

B.A.B.S NEWSFLASH No13

APRIL/MAY 2009

I hope you all had some of that good weather over Easter. By now your kiddings are probably over and you are looking towards the fast approaching shows. There seems to be a positive buzz in the air this spring with one or two new goatkeepers about. I hope the one or two we have lost will keep in touch and we will see them every now and then.

If we can have a clear run through this year and a few sunny days,(I am sure we must be due some), maybe goat keeping will turn the corner. We are all very busy looking after and earning the money to pay for the animals,, sometimes so busy we forget to enjoy them My resolution for this year is to try to find a little extra time to spend with the animals, just enjoying them. Well, we can all hope!

SOCIAL EVENTS

STRAWBERRY TEA

Sunday 26th July from 2 – 6pm

At Rose Cottage, Waterley Bottom, North Nibley, Dursley Glos GL11 6EF

Ruth will have a strawberry tea in her garden at Rose Cottage and there will be a plant sale so please bring any extra plants you can donate. The proceeds will be shared between BABS and the Gloucestershire Goat Society. Ruth Candy Tel 01453 542230

KIDS AND NANNIES

Sunday 15th August from 11am

At Stow House, Dauntsey Road, Great Somerford, Wilts. SN15 5HU

General get together, and lunch, please bring contributions, plant sale and baking competition

The proceeds will be shared between BABS and the Gloucestershire Goat Society. AND A SPECIAL INVITATION TO ALL YOUNG PEOPLE, children, grandchildren and young helpers.

Please let us know of any youngsters who may be coming and their ages and we will try to arrange some appropriate entertainment for them. Sue Gow 01249 720621 email suegow@hotmail.co.

STUD LIST

Please send any details of males or kids to

Debbie Vernon Westward, Faversham Road, Wychling, Kent ME9 0DH

Tel 01795 886202 email shanverngoats@googlemail.com

SCRAPIE MONITORING SCHEME

There seems to be some concern between members as to whether they should become scrapie monitored or not. Quite a few people did become monitored over the last couple of years and now a few have dropped out again due to the charges made by the new scheme. As there are so few of us now the main problems are arising when it comes to passing around males. My concern is also that when selling goats it is not always possible to say you can take the goats back if there are any problems as few new goatkeepers are going to be monitored. It would be helpful to all if we could all go the same way. Perhaps Charlie can help us out on this one; it would be good to hear your thoughts.

Goat Veterinary Society 2.4.09

BTV UPDATE after Stakeholder Meeting Monday March 30th

Current number of premises in total that have shown evidence of BTV in England is 149. Of those some 67 were found in 2007, and the rest in 2008. However no home-grown animals were found with circulating virus in 2008, so all the seropositives are thought to have been the result of infection acquired in 2007

The exception was 12 lots of imported animals which were found to have active infection, despite having according to their accompanying paperwork, been correctly vaccinated. As a result of this the testing of imported animals will CHANGE AS FROM YESTERDAY

All imported ruminants will now be subjected to a PCR test 1 to 2 days after arrival in the UK, and again 7 days later, which is expected to pick up any animals that may have been incubating infection at the time of the first blood test.

SURVEILLANCE

377 animals imported since January 1st 2009 have been tested negative to a single PCR. A trial of bulk milk testing with a test that is not officially validated, has been carried out on 70 herds totalling 7428 cows. these were mainly in the west and north as the test cannot differentiate between vaccinal response and response to natural infection, and there are very few unvaccinated dairy herds in the 2008 over winter PZ.

The EU rules on surveillance are currently under discussion. DEFRA have long considered them to be over expensive!! Some relaxation seems likely at some time, but DEFRA seem to be taking the view that with 25,000 premises infected with BTV8 in France, the chances of the UK being clear of disease in 2009 is very low, and surveillance to a higher standard is only likely to be cost effective in 2010, and that will assume that infection in France is under control by then. We need to have 2 years freedom from circulating virus, proven by surveillance to internationally accepted standards, before we can be declared disease free.

INFECTION LEVELS in the rest of the EU.

Main report so far is 51 cases found on surveillance in Germany since Jan 1st.

These will all be old infections.

The discovery of disease in southern Norway is quite surprising in that virus is now thought to have been circulating there. As that is the same latitude as the Dornoch Firth, it rather puts into perspective any complacency about the need for vaccination in Northern England, where uptake last year was only 25%

THE SITUATION IN FRANCE is the major cause of concern for us.

The whole of France is now a PZ for BTV1, though according to the French Authorities there are restrictions on the movement of animals out of the BTV1 infected areas until they have been vaccinated, anecdotal evidence suggests that this has proved difficult to enforce, and thus there is a concern that BTV1 may be over wintering in animals being brought north, which is totally legal under international rules. That could have awkward implications for us.

Furthermore, anecdotal evidence also suggests that many French Farmers are only vaccinating young stock on the principle that they see no need to vaccinate animals that were exposed to infection last year. Again this somewhat convenient farmer talk is likely to leave a dangerously large number of animals in France unprotected if it is true.

It is very difficult to know just what will happen, and the proof either way will not really become evident until midsummer, by which time we should have a fair idea how successful containment has been. The Vector Free Period in the south of France must surely now be over!!

VACCINATION AND VACCINE AVAILABILITY

There are currently 10.6 million doses in the UK supply chain, left over from that underwritten by DEFRA last year, expiring as follows, 4.7 million doses in June, 4 million in July, and 1.9 million in August. There will be no need to stock only against definite orders, vaccine can be ordered on a normal commercial basis, and it may be prudent to make sure it is going to be used before it expires!!. If the vaccine is not taken up, it could be sold abroad. It is assumed that plenty of BTV8 vaccine will be available.

BTV1.

The risk of BTV1 coming into the UK is difficult to assess, but is by no means negligible. A buffer stock of vaccine is likely to be purchased when available, for use in emergency as ring vaccination.

BTV6 and BTV11 are currently thought not to be a serious risk to the UK.

BLUE ZONE

The possibility of setting up a so called blue zone in the UK where the area is declared free of circulating virus, but vaccination is allowed, was discussed again. The problem is that the cost of surveillance and the effect of zoning the country might well outweigh any possible advantage.

CONCLUSIONS

1. THERE is a HIGH RISK that infection could flare up ANYWHERE in mainland Britain in 2009

2. VACCINATION CONTINUES TO BE THE ONLY SAFE OPTION

There is no likelihood of a BTV1/8 combined vaccine coming available this year, and thus BTV1 vaccine has to be used separately, and not within 2 weeks of BTV8 vaccine. They cannot it would appear be given together. It might therefore in the highest risk BTV1 area, which is in effect the South coastal area, be wise to make sure that BTV8 vaccine is done NOW in case you need to use BTV1 vaccine later. That I realise may be easier said than done, especially for lambs and spring born calves and kids!!.

3. It remains ESSENTIAL to report ALL cases that might be BTV, even in vaccinated animals. Remember it might be ANOTHER strain of BT

4. It is not known how many animals may have over wintered the virus. These would usually be calves whose mothers became infected while early pregnant in the autumn.

Some of these are presented as "Mentally deficient". Quite a number are stillborn. Many animals can be symptom less carriers, and those could similarly have moved disease around the country undetected.

5. The message is that for now, if you DO NOT vaccinate then not only YOUR STOCK WILL BE AT RISK, but also EVERYBODY ELSE'S.

In saying that, I think we all at the meeting hope that this time The French vaccination campaign is successful. It needs infection there to fall to a very low level of both strains before we are out of danger, and if we do not protect ourselves we have only ourselves to blame.

6. Please note the problem of vaccinated goats not being accepted by importing countries. The rationale behind the non acceptance is distinctly muddled!!.. Efforts are being made behind the scenes to improve matters, but are likely to be difficult.

Nick Clayton.

BLUETONGUE UPDATE MAY 5th 2009

THE FIRST CASE IN EUROPE THIS YEAR

France has reported their first case of Bluetongue this year. That is not a complete surprise in itself, but the circumstances are very odd in that it is confirmed as being BTV1 in an ALPACA in Haute Saone, which is just south east of the Champagne region not far from the German border.

That is several hundred miles away from any previous BTV1 infection, and it will be very interesting to see how it got there.

The case shows the danger of moving livestock around in these situations. The animal may well have been vaccinated, but we have no way of knowing, and there has been little work done on the efficiency of any of the vaccines in camelids.

It is unlikely that the joint vaccine will be available in the UK until late this year at the earliest on present estimates, so BTV1 vaccination will be done on an as needed basis. The French situation with their new case of BTV1 highlights the danger, but There is no plan to do a pre emptive vaccination against BTV1 until or unless it is decreed to be circulating here, largely because of the disruption that putting in place extra Protection Zones would cause, particularly if not really needed!

Current advice re use of the Merial Vaccine remains unchanged. The initial doses of any of the vaccines should be of the same vaccine, but boosters can then be with any brand, with further revaccination intervals being guided by whatever vaccine was last used.

Nick Clayton.