



Key health priorities for Summer

Cow fertility and recovery – Many cows will still be in negative energy balance. Body condition score your herd now – cows below BCS 2.5 face significantly extended calving intervals. Ensure any animals with unresolved metritis (uterine infection) or subclinical endometritis (low-grade uterine inflammation) are examined promptly; these are among the most underdiagnosed causes of poor conception rates in UK herds.

Calf respiratory disease – Calves born in March and April are entering a vulnerable window. A damp British summer creates ideal conditions for pneumonia, particularly in recently turned-out or mixed groups. Ensure your vaccination protocols cover the pathogens relevant to your unit. A calf with pneumonia left untreated for 24 hours risks permanent lung damage.

Parasites – June marks peak pasture larval challenge. *Ostertagia ostertagi* (brown stomach worm) in young stock and *Fasciola hepatica* (liver fluke) – both warrant attention. Use faecal egg counts (FECs) to guide treatment rather than blanket dosing; resistance is a growing problem and routine dosing is no longer recommended. Please speak to the practice if you want to set up regular FEC testing for the grazing season.

Summer mastitis and fly control – *Trueperella pyogenes*, the bacterium responsible for summer mastitis, can destroy a quarter in dry cows and heifers at pasture, with flies as the vector. Pour-ons, ear tags, and external teat sealants in at-risk animals offer meaningful protection.

Summer may feel quieter, but the decisions you make now – on data, breeding, and disease prevention – will define next spring. Use the time well.



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Best Time for Ram Testing

We will soon be thinking about testing tups, vasectomising teasers and deciding which ewes we keep to breed from next year. Ideally, we want tups tested 6-8 weeks before you plan to put them in with the ewes.

A few common issues we hear include “my tup lamb isn’t interested in the ewes” – depending on the breed of the ram, he might not have reached puberty yet and so if you are using a young ram, always have a back up option! We also see tups not producing samples on tup testing – this might happen for a number of reasons, not just infertility; other reasons include testing the tup outside of his mating season (too early), the ram has not been rested away from ewes for 3 days before coming to us for testing or some rams just don’t give a good sample with our method of testing so we can retry again the following week (note that some tups may not take to this method of testing at all, in which case a teaser ewe might be needed).

As always when picking rams for breeding we will perform a Ram MOT checking feet (lameness will affect fertility), teeth, testicles (ensuring no lumps or bumps), tone (we want a body condition score of between 3.5–4.0 (spine well covered) at 10 weeks before tupping) and treat (making sure all his vaccines/fluke/worming have been completed as necessary). These are all things you can check yourselves in rams you’re not planning to bring to us for testing.

For more information on Ram testing please give us a call and speak to member of the farm team.