

RUMINANT NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2026



@howellsvets



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www.howellsvets.co.uk

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WHAT'S ON

Farmer talks:

Join us for a pie supper at the Gavel Café,
Thirsk Auction Mart:
Monday 9th February 6:30-9pm:
**ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE PATHWAY:
Highway To Health**
Alasdair Ross BVM BVS MRCVS

Automated Technologies in the Modern Dairy

Thursday 5th March 11am to 2pm
Ellie Button, Amy Bowers and Luke Ramsden
Location: Held on a local farm

Courses:

Making The Most of Medicines
Monday 23rd February 2026 with
Ellie Button,
The J M Guthrie Clubhouse, Scalby,
Scarborough YO13 0NL

Lambing for Beginners
Monday 2nd March at Howells
Veterinary Services, Roxby Business
Park, Easingwold YO61 3EF
6.30pm -9pm: Trainer: Ellie Button
MRCVS

PREVENTING CALF SCOURS THIS SPRING

Calf scours remain one of the most common and costly health challenges on UK farms during spring. With varying conditions, fluctuating temperatures and higher disease pressure, prevention is far more cost effective than treatment.

Good colostrum management is the starting point of scour prevention. Ensure calves receive high-quality colostrum and in a timely manner, under 4 hours, whilst maintaining strict hygiene of feeding equipment can significantly reduce disease risk. This means 20 minutes of good continuous suckling.

Clean, dry calving environments are equally important. Regularly bed up, avoid overcrowding, and aim for good ventilation without draughts. Separate age groups over 2 weeks where possible to limit the spread of infection, and clean pens thoroughly between calves.

Consistent nutrition also plays a key role. Ensure the calf is up and suckling or if being fed milk replacement - avoid sudden changes in milk type, volume, or feeding times, and ensure milk is mixed accurately and fed at the correct temperature.

Finally, call to speak to a vet regarding vaccination protocols and scour prevention plans tailored to your farm. Remember for vaccination protocols such as Rotavec Corona the mother is vaccinated prior to calving – this gives the calf a boost in protection as they enter the environment!



VET'S VIEWPOINT



Iwan Evans
BVSci (Hons), MRCVS

With spring just around the corner, many of us are turning our attention to lambing and calving. Getting those first few hours of life right dramatically increases a newborn's chance of survival. Colostrum provides vital antibodies and immune cells, but just as importantly, a warm, full belly helps prevent hypothermia and hypoglycaemia—two of the leading causes of neonatal death in the first 48 hours of life. As a guide, calves and lambs should receive around 10% of their body weight in the first feed in the first few hours, followed by a similar amount over the next 12 hours. Colostrum quality can be tested pen-side using a Brix refractometer and should be over 22%.

Keeping a store of high-quality colostrum in the freezer is an excellent backup for situations where the dam cannot provide the quantity or quality required. From all of us at Howell's, we wish you a successful lambing and calving season.

Animal health and welfare pathway grant increase

Species	Animal health and welfare review		Endemic disease follow-up	
	Current	New	Current	New
Pigs	£557	£648	£923	£1,087
Sheep	£436	£574	£639	£658
Beef Cattle	£552	£647	£837	£954
Dairy Cattle	£372	£447	£1,714	£1,844
Biosecurity (All Cattle)	–	–	£215	£258

From 22 January 2026, payments for both the animal health and welfare review and the endemic disease follow-up will increase. The increase reflects inflation and helps ensure farmers can continue to access high-quality support, while allowing vets enough time to provide a thorough and valuable service. Any eligible visit that takes place on or after this date will be paid at the higher rate. On average, the payments will increase by 16% across the species covered in the offer.

DISPENSARY UPDATE- In House Fluke Testing

With winter in full swing, now is the time to be thinking about adult liver fluke in your flock or herd. When considering your farm, you need to take into consideration the farm's history, geographical location and weather patterns due to the nature of the liver fluke lifecycle.



ASK
ABOUT OUR
IN-HOUSE
FLUKE
TESTING



We have started to see the emergence of the adult liver fluke and testing is the best way to determine whether treatment is needed and then the correct flukicide is used.

As well as all year-round faecal egg counting, this time of year we also offer the in-house faecal fluke egg counts which play an important role in the monitoring process and results are usually back within 24 hours. This test detects liver fluke when egg-laying adults are present at around 10-12 weeks after ingestion off contaminated land.

Our farm dispensary stocks a full range of flukicide products, and our registered animal medicines advisors are available on phone or in the shop to discuss which treatment is right for your farm.

Independent and proudly supporting our farming community for over 30 years