

Portland House Veterinary Group
Newsletter

Bluetongue Update

Time to take action!

With the weather becoming warmer and stock progressively being turned out where do we stand with regard to Bluetongue?

Vaccination: We have to work on the basis of this not being an option in most of this area until late Summer or even into the Autumn. Vaccine production is on course with the first two million dose likely to be available in May but hoped for extra supplies from Intervet (DEFRA's supplier) look unlikely. The other two manufacturers, Merial and Fort Dodge, have not yet got a UK licence and are busy trying to meet demand on the continent. As a result we have to look at alternative strategies.

Vector Control: This seems to be the only really practical way forward with three products available **BUTOX SWISH, COOPERS SPOT ON** and **CROVECT**. None of these are licensed for midge control but Butox has research data from Germany showing control of midges for up to four weeks post treatment. By 35 days post treatment most midges were still alive after 24 hours. As all products contain the same family of insecticide it is not unreasonable to assume similar control; can be achieved with all of them. So applications at four week intervals are likely to be needed for midge control.

All are pour on products so application is fairly easy. The smaller packs come in squeeze on bottles but the larger packs need an applicator. If you decide to use any of these then you should consider buying a whole season's supply at once as demand for these products is likely to be high.

Butox Swish: This is only licensed for use in cattle. Dose levels are 10ml for cattle up to 100Kg, 20ml for cattle between 100 and 300Kg and 30ml for cattle over 300ml. Withdrawal periods for meat are 20 days and there is a zero withhold for milk even when used at four weekly intervals.

This is available in packs of 250 ml, 1l, 2.5l (with or without a gun) and a value pack of 4x2.5l plus 2x1l. Doses are 10ml for cattle less than 100Kg, 20ml for those between 100 and 200KG and 30 ml for cattle over 300Kg

Coopers Spot on: This is licensed for sheep and cattle. Dose levels are cattle 10ml, sheep 5ml and lambs under 10Kg or one month old 2.5ml. Withhold times for meat are Cattle 17 days and sheep 35 days. It should not be used in milking sheep but in cattle there is a zero milk withhold.

This comes in packs of 250ml, 500ml, 1l, and a summer pack of 2.5l. Doses are cattle 10ml, sheep 5ml and lambs under 10Kg or 1 month 2.5ml

Cryovet: This is a sheep only product. Withhold periods are 8 days for meat but it is not recommended in milking animals.

This comes in pack sizes of 0.8l, 2.2l and 5l. Dose levels are between 10ml and 40ml depending on size.

We have worked out competitive prices for all of these and we can quote you at any of the practice numbers. Because we have reduced these as far as possible they have to be payment on collection please.

Retford 01777 703663, Farm line 01777 714060, Selby 01757 706933
Vet Drugs 01777 706664

Getting ready for the vaccination

While vaccination is some way off, we are now being asked by DEFRA to estimate the number of doses of vaccine we may want to order. We have a list of farmers waiting for vaccination but not numbers for everyone. Please do a rough calculation of how many doses you might need and let us know .

Sheep will need one dose of vaccine and cattle will need two doses three weeks apart. Even after vaccination remember it will take three weeks for full protection to develop.

Tackling Breeding sites

Midge breeding sites should be identified and destroyed. Culicoides usually breed in animal dung and moist soils; either bare or covered in short grass. Turning off taps, mending leaks and filling in or draining damp areas may help reduce the number of midge breeding sites. Dung heaps and straw bedding should be moved at least weekly as this is less than the developmental period needed by the immature midge to develop into an adult.

We do not have all the answers but will be pleased to advise you with any queries you have. Vaccination is the only complete answer to Bluetongue but hopefully the above will help us hold things until the vaccination is available.