Newsletter

# Fenton Vets

**March 2026**

## Milk Feeding Hygiene

Struggling with scours? Plagued by poor calf performance? Could it be an issue with milk feeding hygiene? Going back to basics with your buckets can yield significant rewards!

1. **Rinse** – use warm, not hot water to remove residues (hot water actually 'cooks' the grot on to the equipment)
2. **Soak** – in hot water (50-60°C) with hypochlorite detergent for 30 minutes
3. **Scrub** – elbow grease!
4. **Wash** – in hot water (>50°C) to remove residues
5. **Re-rinse** – using an acid sanitiser
6. **Drain & Dry** – an essential step, often forgotten. Bacteria love moisture…
7. **Store** – somewhere clean & dry, off the floor where it will not be contaminated by aerosols from pressure washing or dirty boots

Test your system with a hygiene check: we can send off samples from your feeding equipment to measure total bacterial count – **would you eat off it?**

## AHIC

Fenton Vets are ready to go on the new Animal Health Improvement Cycle (AHIC). It is one of the 12 mandatory Universal Actions required to qualify for the new Sustainable Farming Scheme.

This involves working with your vet to identify one or more Production Health Metrics to work on over the next 12 months.

If you are signing up to the scheme, please get in touch so that we can look at getting your AHIC ready for action!

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Fenton Vets
Farm Animal

## Bluetongue Update - Spring 2026

With the 1st signs of spring appearing, we are heading towards another bluetongue risk period. Wales had 22 cases BTV-3 detected in 2025, with 287 in England. BTV-8 has been found in England, but is yet to be detected in Wales. Some BTV-3 cases have been found at routine testing, but others were associated with neurological signs in calves and fertility issues in cows.

- Cases are still being detected across the UK, including in Wales
- Booster vaccinations are strongly recommended for farms that completed the primary vaccination course last year. These animals will require a single dose booster this year
- Ideally, animals should receive their booster—or complete their primary vaccination course—before early May, or at least three weeks before the anticipated risk period. Midge activity, and therefore infection risk, is expected to increase from early June

Sheep require a single dose of 1ml, given under the skin. This should be boosted annually, at least 3 weeks before the high risk period (June)

Cattle not previously vaccinated require two 1ml doses, 21days apart, given into the muscle. Those vaccinated last season require a single 1ml booster dose at least 3 weeks before the high risk period.

## Bull MOT

It's time for the spring calving herds to get their bull power ready for action! Make sure that your bulls have an MOT well in advance of the breeding season. Check:

- **Feet** – the foundation of a working bull. Make sure they are trimmed appropriately and free from infection/defects
- **Testicles** – size, shape & tone are all important. Did you know that semen production is correlated with scrotal circumference – size does matter!
- **BCS** – the boys need to be fit, not fat @ score 2.5-3.0 is optimal
- Vaccinations – make sure that vaccinations in line with your herd health plan are up-to-date
- **Semen** – consider semen testing: 20% of bulls are subfertile and will reduce the reproductive performance of your herd

Make sure that you have enough bull power too. Young bulls should be stocked at a ratio of 1 bull: 15 non-pregnant females, but a mature bull should be able to handle 30.

## BATTLE BLUETONGUE FACT CHECK

### MYTH

Bluetongue vaccines cause infertility in cattle and sheep.

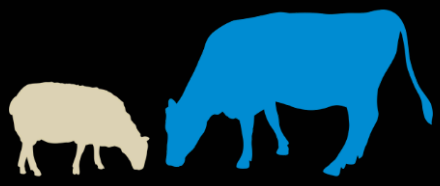
### FACT

The disease itself is the real threat. BTV can cause abortions, foetal deformities and stillbirths.

**Vaccination is safe.**

There's no evidence linking bluetongue vaccines to fertility problems in cattle or sheep.

**Don't wait for it to hit your farm. Protect now.**



Get trusted, up-to-date information on bluetongue:

**ruminanthw.org.uk/bluetongue-virus-hub**

SCAN ME