

Hello and welcome to 2025! Happy New Year and I hope you all had a good Christmas with some time off.

We had a relatively calm December at the practice – call-out wise – probably the calm before the storm. One call out was for our first lambing of this season.

This month, Tom is holding one of his annual lambing course days. The course is fully booked but we have a reserve list if you are interested. These courses have been extremely useful to attendees of all ages and a mixture of abilities.

Avian 'flu and Bluetongue virus are still rumbling around – fortunately not close to us yet, but remember particularly the Bluetongue virus if you are purchasing stock, see this link for the signs of bluetongue. www.gov.uk/guidance/bluetongue
We are past the shortest day now, down hill all the way to summer. Let's hope we get a (little) bit of seasonal weather.

As many of you know, very sadly, Steve Dando passed away peacefully on 30th December. Helen, Steve's wife, is one of our receptionists and a very dear colleague. Steve's funeral is on the 17th January at St Tyfodwg's Church in Glynogwr at 12pm, Helen will be returning to work from mid-January and we are really looking forward to seeing her. She very much appreciates all the support that she has received from many of you.

Mary

Heptavac P Plus shortage

Many of our sheep farmers are on the Heptavac P Plus (Heptavac) vaccine system for the control of Pasteurellosis and Clostridial diseases. Adults need a yearly booster, following their primary course, in order to maintain immunity to the diseases covered. This is usually given to breeding ewes in late pregnancy, in order to provide passive immunity to newborn lambs via colostrum.

We are aware of shortages in the supply of Heptavac again this year and are getting a number of phone calls asking for advice on how best to deal with this.

The first point to make is that there is no direct alternative to Heptavac (so if you are able to get it, then snap it up). The second point is that if adults do not receive a booster dose, then they will need to restart the vaccine course with a primary course of 2 injections.



Continued P.T.O

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Also known as 7 in 1, Heptavac P Plus covers:

- Lamb dysentery
- Pulpy kidney
- Struck
- Tetanus
- Blackleg
- Black disease
- Braxy
- Clostridial metritis
- Pasteurellosis

The diagram below shows the ages that sheep are most commonly effected by these diseases.

Pasteurella and Clostridial age distribution

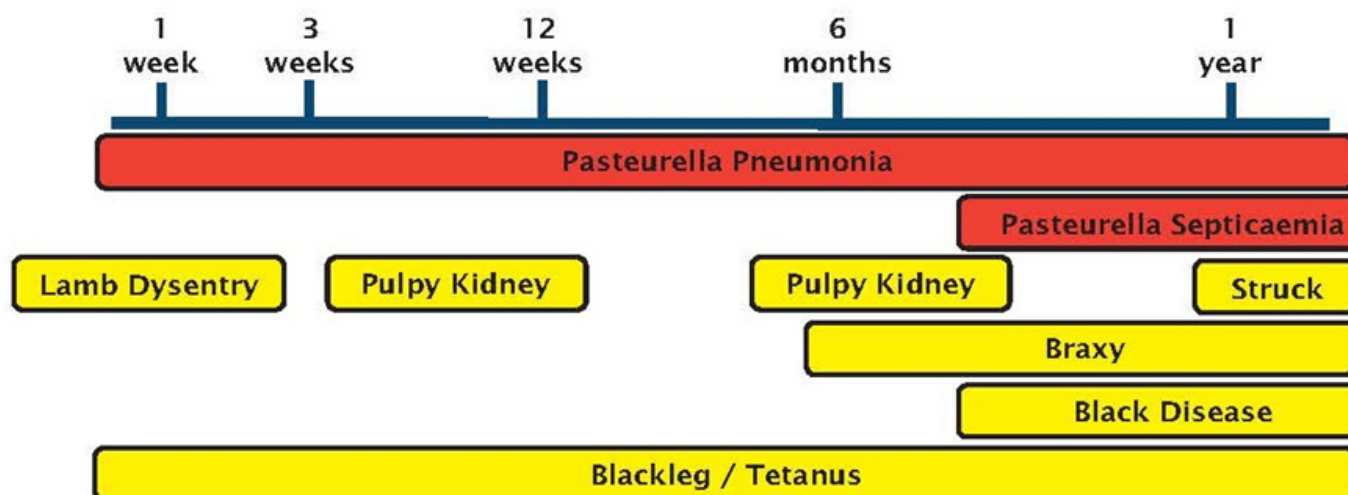


Image courtesy of MSD

No other product covers the same range of diseases, so any alternative vaccine used will be a compromise or additional products will be required to provide the same cover.

Covexin 10 and Bravoxin – protect against all the clostridial diseases (yellow in the image above) that are covered by Heptavac **but** do not cover pasteurellosis (red). This means that to protect against pasteurellosis you would need to give an additional vaccine, **Ovipast Plus**. These vaccines are not licensed to be used together so you would need to speak to one of the vets at the practice to decide how best to proceed.



Ovovac P Plus – Has the pasteurellosis protection the same as Heptavac but does not cover some of the clostridial diseases that are important in pregnancy and so is **not recommended** for breeding stock (AHDB, Clostridial vaccines in sheep, 2024).

In summary, there is no simple answer to the Heptavac shortage. All our vets are happy to discuss the alternative choices with you to find the option that suits you best, just give us a ring at the office.

This month's author is Sian Fuller.

Office opening hours

Monday – Friday (Except Bank Holidays)

8.30am - 5.30pm

Emergency out of hours service

Weeknights 5.30pm - 8.30am

Saturday & Sunday all day