

## NEWSLETTER MARCH 2009



Dear Client,

### BLUE TONGUE

#### Situation in Europe

2008            BTV8:-            France – 23000 cases – a vaccination programme during the summer 2007 outbreak was unsuccessful  
Germany – 2200 down from 21000 in 2007 following a vaccination programme during Winter 2007  
Belgium 21, Denmark 14, Netherlands 55, Spain 12, Sweden 26 cases  
BTV1:-            France 3500, Spain 2000, Portugal 37 cases.

#### Strain 8

Given that free trade with no movement restriction or vaccination requirements currently exists with much of Northern Europe (bar France, Spain, Portugal and Netherlands) the risk of BTV8 coming directly into Cumbria with imported stock remains high. Vaccination by UK farmers in the South of England will help with minimising the spread of infected midges northwards but will not prevent the import of animals from some previously infected countries. We recommend vaccinating all stock down to 1 month of age prior to turnout.

#### Strain 1

In 2008 this was circulating in Spain, Portugal, and France. However compulsory vaccination in France during Winter 2008 will reduce the likelihood of BTV1 spreading through infected midges to the UK. Due to EU law we are unable to vaccinate against BTV1 until we have the disease actively circulating in the UK. In the event of BTV1 reaching the UK, stock would not be covered by current vaccines.

As yet there is not a combined 1+8 but it is expected for the Winter 2009.

#### Symptoms.

Infection rates are close to 100% when blue tongue enters a herd or flock mortality rates vary but 13% in Cattle and 42% in Sheep was seen in Germany in 2007. Further economic costs include milk drop, abortion and treatment costs.

BTV8 infected animals will not be culled. No compensation is available for infected herds/flocks. Knackery costs will be significant.

The price of vaccine is expected to remain at much the same level when we use up the Defra stocks in the next few weeks. The 20mls becoming slightly cheaper and the 50ml dearer (possibly 5p per dose).

#### Our Message

This is a cheap vaccine which works well and it makes sense to protect all your animals.

The problems of side effects are greatly exaggerated.