Vet Tech and Receptionist. Catherine comes from a local farming family nr Penrith. When not at work you will find Catherine competing her 2 horses at the local & national shows.

TB Advisory Service: What it is TBAS and How Can It Help Farmers Tackle Bovine TB?

By Ben Dustan

Bovine tuberculosis (bTB) remains one of the biggest challenges facing cattle farmers across England and Wales. Testing restrictions, movement controls and the emotional and financial strain can be severe. One tool that is increasingly being used to support farmers in managing TB risk is **TBAS – the TB Advisory Service**.

TBAS is a free, government-funded service designed specifically to help cattle farmers reduce the risk of bovine TB on their holdings. It is delivered by trained vets and advisers to identify practical, farm-specific actions that can help limit disease spread. We have several trained vets available to deliver the service onto your farm.

What does TBAS involve?

If your holding experiences a TB breakdown, or your holding is within a current TB hot-spot, you may be eligible for a **free on-farm visit** from a TBAS adviser. During this visit, the adviser will carry out a detailed **TB risk assessment**, looking at factors such as cattle movements, biosecurity practices, housing, grazing arrangements and potential wildlife contact. The aim is to understand where risks may lie and what changes could realistically be made on your farm. Following the visit, you will receive a **tailored action plan** with practical recommendations designed to reduce the TB risk, both now and in to the future.

Practical, farm-focused advice

One of the strengths of TBAS is that advice is **specific to your system**. Recommendations may include:

- Improving boundary fencing to reduce nose-to-nose contact
- Adjusting feeding or housing to reduce wildlife access
- Reviewing cattle purchasing and quarantine procedures
- Improving slurry and manure management
- Changes to grazing patterns or water sources

Benefits beyond the breakdown

While TBAS is often triggered by a TB breakdown, its benefits extend well beyond the immediate situation. Improving biosecurity can:

- Reduce the risk of future breakdowns
- Shorten restriction periods
- Improve overall herd health
- Support long-term business resilience

Many farmers who have engaged with TBAS report that the process has increased their confidence and understanding of TB risks, giving them more control over an otherwise frustrating disease. It is also worth noting that for those within a hot-spot area, it is a condition of moving to reduced testing intervals to have had a TBAS visit performed.

Working with farmers, not against them

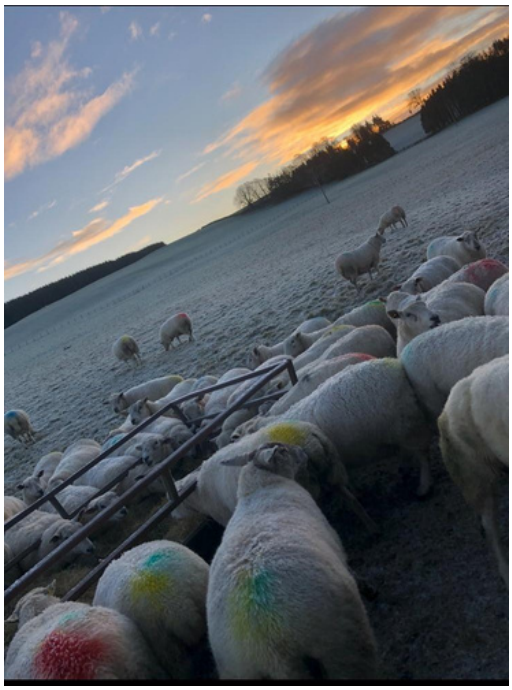
TBAS is not an enforcement scheme. It is a **supportive, confidential service** designed to work alongside farmers in the fight against bovine TB. In a disease where no single measure offers a complete solution, TBAS provides practical help, expert advice and financial backing to support real change on the ground.

In addition TBAS is now available for other farmed species, including Goats and Camelids. Please contact the practice for more information or to book your visit.

Caring for Pregnant Sheep Through Winter to Lambing Time

By Dan Lawson

With tupping time drawing to a close and scanning soon to be upon us this allows a crucial time to assess the flock and identify any issues which there may be. The barren rate is a key indicator of any issues, target figures are less than 2% barren. Before these barren ewes are sold it is important to ask why they are barren, and to use this opportunity to test some of these ewes for the major causes of abortion including enzootic abortion and toxoplasmosis.



Nutrition: The Cornerstone of Winter Care

Managing pregnant ewes through winter is one of the most important periods in the shepherd's calendar. The months leading up to lambing set the foundation for healthy births, strong lambs, and productive mothers. Winter poses unique challenges—cold, wet conditions, limited pasture growth, and increased nutritional demands as lambs develop rapidly during late gestation.

During early to mid-pregnancy, ewes generally maintain well on good-quality hay or grazing, but by the final six to eight weeks, their energy and protein needs increase sharply. This is when 70% of fetal growth occurs, and the ewe's rumen capacity decreases as lambs grow, leaving less space for bulk feed. Offering higher-quality forage and, when necessary, a small concentrate ration helps prevent issues such as pregnancy toxemia(twin lamb disease), low birth weights, and poor colostrum production.

Body condition scoring (BCS) offers a reliable way to monitor nutritional status. Ideally, ewes should enter late pregnancy with a BCS of 2.5–3. Under-conditioned ewes may struggle to support fetal growth or produce enough milk, while over-conditioned ones face increased risk of lambing complications. Separating the flock into feeding groups—singles, twins, triplets, and thin ewes—allows feed to be tailored for each animal's needs.

Minerals and vitamins are equally important for example selenium, iodine, and vitamin E support fetal development, lamb vigor, and proper immune function, therefore assessing mineral status of the ewes helps to ensure any issues can be corrected.

Shelter and Environmental Management

Winter weather brings additional stress for flocks, windbreaks—natural or constructed—can dramatically reduce cold stress. Rotating feeding areas prevents mud buildup, which can harbor bacteria and contribute to lameness. Ensuring access to unfrozen water is also critical; dehydration can reduce feed intake and worsen metabolic diseases.

Health Care and Monitoring

Routine health management becomes increasingly important as lambing approaches. Vaccinating ewes four to six weeks before lambing with a clostridial vaccine boosts antibody levels in their colostrum, giving newborn lambs early protection. This booster also safeguards the ewe against diseases like tetanus and enterotoxemia. Continue to monitor both fluke and worm levels during the winter, whilst worms may be of reduced risk. fluke continues to be an ever present issue which can massively effect the ewes.

As the lambing period nears, careful observation becomes vital. Ewes carrying multiples may show signs of strain earlier and are at higher risk for pregnancy toxemia, especially during cold snaps. Checking ewes twice daily—monitoring appetite, behavior, and body condition—helps detect problems early. Any ewe that separates from the flock, appears depressed, or stops

Calf Feeding Equipment Hygiene: A Key to Healthy Calf Rearing

By Karen McNeil

Feeding equipment hygiene is a crucial component for successful calf rearing but is often overlooked due to factors such as time restraints and staff shortages.

Milk and milk replacers are rich in nutrients which provides an excellent medium for bacteria to grow. Dirty feeding equipment can cause pathogens such as Ecoli and cryptosporidium to rapidly multiple and spread between calves resulting in scours and dehydration therefore reducing growth rates and increasing calf mortaility. This is why strict cleaning protocols should be implemented.

Cleaning Procedures

Effective cleaning involves several important steps:

Rinsing:

- Immediately after feeding, rinse equipment with lukewarm water to remove milk residues. Hot water should be avoided initially as it can cause milk proteins to stick to surfaces.

Washing:

- Wash equipment thoroughly using warm water and a suitable detergent such as washing up liquid. Scrub all surfaces, especially corners, nipples, and valves, where residues can accumulate.

Disinfection:

- After washing, disinfect the equipment using an alkaline disinfectant. Follow recommended concentrations and contact times to ensure effectiveness.

Final Rinse and Drying:

- Rinse with clean water and allow equipment to air-dry completely (avoid stacking buckets on top of each other). Drying is essential, as moisture encourages bacterial growth.

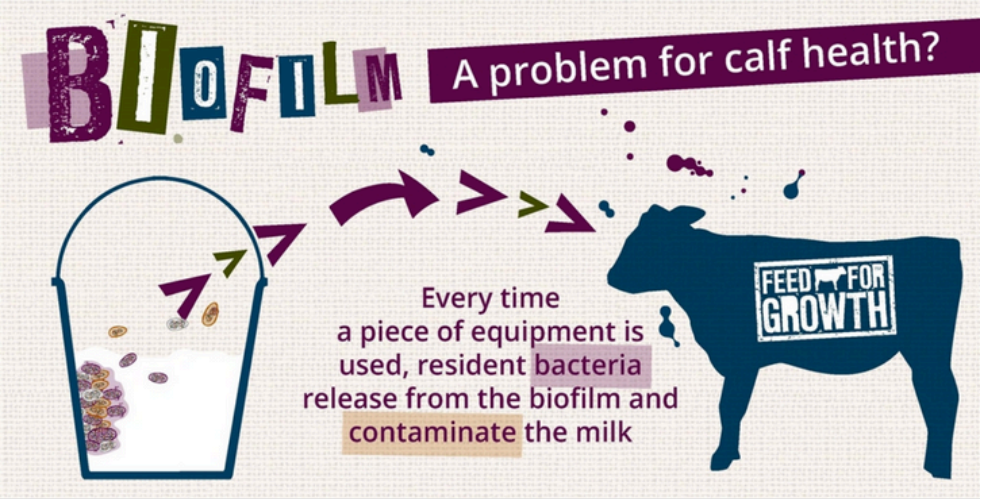


Image Feed For Growth

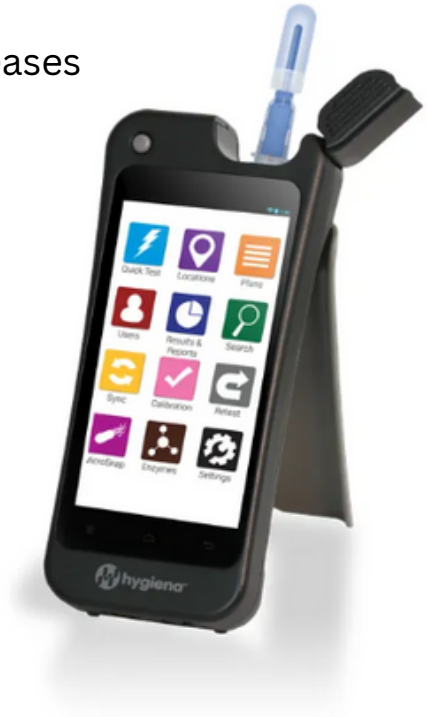
How to Measure Calf Hygiene Using an ATP Machine

An ATP (Adenosine Triphosphate) machine is a rapid, practical tool for objectively measuring hygiene. It detects organic contamination (from milk residues, manure, bacteria, and biofilms) on surfaces by measuring ATP, which is present in all living cells. Results are expressed as **RLU (Relative Light Units)** and are available within seconds, making ATP testing ideal for routine hygiene monitoring.

Why Use ATP Testing for Feeding equipment hygiene?

Visual inspection cannot detect invisible contamination. ATP testing:

- Provides **objective, numerical results**
- Identifies **hidden contamination** on feeding equipment and surfaces
- Verifies **cleaning and disinfection effectiveness**
- Helps reduce scours and other hygiene-related diseases
- Supports **cleaning protocols**



RLU Value	Interpretation
< 100	Excellent Hygiene
100 - 300	Acceptable
300 – 1000	Poor Hygiene
> 1000	High Risk

When to Test

Test **after washing + disinfectant + drying**

- This tells you whether your cleaning protocol is actu
  matter

Before restocking calves

- Especially important for:
  Newborn calf areas
  Pens used for sick calves
- Confirms the environment is low-risk at calf arrival

Routine monitoring

- Helps spot gradual hygiene decline
- Typical frequency:
  Monthly for high-risk areas
  Quarterly for stable systems
- Always test the same surfaces so results are comparable

After a disease problem

- If you've had scour, pneumonia, or cryptosporidium:

Test after enhanced cleaning

Confirms whether the shed is truly clean before reuse

After changes

- Change detergents or disinfectants
- Change staff or cleaning method
- Introduce new housing or equipment

Paragon has just recently invested in an ATP machine so if you are intrigued to find out how your feeding equipment hygiene measures up, please speak to a member of our team.

Training Courses

Reserve your place on one of our next courses

- **DIY AI and Cattle Fertility - 28th - 30th January**
- **Mastering Medicines - TBC**
- **Foot Trimming - TBC**

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

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