

Portland House Veterinary
Centre,
53 Churchgate,
Retford
DN22 6PA
Tel: (01777) 703663
Fax: (01777) 706007
Dedicated Farm Line
(01777) 714060

Cattle Breeding Centre
Leeds Road
Thorpe Willoughby
Selby
YO8 9HL
Tel: (01757) 706993
Fax: (01757) 213604



TB Testing

We are currently experiencing an extremely busy period in our TB testing and expect this to continue until May. Where possible we would like to be able to arrange testing well in advance. This should allow us to test your cattle at a date which suits you best and more importantly avoids unwanted movement restrictions. If your TB test is coming up contact us early to avoid unnecessary hassle.

Mastitis Improvements

A quick well done to everyone who over the extreme weather this summer had been experiencing particularly bad mastitis problems. Most dairies are now finding cell counts coming back down to a more normal level. If you are still having a problem then let us know and we will do what we can to help. It might simply be a case of selecting different treatments or may involve a more in depth investigation.



Abortions in Sheep

Over a million lambs a year are lost through abortion and stillbirth. Early diagnosis is important so that appropriate control measures can be implemented and abortions should be monitored throughout the season. If your flock is starting to experience any abortion problems please contact us immediately. You may need to act now to avoid a more serious problem next season.

Cow Down?

A recent addition to our practice laboratory is now allowing us to run a 'downer cow profile' this will give us a same day result allowing us to assess basic organ function and essential electrolytes such as Calcium, Magnesium and Phosphorous. This new blood test will then allow us to advise far more accurately on the appropriate treatment for each individual animal.



LAMBING CLUB

The Portland House Lambing Club is back for another year after the success of last year's launch.

The club represents a way of making veterinary treatment more affordable and available for sheep farmers at the most important time of year— lambing. For an initial joining fee of £150, for flocks of 200+, or £120 if you have fewer, any lambing related problem such as lambings, prolapses or sick lambs, will be seen at the surgery and treated, for only the cost of the drugs and disposables. Outside of the hours of 7am and 7pm an additional £10 out of hours charge is applicable.

Farmers who used the service last year made an average saving of £97, with some **saving as much as £335** by using the service.

The lambing club will run from 1st January until 30th April (although this period is flexible if your flock lambs outside these times). If you think you might be interested in joining, renewing your membership from last year, or simply would like further information please contact the practice on 01777 714060.



Pneumonia

Just a quick reminder about the importance of the use of anti-inflammatories in the treatment of cattle pneumonia. Combination antibiotic/anti-inflammatory treatments or long acting NSAIDs such as Metacam used with your normal antibiotic treatment allow for a much quicker return health and importantly to normal growth rates. In the long term this should save you money. If you would like to discuss which treatment is most appropriate for you phone the surgery and ask to speak to one of our large animal vets. It may also be worth thinking about vaccination. Remember intranasal vaccines can be quick acting and are often a good aid to holding back pneumonia especially with bought in young stock.





Bluetongue

In some form or another the vast majority of our clients appear to have been affected by the current Bluetongue infection in the south east. DEFRA is currently expecting the cold weather to halt spread of the disease over winter, however further spread come the warmer spring weather is likely. Due to this likely recurrence DEFRA and several of the drugs companies are currently trying to push through the development of a vaccine. This should hopefully be in full production by spring/summer—around the time further spread of the midge population is expected. We would advise the use of long term fly control such as Butox SWISH which may help reduce the chance of infection but cannot completely prevent it. As such absolute vigilance will be necessary to monitor for any further outbreaks. We will try to keep you all up to date with any further developments in our next newsletter. The common signs you should be looking for in your animals are swellings of the mouth, head and neck, discharge from the nose and eyes, lameness, bleeding into or under skin (often seen around udder) and a high temperature. A blue tongue is very rare. If you are worried or would like any further advice please contact one of our large animal vets immediately. Alternatively visit www.defra.gov.uk and select the Bluetongue link.

JOHNE'S DISEASE AWARENESS

The incidence of Johne's disease is increasing and becoming a significant problem facing the UK cattle industry. Johne's disease is an infectious wasting condition of cattle which causes persistent diarrhoea, severe weight loss & loss of condition, infertility and eventually death. It will significantly reduce milk yield in dairy cows and cause general deterioration in cow health and increase culling rate. Cattle are most vulnerable to infection in the first few months and the infection can be passed via sheep grazing the same pastures.

Although the blood and faecal tests for Johne's are not 100% accurate they are very informative. The earlier a cow with Johne's disease is detected the less chance she has of spreading infection to the rest of the herd so any suspect cases should be blood sampled.

Bulk milk samples will give us a good indication of the herd status and once diagnosed there are control measures we can implement to help reduce the incidence.

Fertility Problems?

A number of our clients are experiencing a greater than expected problem with fertility at the moment. If this includes your herd it may be worth thinking about organising a routine fertility visit. When organised in advance this can be a relatively cheap method of getting on top of those problem cows and avoiding wasting money on unnecessary treatments.



Plan now for healthier lambs in the spring

Your annual pre-lambing pasteurised and clostridial disease booster might provide you with more benefits than you imagine. In addition to the ongoing protection it gives to pregnant ewes against a broad spectrum of potentially fatal diseases, studies have shown that newborn lambs also benefit from the protective antibodies found in the colostrum of vaccinated ewes.

Protecting your next crop of lambs starts well before they are born, and it is a good idea to start thinking about disease protection now, when many of you will have recently put your ewes to the tup.

First off, it is important that your ewes are on the "P" scheme, which means they will have already received a primary course of two doses of Heptavac-P Plus, 4-6 weeks apart. Once on the scheme, they will only require a single annual booster, and the time to give this for maximum benefit for both the ewe and her unborn lamb is 4-6 weeks before she lambs.

For ewes not already on the scheme, it will be necessary to give one injection of Heptavac-P Plus 8-12 weeks before lambing and another 4-6 weeks later. Ewes treated in this way will then only require a single annual booster dose, which can be done 4-6 weeks before next year's lambing starts.

It is important, however, that the interval between starting on the scheme and the annual booster, or between boosters, does not exceed 12 months.

In response to vaccination the ewe produces antibodies, which increase her immunity to a wide range of diseases. Vaccinating 4-6 weeks before lambing increases the concentration of these protective antibodies in the ewe's colostrum, which then pass to the newborn lamb when it suckles, and lasts until lambs can be vaccinated at around three weeks of age.