



Christmas Newsletter

December 2025

*WISHING EVERYONE A MERRY
CHRISTMAS!*



As 2025 draws to a close, we'd like to thank all the farmers, smallholders and livestock pet owners that we've had the privilege of working with this year.

2025 has been a significant year for us, steering the practice through new relationships, new vets, the usual amount of unpredictable weather, curveballs, highs, lows...it is farming after all...you know what we mean!

But it has been a joy to have been there to support our clients through everything from routine visits to those unexpected emergencies that always seem to choose a weekend.

From all of us here, thank you for your trust and partnership. We wish you and your livestock a safe, peaceful, and joyful Christmas, and a healthy, successful New Year.

The Livestock Clinic Team

Bird Flu update:

Avian Influenza (bird flu), particularly the highly pathogenic H5N1 strain, continues to circulate in the UK and across Europe this winter. Recent government animal health data shows new confirmed cases of HPAI in poultry flocks, including premises in Kent and Essex in the South East, where 3 km protection zones and 10 km surveillance zones have been declared to contain the disease and prevent further spread. These disease control zones mean strict rules on movement of birds, eggs, manure, and equipment apply within and around affected areas, and keepers in those zones must follow all biosecurity and reporting requirements. The UK remains under an Avian Influenza Prevention Zone, so heightened vigilance and preventive measures are advised for all bird keepers.

For smallholders, the risk of bird flu entering flocks is driven largely by contact with wild birds or indirectly through contaminated equipment and people. Maintaining strong biosecurity is essential – this includes housing birds where required, restricting access to poultry areas and cleaning and disinfecting footwear and tools. The risk is elevated over the winter months due to migratory wild birds from Europe therefore prepare accordingly by securing feed indoors and minimising contact with wild waterfowl.

In chickens, signs often come on quickly and may include sudden death, marked lethargy, loss of appetite, a sharp drop or stop in egg laying, respiratory signs (gasping, coughing, nasal discharge), diarrhoea, and swelling or dark discolouration of the comb, wattles, or legs. Some birds may show nervous signs such as tremors or loss of balance. Other poultry species can look different: ducks and geese may show fewer obvious signs at first but can carry and spread the virus, while turkeys often develop more severe respiratory and neurological signs.

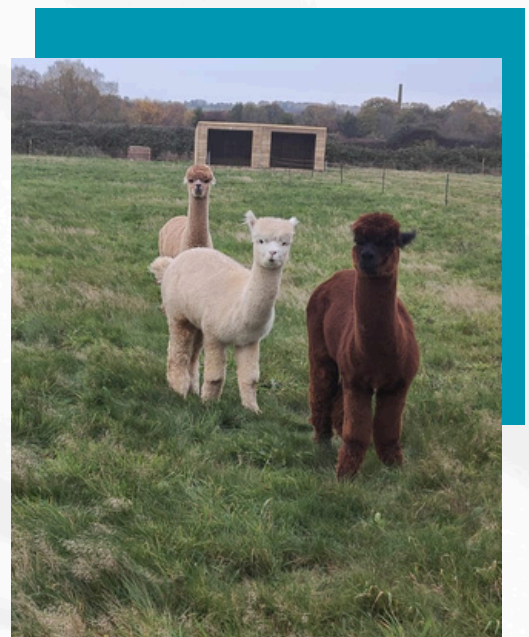
*Any suspicion of avian influenza in the UK must be reported immediately by calling the Defra Rural Services Helpline on: **03000 200 301** – early reporting protects your birds and others.*

Dogs (Protection of Livestock) (Amendment) Bill:

On the 5th December 2025 the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) (Amendment) bill passed its final stage in the House of Lords. The amendment to the bill means that camelids are now included within the definition of ‘Livestock’ which applies for the purpose of the offence of Livestock Worrying. The change means camelid owners are now protected if a dog is seen to be chasing or attacking an alpaca or llama, and the dog owner can now be punished under the new bill.

Updated terminology now separates the act of ‘attacking’ and ‘worrying’ livestock, so that these offences are now dealt with differently.

The amendment now covers livestock worrying incidents on roads and paths and ‘any agricultural land’ unless ‘livestock are on the road or path as a result of straying from where they are kept’.



Managing cattle this winter:

There are a few important things to bear in mind this winter with cattle.

1. Worm the youngstock (<2 years of age) with an ivermectin-based wormer (if not organic) to clear out any *Ostertagia* worm larvae that may be overwintering in the stomach wall. This will prevent type 2 ostertagiasis in early spring when these larvae become active causing severe weight loss and diarrhoea. Adult cattle should have developed immunity.
2. If there is a history of liver fluke in the herd, now is the ideal time to treat the whole herd, to clear out existing fluke and keep the liver damage minimal. Immunity to fluke does not develop, so yearly treatment must be carried out to prevent health issues.
3. If you have had diarrhoea in young calves in previous years, consider vaccinating the cows before calving with a suitable scour vaccine that can help prevent scours due to *E.coli*, rotavirus, and coronavirus.
4. If housing overwinter, be on the lookout for ventilation problems in the shed that can lead to pneumonia outbreaks. Should an outbreak of pneumonia occur, testing can be done to identify the pathogen involved, and help us to advise what vaccine might be useful in future years.



Please call 01483 342070 for all enquiries and OOH emergencies



Christmas Opening hours:

*Thursday 25th – Sunday 28th December:
No routine visits, emergencies only.*

*Monday 29th – Wednesday 31st December:
Normal opening hours (8.30am – 5pm)*

*Thursday 1st January 2026:
Emergencies only*

Normal opening hours resume 2nd January.

Upcoming Events.

2026

The Old Stables, Wisborough Green, RH14 0HJ

FEB

12

Small ruminant lameness and foot trimming

An informative and interactive session on tackling foot problems in sheep and goats.

10am - 12pm. The Old Stables, RH14 0HJ

March

11

General husbandry for pet goat keepers

Highlighting husbandry essentials, including nutrition, routine health care and what to look out for.

2 - 4pm. The Old Stables, RH14 0HJ

April

17

Unpacking management for Alpaca owners

An educational session on managing alpacas during unpacking and neonatal cria.

1 - 3pm. The Old Stables, RH14 0HJ

**For more information or to book onto any of our events
please call the practice on 01483 342070 or email
info@thelivestockclinic.co.uk**

