



THE
WOOD
VETERINARY
GROUP



FARM NEWSLETTER APRIL 2020

Covid 19 Update

It would be impossible to send out a monthly newsletter without focusing on the global pandemic of highly contagious Coronavirus. As an industry it is vital that we maintain a strong food supply to an already struggling and panicked nation and in light of this we want to reassure you that your farm animal veterinary team at Woods will continue to provide you as close to “normal” services as is safe to do so over the coming weeks and months.

To ensure the ongoing safety of yourselves, other clients, and our practice team we have made changes to how we operate. We ask that you help us by taking the following measures to reduce the spread of Covid-19 and keep our veterinary team supporting your businesses and providing essential services:

Medicines Orders

We have acquired a safety net of stock in the practice to avoid shortages. We will maintain this excess of stock so that farms do not need to stockpile supplies:

- Please order normal amounts of medicines
- Please ring all orders into the office a minimum of 3 days ahead - we are receiving deliveries every 48 hrs rather than every day
- Vets will be also be visiting the practice much less often to collect your orders
- **For medicine collection, please do not enter reception.** Please ring the office from the carpark when you arrive, and your order will be placed outside the front door to avoid immediate contact

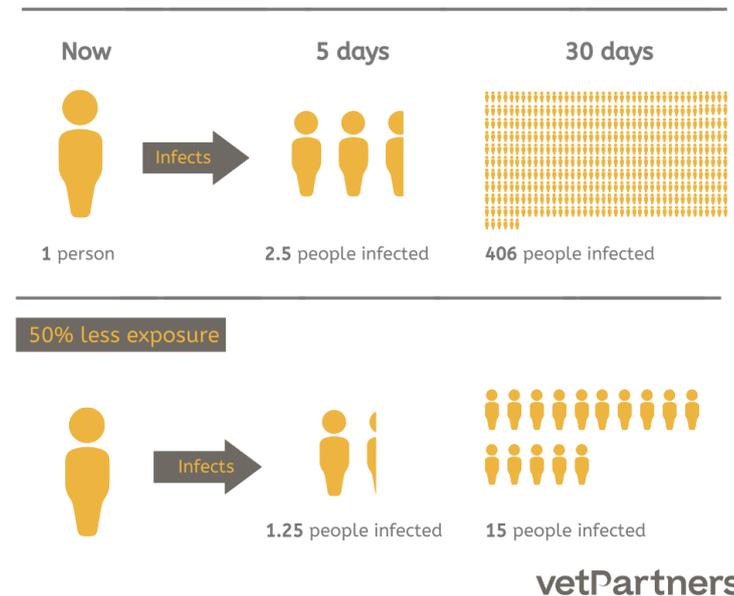
Farm Visits

We will maintain all routine and emergency calls – if we experience staffing shortages in the future, this may not be your usual vet but one of the team will get to you.

- If you or anyone on farm is unwell, in advised self-isolation or social distancing, please make us aware before we arrive on farm so that we can make the best decision to reduce risks for everyone
- We will continue to use our usual protective equipment and practice strict hygiene and biosecurity measures such as disinfecting between visits and wearing disposable gloves
- We will also be using antiseptic hand gel between farms
- **Please always practice social distancing – no hand shaking, passing equipment and stand 2 metres apart from other people. This is vital to avoid unnecessary infection spread**

Why social distancing is important

Social distancing of 2m significantly decreases the exposure and spread of Corona Virus (COVID-19). Help us all to stay safe during this time and respect the 2m distance from your vet and team members.



vetPartners

Lab Services

We have also made some changes in the staffing of the laboratory. More samples will be sent to external labs to minimise the impact on our diagnostic abilities:

- Please ring the practice before submitting a faecal sample for WEC or cocci counts. This is so we can arrange for a clinician to be there to run the sample
- Farm vets are carrying calf scour test kits so these can be run on farm
- We will not be running bulk milk or mastitis samples in house at present – these will be sent away
- Many external labs are reducing the list of tests they offer down to those conditions that are deemed welfare or production issues. What does this mean?:
 - o Most farm animal testing is continuing as normal but will be run less frequently
 - o Most Health Schemes are suspending testing and will contact their members directly about this if you are due a test soon

TB Testing

All TB testing is continuing where a 2-metre distance can be maintained i.e. minimal staff are required and good handling facilities are available i.e. crush for adult cattle and a crush or halter for younger animals.

- If you are unable to complete your test due to current illness or self-isolation, please contact APHA direct on 0300 020 301. Please let the office know when you have instruction from APHA
- We can apply, on an individual farm basis for a one off extension to your testing window where it is not possible to complete your test and maintain social distancing i.e. young calves with no calf crush
- This extension adds 30 days to a 2 month testing window or 60 days to a 3 month window. Please contact the office to request this extension application
- The window for IR testing and Trace animal testing cannot be extended
- If testing cannot be completed within the newly extended window, farms will be placed under movement restriction but no financial penalty will be imposed under the current circumstances



Castration of Bull Calves

In the current situation it is difficult for us to surgically castrate calves whilst maintaining a safe 2 metre distance. In light of this, we advise that as many calves as possible should be castrated by ringing at birth:

- By law calves can be castrated with a rubber ring **under 7 days old** by a trained member of staff
- Best done within 24 hrs of birth at tagging to make it easier
- Make sure there are two testicles in the scrotum before the ring is released from the pliers



Plenty of studies have found that **there is no benefit between surgical castration at 3 months and ringing under 7 days old on weight at weaning or final kill weight** but the 'check' that occurs from castration is far less if done by rubber ring under 7 days old.

Countryside Productivity Small Grant Scheme

In some better news, the deadline for the Countryside Productivity Grant has been extended from 31st May and applications will now be accepted up to 31st July 2020. The 2nd round of this grant scheme is open to all farm business applicants for 40% grants of a value between £3000 and £12,000. The list of items that the grant can be applied for is extensive and includes items suitable for dairy, beef and sheep farmers with a heavy focus on handling, weighing, ID recording and health promotion as well as arable management items. It is well worth a look if you were on the brink of investing especially with a reduced amount of staff available on farm. Please visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/countryside-productivity-scheme> for more information and click on the link to the handbook.