

# Lisnafillan Farm Vets



January 2026 Newsletter 07791146060 07538375056

## Happy new year!

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a Happy New Year!

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

#### Flock health meeting

Our first flock health meeting of the year will be held on **Wednesday 21st January 2026 at 7pm**. The meeting topic will be "Survive and Thrive" where we will focus on the neonatal lamb. More details to follow!

#### Dairy calf meeting

We will be holding a Dairy meeting on **Thursday 22nd January 2026 at The Rossspark Hotel at 11.30am** focusing on the importance of a healthy start in the life of a dairy calf. This meeting will be held in conjunction with World Wide Sires. Lunch will be provided.

**Please call the office to register your interest for both of the meetings!**

### Flock metabolic bloods pre lambing

As we approach lambing for most flocks, it is the ideal time to check for nutritional status of ewes pre-lambing. By doing this we avoid common problems at lambing such as twin lamb disease and body condition loss.

It is important to get the timing correct. The best time to blood sample ewes is around 3-4 weeks before lambing starts. This allows time for nutritional adjustments to be made if required.

What sheep should you sample? Usually at least 5 sheep per management group (twins, triplets) should be sampled.

The major parameters tested are:

Beta hydroxybutyrate (BHB) - a by-product of negative energy balance; too high increases risk of twin lamb disease.

Urea - marker of current protein intake; too low will result in poor growth in unborn lambs and poor colostrum quality and milk yield.

Albumin – protein produced by the liver; too low would mean the liver isn't working properly which could indicate an underlying problem such as chronic liver fluke or Johne's disease, it would also result in poor colostrum quality, milk yield and a less effective immune system which would reduce response to vaccination.

How did your lambing go last year? If you had issues with twin lamb disease and poor colostrum then perhaps carrying out some pre-lambing metabolic bloods could help!

### Calf scour focus: Rotavirus

Rotavirus usually affects calves aged between 5-14 days. Clinical signs include a pale yellow diarrhoea, sometimes containing mucus and blood. Calves are dull and reluctant to drink. Due to this, calves can become dehydrated which puts them at greater risks to pick up secondary infections.

Prompt treatment is a must! Oral fluids are the most important line of treatment. Ideally allowing the calf to drink the electrolyte solution naturally should be the first option however if the calf is not drinking then stomach tubing is indicated. If the calf won't get up, it's time to give us a call! Intravenous fluids should be given at this stage.

As with all diseases, prevention is the key.

Hygiene: Keeping pens clean and dry is so important along with cleaning them out and disinfecting between calves.

Colostrum: Ensuring that the calf receives sufficient colostrum (at least two litres within six hours) is vital in the control of calf diarrhoea.

Vaccination: Vaccines such as Fencovis are available for giving to the dam to increase the amount of rotavirus antibodies in the colostrum. Ensuring the calves receive at least 10% body-weight of good quality colostrum from vaccinated dams within 6 hours of birth will result in a protection period of at least seven days. For farms with a severe rotaviral problem, continued feeding of colostrum from vaccinated dams can extend this period.

A gut stabiliser such as Precision Microbes can also be useful as it contains probiotics. The probiotics help heal the gut lining and bind pathogens. It also helps quickly restore good local immune function so is definitely worth including in a treatment plan for your calves to help aid and speed up recovery.

If you have a problem with calf scour, we can carry out diagnostics to determine the cause of the scour and recommend a treatment plan!

### Red Tractor and FQAS

Red Tractor and FQAS Given that we are very busy at this time of the year, we would just like to remind anyone with farm quality assurance or red tractor inspections coming up to please leave your paperwork in for our vets to complete at least 10 days in advance of your inspection date. Thank you for your cooperation!

## The value of diagnostics

Every day, our vets attend cases in which we take samples to further investigate the problem. This is a huge part of our job however there are many cases which perhaps have had treatment prior to us visiting and at this stage the diagnostic value of the tests can be limited. What can we do on farm?

Blood sample - blood sampling is a very easy method to investigate many issues including disease and metabolic problems.

Swabs - nasopharyngeal swabs can be used to investigate respiratory pathogens within a herd.

Faecal samples - We can efficiently test in house for worms, fluke and coccidiosis.

Skin scrapes - If you suspect ectoparasites but aren't sure what one or how to treat, we can take a skin scrape and investigate under the microscope.

Liver biopsy - This is a more recent method to investigate trace element status within a herd and can be done on farm.

Carcass submission to AFBI - This is a great option in a situation where an animal has died suddenly or you've had numerous animals affected in a group. AFBI can perform a full post mortem including further investigation into suspected diseases.

We know sometimes tests can give an inconclusive results, this can be extremely frustrating, it is for us too! However majority of the time lab results can be very helpful and prompt investigation often maximises the chances of a useful outcome. As you all know, we as an industry are being encouraged to reduce the use of antibiotics. So by using the available diagnostics to the best of our ability, we can obtain an accurate diagnosis and treat accordingly rather than trying all the bottles in our medicine cupboard and investigating when it's too late! So next time you have a poorly animal and reach for a medicine, ask yourself is this the right treatment? If the answer is "I'm not sure" then pick up the phone and speak to one of our vets for some advice! This could be a huge benefit to the health of the animal and financially!

## Calf booster

Calf Booster is formulated specifically for older calves & weanlings supporting growth rates, appetite and the natural management of immunity & gut health.

It is recommended to administer the product at key times of the calf's life including at times of stress e.g. after transport, when worming or vaccinating and to weak or sick animals. The key ingredients of Calf Booster include Rosemary, Oregano and Garlic which have been used for many years both in humans and animal remedies and their benefits to health have been described. Plant extracts contain many biologically active compounds which have been found to possess antimicrobial, antioxidant, antiviral, antiprotozoal, antifungal, and anti-inflammatory properties.

This product comes in 500ml bottles and the dose is 10-20ml depending on the weight of the calf.

## Fluke

Our mild autumn and generous helping of rain has bred perfect conditions for fluke to thrive. Recent flooding has also led to a lot of animals being forced to graze recently flooded ground which are some of the highest risk areas on farm.

Leaving in a faecal sample will allow us to check for overwintering fluke and get any affected animals treated. In January, the typical fluke treatment for sheep and cattle is a product that will target adult liver fluke. These fluke specific treatments for this time of year include oral drenches such as Oxy-closanide (Distocur & Zanil) or injectables such as Nitroxynil (Fascionix & Trodax).

Thanks to our ovacyte machine samples can be run same day to get fast and efficient results. We can test either an individual sick animal or to check a batch, faeces from approximately 10% gives us a good picture of what's going on. As always give us a call and we will be happy to get you sorted and dispense exactly what you need.

ACTIVE INGREDIENT	PRODUCT	ADMINISTRATION ROUTE	STAGE OF LIVER FLUKE KILLED
Albendazole	Albex	Oral	Adults only
Clostrulon	Bimectin Plus	S/C Injection	Adults only
Closantel	Solantel (Sheep only)	Oral	7 weeks onwards
Nitroxynil	Fascionix 34%	S/C Injection	7 weeks onwards
Oxy-closanide	Distocur	Oral	Adults only and RUMEN FLUKE
Triclabendazole	Endofluke	Oral	2 weeks onwards

\*Do not dose ewes at the 'fluke and worm' dose rate of Albendazole, (7.5 mg/kg), during tupping or for 1 month after removing the rams.

## Bacillus licheniformis

Bacillus licheniformis is a bacteria which is commonly found in silage that can cause abortions and stillbirths in cattle, particularly spring calving beef cows housed and fed pit silage in the last two months of pregnancy.

AFBI, our local veterinary laboratory, has noted a seasonal rise in *Bacillus licheniformis* in January-March for the last 4 years.

Reducing exposure is the best way to avoid this situation on farm:

- Feed the best available silage to late pregnant cows and heifers.
- Discard all mouldy and slimy silage.
- Clean away any uneaten silage from the feed passage before adding more.
- Clean out water troughs regularly.

If you have an abortion or a stillborn calf, please give us a call so we can investigate further and help prevent further problems on farm.

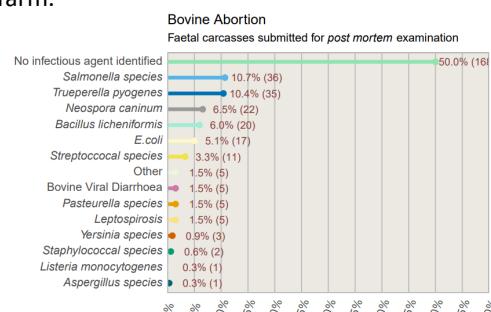


Figure 1: AFBI: Relative frequency of the identified infectious agents of bovine abortion from submitted foetal post mortems in 2023