



nantwich
farm vets LTD

APRIL 2026

A positive outlook?

After a long, wet winter, it's a welcome relief to see settled weather and some sunshine. Ground conditions are improving, turnout is underway on many farms, and there's a real sense of the season changing as we move into spring.

It's been a particularly busy period at Nantwich Farm Vets, with lambing and calving in full swing. These months always bring challenges, but also plenty of reward, and it's been encouraging to see many farms achieve successful outcomes at this critical time of year.

The dairy sector has faced its difficulties in recent months. Milk volumes have been restricted on some contracts, and prices have been lower than many would have hoped. That said, there are early signs of cautious optimism. Tightening supply, both domestically and globally, could support a gradual improvement in the market as the year progresses.

Many farms have had to find creative solutions to manage excess milk, with more calves than ever being fed whole milk. If you are in this situation, involving your vet is important. There are clear benefits to this approach, but also risks, particularly around cleanliness, disease control, and staff management. Planning ahead ensures calves receive the full benefit of the oversupply safely and efficiently.

In contrast, the beef sector continues to perform strongly. Prices remain high due to herd numbers, strong consumer demand, and tighter supply chains from abroad. Interest in beef production is growing, with dairy cross calves and barren cows commanding strong prices, offering additional income opportunities for many farms.

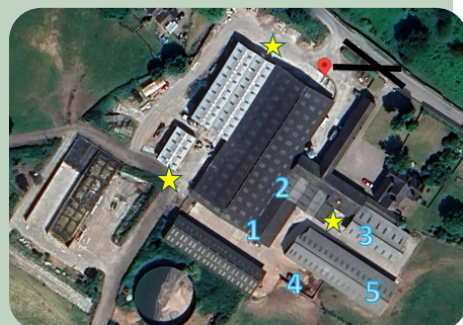
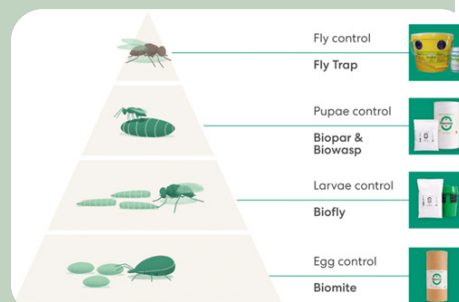
If expanding beef production or managing dairy cross calves is of interest, your vet can provide guidance. At Nantwich Farm Vets, we have extensive experience in setting up and managing successful beef rearing systems, helping farms maximise opportunities while maintaining animal health and welfare.



Make your farm a No Fly Zone

Following a very successful meeting with Bestico last month, we have just finished sending out this year's fly control plans. These are designed to target likely areas of fly breeding on the farm, and will be starting early enough in the season to prevent a large fly population developing in the first place. The nuisance flies you see are the tip of iceberg; biological control plans aim to deal with fly lifecycles at a much earlier stage

Consisting of a mix of Biowasp, Biofly, Biomite and bucket traps as appropriate, each plan is custom designed for the farm, and agreed in conjunction with the farmer. Deliveries happen every 2 weeks throughout the season and can be spread either by you, or our vet techs can come and spread for you.



To bust a myth – use of Biowasp or Biofly will not result in you seeing lots of 'wasps' around the farm, or replacing one nuisance fly population with another. These mini-insects are the size of a grain of rice, so you're unlikely ever to see one on your farm. They just work away unseen, preying on nuisance fly larvae so they never get a chance to develop into adults and reproduce.

Prevention is better than cure and there's still time to get ahead for 2026, so if you'd like more information contact the office and ask to speak to Becky, Jenny or Phil.

Anthelmintic resistance

Faecal egg counting (FEC) is a well-established method for monitoring worm burdens in sheep and building sustainable worming plans. With our in-house Ovacyte machine now in use for two years, testing has become more affordable, enabling more farmers to monitor their flocks regularly. Through the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway (AHWP) funding, I have been able to visit more farms and carry out broader testing of anthelmintic (wormer) efficacy.

In cattle, FEC is also recognised as a useful tool, particularly in youngstock, helping guide decisions around responsible and targeted treatment. Integrated parasite management and worm egg counting in cattle is an area I plan to focus on further following my return from maternity leave next year.

Anthelmintic resistance is defined as the heritable ability of worms to survive a dose of wormer that would normally be effective. While a lack of clinical improvement after treatment can indicate resistance, more structured methods are available to assess wormer efficacy.

Drench testing involves taking faecal samples from 10 treated sheep a set number of days after treatment, depending on the product used. Its accuracy improves if samples are also taken before treatment, allowing comparison of egg counts.

A more robust method is the **faecal egg count reduction test (FECRT)**, which compares a treated group with an untreated control group. Ideally, each group should contain 15–20 sheep, with FECs taken before and after treatment. The percentage reduction in egg count is then calculated, with anything below a 95% reduction raising suspicion of resistance.

Other laboratory-based tests, such as **larval development tests** and **egg hatch assays**, are available but less commonly used due to higher costs and the need for specialist input.

One of the key challenges is that visible clinical signs may not appear until treatment efficacy has dropped significantly—potentially as low as a 50% reduction on FECRT. By this stage, lamb growth rates may already have been affected. In practical terms, by the time a problem becomes obvious, resistance may already be well established. This highlights the importance of proactive monitoring.

It is also important to recognise that treatment failures are not always due to resistance. Incorrect dosing, poor administration technique or equipment issues can all reduce effectiveness, so these factors should be ruled out first.

Over the past year, we have carried out drench testing and FECRT for several clients, with quick turnaround times. Although the dataset is relatively small (13 farms), some clear trends have emerged (see Fig. 1).



Wormer type	Flocks tested	Resistance suspected
Group 1 - white	2	2
Group 2 - yellow	3	3
Group 3 - clear	5	4
Group 4 - orange	3	1

Figure 1: Number of cases of suspected resistance for each wormer type tested at NFV

Something that particularly surprised me was yellow drenches (Group 2) showing poorer responses than expected, despite relatively limited use of levamisole in many flocks. Resistance to white drenches (Group 1) is already widespread, and poorer performance from clear drenches (Group 3) is less surprising given their frequent use.

These findings reflect the wider national picture, where it is estimated that 98% of UK sheep farms have resistance to at least one class of wormer. This reinforces the importance of avoiding repeated use of the same product throughout the grazing season, across consecutive years, or between different groups of animals.

The presence of resistance does not mean there is a need to panic. With careful planning, worm burdens can still be managed effectively. We can help develop tailored strategies that reduce reliance on specific products, lower selection pressure on worm populations, and maintain ongoing monitoring of treatment efficacy. Resources from **SCOPS** can also provide useful guidance.

In cattle, the situation presents a different challenge. Worm control relies heavily on a single class of wormer—Group 3 (ivermectins)—largely due to milk residue restrictions and the convenience of pour-on products. This limited range of options increases the risk of resistance developing more quickly, as worm populations are repeatedly exposed to the same chemical year after year.

In practice, there have been increasing reports of reduced responses to pour-on treatments. However, as with sheep, resistance is not the only possible explanation. A proportion of pour-on product can be lost through licking or rainfall before it is fully absorbed, resulting in underdosing. This reduces treatment effectiveness and increases the risk of resistance. Suboptimal application can also lead to unintended consequences such as residues in meat or faeces, with potential environmental impacts. This reinforces the importance of correct product selection, accurate dosing, and good administration technique.

Overall, sustainable worm control in both sheep and cattle depends on a combination of monitoring, appropriate product use, and forward planning. FEC and efficacy testing remain key tools, allowing informed decisions that protect both animal health and the long-term effectiveness of treatments.





FETF and AHWP

As we head into spring and the weather finally starts to turn, things are picking up pace on farm and in the practice. Turnout, calving and lambing are keeping us all busy, and attention naturally shifts to making the most of the months ahead.

The busy period also coincides with the reopening of the **Farming Equipment and Technology Fund (FETF)**, offering a timely opportunity to receive up to 50% funding for investments relating to improving productivity, managing slurry and – most importantly for us – improving animal health and welfare.

Many of you will already be familiar with how the FETF works. Last year, over 60 of our clients involved us in their applications, using vet input to strengthen the link between planned investments and herd or flock health. That approach paid off, with uplifts on scores being awarded and plenty of funding being won. This year, while that specific uplift has been removed, the overall focus remains the same. Applications will be assessed on real outcomes, particularly around animal health, welfare, productivity and efficiency. The strongest applications will clearly demonstrate how an investment will make a genuine difference on your farm.

Meanwhile, a consultation on the **Animal Health and Welfare Pathway (AHWP)** has just opened, with consideration being given to making Pathway-style visits and disease testing mandatory from 2027. If this happens, then the currently-available funding may well be removed and farms may have to cover costs themselves.

Although many of our clients have benefitted from AHWP funding, there is still plenty of money available; in fact, opportunities have broadened and amounts actually increased recently. This is where we can help. By starting your AHWP review, we can get you funding and provide a structured, practical assessment of your herd or flock, along with clear, farm-specific recommendations and some funded disease testing. These insights can then strengthen your FETF application, providing solid justification for your funding requests.

If you're considering applying, you need to move quickly – the FETF submission window closes at midday on 28th April. Speak to your routine vet or call Phil at the practice to discuss options and get started.

Team News

What was Nantwich Farm Vets LLP has now become Nantwich Farm Vets Ltd. What's in a name? Well, a different bank account for a start. If you currently pay our invoices by BACS or direct transfer, please use the bank details below with immediate effect, and make cheques payable to Nantwich Farm Vets Ltd. If you're on Direct Debit you don't need to do anything. If the Direct Debit sounds simpler for you, please contact the office.

Account Name: Nantwich Farm Vets Ltd
Sort Code: 60-40-08 Account: 42431395

In other team news, this month sees Craig and Joe stepping into their new roles as Partners, and Dave hanging up his partnership boots. He will continue working Mon-Wed doing export work for the practice, so you'll still see him driving about the counties at speed in his high viz!

On a final note, we say goodbye to Claudia Tonks from our office team. She is moving on to an exciting role on the Procurement and Rearing Team for ABP UK, so Claude, we wish you all the very best for the future and thanks for all your hard work at NFV!

Dates for your diary

Thurs 23rd April, 10:30am

Medicines Course

Farmers assured through Red Tractor need to update on one of these courses (or similar) every five years, so these courses are very popular. £70+VAT. Includes a hot lunch!

Wed 29th April - Fri 1st May

Intermediate Hoof Trimming Course

A course suitable for all skill levels, from those with no trimming experience to those having done it for years and needing a knowledge refresher. Theory includes anatomy, lesion id and risk factors, and on-farm practical includes use of both knives and grinders. £750+VAT.

Get in touch...



nantwich
farm vets LTD

Hurleston, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 6BU



01270 610349



office@nantwichfarmvets.co.uk
orders@nantwichfarmvets.co.uk



www.nantwichfarmvets.co.uk

Follow us on ...

