

Welcome! What a difference a month makes! After the snow and freezing conditions earlier in the year, April saw the hottest day on record since 1949, reaching over 29°C in London. With the weather set to return to more seasonable conditions, now is an ideal time to take advantage of the free advice available from the TB Advisory Service by signing up for an on-farm advice visit from one of our consultants.

‘We are working with a number of experienced vets and farm consultants to deliver bespoke advice to farmers in the High Risk and Edge Areas of England’ said Matt Dobbs, Project Director. ‘In addition, each consultant has attended a one-day workshop to understand the aims and objectives of the project, and is able to call upon the specialist skills and knowledge of some of the country’s leading TB experts that make up the project’s Technical Board. The main aim of the advice visit is to agree a number of practical, cost effective measures that a farmer can take to reduce the risk and impact of TB for their own business. For some farmers, it can feel like TB is inevitable, but often, there are steps that can be taken to reduce the risk and the TB Advisory Service is here to help farmers take back some control.’



To find out more about the TB Advisory Service or to request advice, please contact us today.

Top Tips – Mineral Licks

Many farmers use mineral licks to supplement cattle – especially those out at grass during the spring. However, badgers are often attracted to these licks, in particular where molasses is included to increase palatability. Not only does this increase the risk of badger-cattle interactions, it is also a waste of a costly item! Here are some things to think about if you use mineral licks at grass.

- Firstly, ask yourself whether you really need to supplement your cattle at grass. If the answer is yes, it might be worth talking to your vet or nutritionist to discuss alternatives
- Adding vitamins and minerals to a compound feed is usually cheaper than providing licks
- Using boluses ensures that each and every animal receives the supplement – something that can’t be guaranteed with licks
- If licks are appropriate, consider ways to prevent badgers accessing them – either by raising the licks off the ground, or covering them/bringing them indoors at night

E info@tbas.org.uk

W tbas.org.uk

T 01306 779410

Did you know

..... that the bacteria that cause Johnes disease (*Mycobacterium avium* subspecies *paratuberculosis* or *M. avium*) are very closely related to those that cause bovine TB (*Mycobacterium bovis* or *M. bovis*)? Did you also know therefore, that vaccination against Johnes disease can affect how quickly you can eliminate TB from your herd?

Johnes disease is extremely common in cattle in the UK and has a very severe financial and welfare impact in both dairy and beef herds. Eliminating the disease and preventing reintroduction is possible, although difficult, and requires continued effort over a long period. Johnes vaccines are available and are sometimes used to assist in this battle.

The problem arises because the two diseases are so closely related. If an animal has been vaccinated against Johnes disease, it is less likely that the skin test will detect TB.

When the TB skin test is carried out, two injections are made into the skin of the neck – one of avian tuberculin and one of bovine tuberculin. Avian tuberculin is an extract of *M. avium* and bovine tuberculin is an extract of *M. bovis*. The test result depends on the comparison of the swelling in the skin measured at the site of each injection. Normally, TB infected animals develop a larger swelling at the site of the bovine injection which indicates a positive result for TB.

However, animals that have been vaccinated against Johnes will have immunity to *M. avium* and are likely to develop a larger swelling at the site of the avian injection which may therefore result in a negative result to the TB skin test. This means that TB infected animals are less likely to be identified and may be left in the herd posing a risk of spread to others and preventing the herd going clear.

Getting rid of Johnes disease is possible without vaccination and you should speak to your vet before you consider using it.

Come and see us!

The TB Advisory Service will be attending a number of meetings and events during the coming months - please come and say hello!

- 10th May Grassland UK, Somerset
- 17th/19th May Devon County Show
- 25th May Beef Expo, Shrewsbury
- 26th May Heathfield Show, East Sussex
- 30th May/2nd June Bath and West Show
- 7th/9th June Royal Cornwall Show
- 7th/9th June South of England Show

Don't forget to follow us!

To get the latest news from the TB Advisory Service, don't forget to follow us on Twitter and like our Facebook page!



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Meet The Team

Ever wondered about the people involved in the TB Advisory Service?

Name: Sarah Tomlinson

Role: TB Advisor



Sarah Tomlinson has worked as a farm vet in Derbyshire for 17 years, the last eight years with Westpoint Farm Vets in Ashbourne, where she is now practice principle. In 2016 she became a member of the TB eradication and advisory group for England. In 2017 she was part of the technical team that successfully bid for the RDPE funding to run the TB Advisory Service, and is one of their advisors.

Sarah is married to a sheep farmer and has three children. You may see Sarah with her family at local and national events showing their Blue Faced Leicesters, Mules and beef cattle - sometimes coming home with rosettes!

Sarah loves speaking to farmers about TB so if you ever need a speaker for a meeting, give her a call! She has no hobbies as she has no spare time!