

November 2022 Newsletter

Introducing Ubroseal® Blue



The benefits of internal teat sealants for cows at drying off are well established – reduced risk of new infections during the dry period results in fewer cases of mastitis in early lactation. For some time now, mastitis experts have recommended teat sealants for every cow, every dry period.

Until now, all teat sealants in the UK have been white in colour. Whilst this is what we're all used to, it does have some disadvantages in that white teat sealant doesn't stand out easily in milk and can be confused with mastitis clots.



Boehringer Ingelheim Animal Health have recently launched Ubroseal® Blue. This update to classic Ubroseal®, from white to easier to see blue, can help farmers to be confident of best practice when it comes to teat sealant administration and removal. Blue teat sealants have been popular for some time in other countries such as the USA.

Ubroseal® Blue (similar to the colour of Blu-tac) is clearly visible in milk. This makes it easier to be sure that all teat sealant has been removed when stripping out before milking, and easier to differentiate traces of teat sealant from mastitis clots. The blue colour also helps to highlight if traces are getting through to the milk filters – if you're seeing traces of sealant regularly in the milk filters it's worth reviewing administration and removal protocols - your vet can help with this.

Speak to one of our vets to find out more about Ubroseal® Blue.

Why a Mast year can cause a massive headache?

We have seen a steep rise in ACORN POISONING in many farm species. Acorns can pose a problem in any year, but 2022 is a 'Mast year', which means the trees are producing a bumper crop of acorns.

Livestock keepers should be on the lookout for dropping of acorns and green oak leaves that cause fatal poisoning. This is usually worse after it's been windy, so please keep an eye on your pasture and fence off areas dense in oak trees. If you suspect your animals have been eating acorns, we have more treatment options if you act quickly, ranging from supportive therapy to surgical removal of acorns from the stomach. Once acorns are metabolised, mortality rates can be up to 70%.

Signs of acorn poisoning include: vomiting and diarrhoea, abdominal tenderness, depression, rapid weight loss, loss of appetite, lethargy and dehydration.

Directions in just 3 words!

As a practice we have been using the "what3words" (w3w) app to help us get to calls, especially where the post-code is not always very helpful. For those who have not heard of it before, it is a program that divides the whole surface of the earth into 3 metre squares and gives each square an "address" of 3 words. You can download the app, for free, and set up log-in details. Once set up it will show where you are on the map – there is even a satellite view option. Tap on the square where you are and your "what3words" address will come up. There is an option to share this by text, e mail or WhatsApp etc or just phone it to someone!

If your stock are on off-ground or if you are at a different part of your farm to normal, we can get straight to you. You can even use it to show where to park! We have w3w addresses for most of the farms we go to but not all. If it is 3 am and you have, say, a lambing or calving in a field you can let us know exactly where you are or where the gate is. A great help to a bleary-eyed vet and a stressed farmer!

Early birds catch the rot!

Autumn and winter always brings with it uncertainty when it comes to weather. When the weather deteriorates the necessity for housing is likely and we'll start to see an increase in foot problems in sheep. We're going to give you a rundown of the most common causes of lameness, how to identify them and the best treatment and control strategies.

What causes sheep lameness?

Correct identification of the cause of lameness is important for proper treatment and control. The first lame sheep in a group, even if only mildly lame, should be examined immediately or within three days. In adult sheep the cause of lameness most often originates in the foot so the claws and interdigital cleft should be closely inspected.

What does scald look like?

The skin between the cleats looks pale pink, wet and there may be white pasty scum and hair loss. Predisposed by wet warm weather and poached fields. Can cause severe lameness.

What about foot rot?

Separation of the horn from the underlying tissue starting between the claws (like scald). Foul smelling greyish pus. Scald and foot rot are caused by the same bacteria. The infection is most commonly passed directly from sheep to sheep but the bugs can survive in the environment for short periods. Damp warm bedding is a perfect place for the bacteria so we often see problems at housing.

Contagious Ovine Digital Dermatitis (CODD)

Separation of the horn at the coronary band (the part of the claw closest to the skin). CODD does not involve the inter-digital space. There is often blood but no significant smell. Sheep are very lame and a large proportion can be affected. This is thought to be caused by the same bug that causes digital dermatitis in cattle.

Toe Granuloma

Strawberry like growth at the toe. May be hidden by loose horn. Often caused by over trimming or secondary to injury.

What's Shelly Hoof? (white line degeneration)

Partial detachment of the outer hoof wall with the gap becoming full of soil. Half-moon appearance > can progress to an abscess which bursts out above the coronary band.

Treatment

Once you have identified the correct problem there are some rules of thumb for treatment:

- Foot-rot or CODD: prompt identification and treatment with antibiotic spray and one long-acting injection
- Scald: individual cases > antibiotic spray OR treat as above. If group affected foot bathing can help

Remember foot rot, scald and CODD are infectious diseases so where possible separate affected animals from the rest of the flock. Animals should recover within 2-10 days. If they are not sound in two weeks, they should be re-examined and re-treated. Ideally animals should be culled if they have foot rot more than twice a year.

Trimming

Generally trimming is not necessary. It can have several detrimental effects including spreading disease, delaying healing and causing injury. Even overgrown feet should only be trimmed if it is affecting their ability to walk.

Control

1) Biosecurity

- If buying stock, purchase from farms which are free of foot rot and CODD or have evidence of a good control strategy
- Quarantine: Isolate for at least 21 days, inspect prior to joining flock and ensure there's no evidence of lameness. Treat where necessary.
- Isolate affected animals and cull those which are unresponsive to treatment

2) **Foot bathing:** particularly at key times (pre-housing, gathering)

3) **Vaccination:** a foot rot vaccine is available but this should be used alongside other control strategies. The response can be variable so please discuss this further with your vet.

4) Pasture management:

- Ensure you have a spare isolation field for lame sheep
- The area around water troughs should be well drained
- Feed troughs should be moved regularly to avoid poaching

5) Housing:

- House lame sheep separately
- Footbath all sound sheep prior to housing
- Treat all suspect cases of foot rot/ scald/ CODD
- Provide dry bedding, especially around water/feed troughs
- Avoid high stocking rates
- Change ALL bedding if putting healthy sheep into pens where lame sheep have been kept

If you would like more information on managing lameness in your flock, please speak to your vet. Alternatively, if you want to actively look at your flock health please take a look at our new Flock Health Club joining details.