Newsletter

Fenton Vets

April 2026

Nematodirus

Faecal egg counts are not a reliable indictor of risk as disease is caused by immature larvae before egg production starts

- Are the lambs grazing fields that carried lambs last spring? If so, it is likely there will be Nematodirus larvae on the pasture
- Are they in the 'at risk' age range? Lambs need to be grazing to pick up larvae. For lambs that are otherwise healthy and whose dams are milking well the risk period is from 6-12 weeks of age. Beyond this they will have acquired immunity
- Are the lambs under pressure to graze at an earlier age? For example triplets, lambs whose dams are not milking well (older or younger ewes), or fostered lambs will normally start grazing at an earlier age and could be at risk below 6 weeks of age
- Are there other challenges? A concurrent issue with coccidiosis, particularly in groups of lambs with a wide age range will increase the risk to lambs, causing clinical disease at lower levels of challenge

If possible, avoid the high challenge. Move at-risk lambs (as determined by the risk assessment) to low risk pastures (i.e. pasture that was not grazed by lambs the previous spring.

White drenches are still highly effective against Nematodirus on most farms and are suitable for young lambs. However, because there have been a small number of cases of resistance confirmed, check that your treatment was fully effective by taking a dung sample for a FEC seven to ten days after treatment.

BVD Update

BVD legislation is kicking in on the 1st July 2026 – make sure that your herd is compliant so that you don't have an interruption to trading.

The mandatory annual 'BVDCymru' screen establishes a herd status of either 'BVD negative' (all screened animals demonstrate no antibodies to BVD virus) or 'BVD Not-Negative' if any of the screening blood samples show antibodies to BVD – indicating exposure to the virus. Cattle herds that have not undertaken the screening will be assigned a Not Negative status.

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Not Negative herds:

- Will be subject to movement restrictions from 1st July 2026
- Should test all animals in the herd to find any persistently infected (PI) animals and remove them from the herd
- PI animals should be sent to slaughter or culled – they must not be sold to another farm
- Identified BVD PI animals that are not removed must be restricted to the farm for life and must be housed indoors and isolated from the rest of the herd
- All calves born into a BVD Not Negative herd must be antigen tested within 20 days of birth in the 12 months following detection of antibodies at an annual screening test (tag&test)
- To sell live, animals must have a pre-movement BVD antigen test no more than 60 days before the movement
- Pre-movement tests must be done by a vet UNLESS the test is on a young animal (within 20 days of birth) using an official UK eartag
- Animals sent direct to slaughter do not require a pre-movement BVD test

All herds:

- Animals bought in from outside Wales that do not have an individual BVD antigen status of negative will need to have a post-movement BVD test within 20 days of arrival
- In-calf cattle must be isolated until they calve unless they are BVD antigen negative and come from a BVD negative status herd

Badger Found Dead

Have you found a dead badger in Wales?

Testing badgers for TB can provide important information about the role of wildlife in spreading TB. Welsh Government is funding a project to collect and test badgers found dead.

If you find a dead badger please note the location of the carcase and call the dedicated badger found dead line on

08081695110

Pembrokeshire Project Update

A group from the Pembs Project Team joined by Abi Reader of the NFU was recently invited to Northern Ireland to speak to Farmers and Vets involved in the Shared Island Initiative on Bovine TB. This project will see Departments either side of the border collaborate on over 900 farms in northeast Donegal and 350 farms northwest of Northern Ireland on measures that seek to provide a regional approach to TB Eradication. The TB incidence rate in the ROI is similar to Wales at 5% and NI is double that at 10%.

The model being used in NI is based on the key principles of the Pembs Project:

- data analysis of existing skin test results to identify high risk animals (residual infection) allowing them to be sustainably managed out of the herd
- having enhanced biosecurity measures which protect the herd from all infectious diseases not just TB. It's all about "Managing risk" in key areas on farm to stop infection spreading

The extra measure being used in NI concerns wildlife intervention. Test, Vaccinate or Remove (TVR). Badgers are trapped then tested for TB using a cage side test. Animals testing negative are vaccinated and released. Those testing positive are culled – an option not available in Pembs or any part of Wales. Both projects either side of the Irish Sea can learn a lot from each other and we look forward to working collaboratively in the years ahead.