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BLUETONGUE VACCINATION– ITS NOT TOO LATE

- AN UPDATE

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Dear All

Firstly an apology for the difficulties encountered over the supply of the first batches of the bluetongue vaccines. Unfortunately the delays and changes in bottle sizes were out of our control and the whole situation has been extremely frustrating for all. The first orders have now all been met using the Zulvac 8 vaccines.

We have now been informed that the Bluevac 8 vaccine should be available this week. Due to MSD carrying out a restructuring of the price, this vaccine now works out cheaper for sheep than the Zulvac 8 Ovis vaccine.

We are getting feedback that there is a feeling that it is now too late to vaccinate as there is around a 6-7 week delay between the first dose of vaccine and the development of full immunity. (2 doses 21 days apart and a further 20-25 days for the onset of immunity).

Based on the 2007-8 outbreak, ---- **IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO VACCINATE.**

In 2007-8 Bluetongue first arrived in the UK in the middle of September on a farm in Suffolk, but spread throughout the South East during September and October. A case was confirmed in Dorset in February 2008. What we don't know this season is if Bluetongue will reach the UK, if it does arrive where will it appear, and how fast and in what direction will it spread. All these factors are weather dependant as Bluetongue is spread by midges, so wind direction/strength and temperature are important in the disease patterns.

Anywhere along the South coast has to be at the highest risk of the first cases, and there would not be enough time to protect stock by vaccinating in the face of an outbreak should it arrive in our area first.

As highlighted in previous newsletters the disease can be quite devastating in sheep, and whilst the disease can be quite mild in cattle, mainly causing production losses, unvaccinated cattle act as "virus factories".

Therefore based on the information currently available we would strongly recommend vaccination of both cattle and sheep as soon as possible. The vaccines are licensed as safe to use in all stages of pregnancy.

All the Bluetongue vaccines are only available in 50 dose bottles. We would recommend the Bluevac 8 vaccine for sheep, and the Zulvac 8 Bovis vaccine for cattle.

If you wish to discuss Bluetongue vaccination further please contact one of us at the surgery.