



nantwich
farm vets LTD

JULY 2026



It was great to catch up with a few of you at Cheshire Show last month. Read on to find out about our upcoming show appearances, a Welsh BVD update, Bluetongue preparation, and other exciting upcoming courses and events!

Welsh BVD Legislation **- changes from 1st July 2026**

Welsh BVD legislation is changing from **1st July 2026**. The following requirements will apply to all cattle keepers in Wales.

Annual BVD screening

All herds in Wales must complete a **BVD antibody screening test** before 1st July 2026 and repeat this **annually**.

The test requires a blood sample from:

- 5 calves aged 9–18 months, or
- 10 calves aged 0–9 months, or
- fewer animals if these numbers are not available.

Keepers are responsible for arranging the test with their vet.

Herd status

If a herd has a Negative BVD status, cattle can continue to move without restrictions.

A herd will become **Not-Negative** if the required annual testing is not completed, or any heifers test positive for BVD antibodies during screening.

Requirements for Not-Negative herds

If a herd becomes Not-Negative, the keeper must arrange a **PI (persistently infected) animal hunt** using ear tag or blood samples.

The following testing requirements apply:

- All calves (including stillborn or aborted) born into a Not-Negative herd must be tested for BVD virus.
- Live calves must be tested before they are 20 days old.
- Stillborn or aborted calves must be tested within 7 days.

- Any calf born in the previous 12 months while the herd had Not-Negative status must also be tested.

Movement restrictions

Animals from Not-Negative herds cannot move freely unless they are:

- moving directly to slaughter,
- moving for veterinary treatment, or
- covered by an appropriate movement licence.

Before any other movement, the keeper must **pre-movement BVD test**, either themselves by ear tagging or with their vet by blood sample.

Animals can only move on a negative result, valid for 60 days. Moving a BVD-positive or PI animal is an offence.

Moving cattle from England into Wales

Cattle moving from England into Wales must either have a negative BVD virus test result already recorded, or, if their BVD status is unknown, be post-movement tested for BVD virus within 20 days of arrival. As with pre-movement testing, this can be done by ear tag by the Welsh buyer, or blood tested by their vet.

“WHAT DO I NEED TO DO NOW?”

If you keep cattle in Wales, check your herd status (you hopefully have done a herd screen before 1st July!).

Speak to your vet if you have cattle moving between England and Wales and need further clarity on the rules.

If you would like to discuss how these changes may affect your business, contact Laura on 07800 647608.



(click me for more info)



Don't let Bluetongue bite: Preparing for the summer midge challenge

As we move into the height of summer, attention is turning once again to bluetongue (BTV), which remains a significant disease threat facing UK livestock. With midge activity now increasing, the risk of disease spread is rising, and preparation is essential to protect herd and flock health.

Over the past year, bluetongue has continued to spread across Great Britain, with BTV-3 now considered established in many areas. Since 1st July 2025, there have been more than 300 confirmed cases across Great Britain, the majority in England, alongside a few cases in Wales. Most have been BTV-3, although BTV-8 has also been detected.

Importantly, this is no longer just a disease affecting farms elsewhere. Within our own practice, we have now had multiple cattle herds and sheep flocks test positive for bluetongue exposure, demonstrating that the virus is circulating locally.

WHY IS BTV A CONCERN THIS SUMMER?

Bluetongue is spread by biting *Culicoides* midges, rather than through direct contact between animals. This means that, unlike diseases such as BVD or Leptospirosis, traditional biosecurity measures cannot prevent infection. Infected midges can be carried considerable distances by the wind, allowing the virus to spread rapidly between farms.

Risk is greatest during late summer and autumn when midge numbers peak. Mild winters can also extend the period of midge activity, increasing the opportunity for disease transmission.

Experience from previous outbreaks suggests that the second year of circulation can often have a greater impact than the first. This is particularly relevant in the UK, where immunity levels remain low in many herds and flocks, especially against BTV-8.

THE FERTILITY IMPACT

For many farms, the timing of bluetongue risk is a major concern. Those relying on autumn breeding, whether for spring calving or lambing, are entering their most important reproductive period just as midge activity peaks.

A bluetongue infection at this stage can have a significant impact on fertility, potentially leading to reduced conception rates, abortions, early losses and problems with offspring health.

In cattle, the effects can be particularly difficult to spot. We often find evidence of previous bluetongue infection when investigating unexpected fertility problems, reduced pregnancy rates or changes in reproductive performance.

SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR

The severity of bluetongue varies between species, with sheep generally showing more obvious signs than cattle.

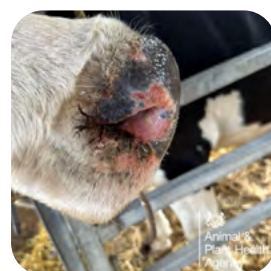
In sheep, watch for:

- High temperatures and depression
- Swelling of the face, lips and tongue
- Mouth ulcers, drooling and nasal discharge
- Lameness
- Reduced fertility or increased returns after tupping
- Weak or abnormal lambs following infection during pregnancy



In cattle, signs may be much more subtle:

- Fever
- Reduced milk yield
- Mouth lesions or nasal discharge
- Lameness
- Reduced reproductive performance
- Abortions or congenital abnormalities in calves



Some cattle may show very few outward signs despite being infected.

MOVEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

At present, England and Wales remain within a Bluetongue Restricted Zone (RZ), allowing movements between the two countries. However, if you are planning to move livestock into Scotland for summer shows, sales or other purposes, the rules are much stricter, with pre-movement blood testing required within seven days of movement.

The [Bluetongue Movement Checker](#) remains a useful resource for checking the latest requirements:

VACCINATION – YOUR BEST LINE OF DEFENCE

Vaccination remains the most effective way to reduce the impact of bluetongue on your herd or flock. While vaccines are serotype-specific and may not completely prevent infection, they significantly reduce the risk of severe disease, virus spread and production losses.

For breeding animals, vaccination is particularly important due to the potential impact of bluetongue on fertility and offspring health.

Ideally, vaccination should be completed before peak midge activity, allowing around 10–21 days for immunity to develop.

If you vaccinated stock last year, remember that most animals will only require a single booster this year to maintain protection.



OUR ADVICE

Bluetongue is now a disease that UK livestock farmers need to actively manage. With midge activity increasing, now is the time to review your vaccination plans, consider the risks to your breeding stock and make sure you are prepared before the main transmission period.

If you need advice on vaccine options, vaccination timing, breeding stock protection or pre-movement testing, please contact your usual vet or call the practice team on 01270 610349.

European Dairy Farmers Congress

The hottest week of the year so far saw more than 350 dairy farmers and industry professionals from across Europe descend on Cheshire for a two-day tour of some of the region's leading dairy farms, including several of our clients.

With a focus on profitable and sustainable milk production, delegates visited a diverse range of systems, from high-output, fully housed herds to efficient, pasture-based block-calving farms. Each showcased different approaches to meeting the current and future challenges facing the dairy industry.

Craig and Jack were drafted in to help at Cotton Abbotts Farm, where they presented an overview of the herd's performance, covering key areas including cell count, fertility and genetics. They also discussed how close veterinary involvement can help improve herd performance—not just for today's production, but by shaping the future of the herd through informed management and breeding decisions.



CLIENT GOLF DAY

Monday 28th September, from 11:30am
Wychwood Park Golf Club, Weston, Crewe

~ £80pp ~

Bacon bap ~ 18 holes ~ 2-course meal + prizes

Prizes awarded for highest individual and 2-person team score, closest-to-pin and longest drive.
Book as a team or as an individual (you'll be randomly paired up).

Contact NFV on 01270 610349 or office@nantwichfarmvets.co.uk
Full payment required to reserve a place.

Team News

At the end of July, Sarah, one of our Vet Techs, will be taking on the Three Peaks challenge with Ashley Young Farmers in memory of Danny Emmott, who sadly passed away in December. They are raising funds for the charity Mind, helping to support people experiencing mental health challenges. If you'd like to donate, please scan (or click on) the QR code below. Every contribution is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your kindness!



Dates for your diary

Saturday 11th July
Newport Show

Wednesday 29th July
Nantwich Show

Saturday 1st Aug
Oswestry Show

Monday 28th Sept
NFV Client Golf Day, Wychwood Park
See flyer below for more details

Wednesday 23rd Sept - Wed 4th Nov, 10am-12pm
New Herdspersons Course

A comprehensive introduction to all the key areas of modern dairy farming — ideal for anyone new to the industry or those wanting to refresh their skills and knowledge. Delivered in seven bite-sized modules each Wednesday. £350 for the full course or £60 per module. Follow the link for more details and to register.

Autumn 2026 - Date TBC

Advanced Calf Rearing Course

More details to come, but places will be limited so register your interest with the office.

Get in touch...



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