

March 2026

Kingshay Antimicrobial Report

The annual antimicrobial report from Kingshay was released in January and it's good news again for dairy herds in the UK. There's continued decline in the use of antimicrobials meaning new industry targets were met just months after they were set. The report is based on data from 967 dairy herds from 136 vet practices across the UK using the Kingshay Antimicrobial Monitoring Service, between 2024 and early 2025. It shows that average total antimicrobial usage for the year has fallen to 12.2 mg/kg PCU from 12.7 mg/kg PCU in 2024 and 15.7 mg/kg PCU in 2020. Farm efforts to reduce antimicrobial use are paying off.

The new RUMA (Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture) targets cover 2025-2029 and include annual reductions of three-year rolling averages in lactating and dry cow tube usage, plus a new 10% reduction on the previous year for calf oral antibiotics. All targets have been achieved for this dataset. Lactating cow tube usage has fallen by 41% since 2019, while dry cow tubes are down on the three-year rolling average, despite a small increase this year.

The calf oral antibiotics target was also met, with usage down 24% between 2024 and 2025 to 1.05 mg/kg PCU. We've also seen a 28% reduction in injectable highest priority critically important antimicrobials to 0.005 mg/kg PCU, which is a 98.3% reduction in seven years. However, usage varies between regions and individual herds. The south and south east of England recorded the lowest average usage at 10.4 mg/kg PCU, while the north of England had the highest at 14.9 mg/kg PCU. The difference is even more pronounced between individual herds. The top-performing 25% averaged just 4.1mg/kg PCU, compared to 24.3 mg/kg PCU for the highest-using quartile. That top quartile really pulls the overall average up – the median across all herds was only 9.8mg/kg PCU. These quartiles aren't static though. A disease outbreak can affect figures rapidly, which is why it is important to keep attention to detail high when it comes to adhering to health protocols, even when usage seems low.

Overall it's a great benchmark to see that the industry has already met those RUMA targets. Equally, things can change quickly, so health planning to build strong, disease resilient herds will remain key in keeping antimicrobial usage low. Speak to us if you haven't had an antibiotic benchmark report recently.

The 2025 annual Dairy Antimicrobial Focus Report can be accessed via the Kingshay website, www.kingshay.com.

Lambing Problems

If there are any cases of abortion then its always a good idea to get them tested as the problem may become far worse in the future, and also may be very preventable by either treatment or vaccination. This can be either swabs of aborted lambs and cleansings, or for ewes that have aborted in the past then we can bleed them to see what the problem has been. In Ireland the 2 big causes of abortion are EAE and Toxoplasmosis. These are 2 very different bugs and require different treatments or vaccines so its important to find out the cause of the abortion to target the problem.



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Bluetongue update ahead of Spring

Northern Ireland has confirmed four cases of BTV3 during the 2025–26 bluetongue season (July start). While case numbers remain low, these detections mark an important shift, highlighting that the virus has crossed into the region and may pose an increased risk as we move toward spring. As temperatures rise, midge activity will resume, creating conditions that could allow further spread—particularly if infected midges arrive via windborne routes or if undetected infections persist in cattle.

With England continuing to record new BTV3 cases through January 2026, the wider UK disease pressure remains elevated, meaning that we cannot rely solely on historically low incidence. Vaccination is now a crucial consideration. The UK has authorised BTV3 vaccines for use with a DAERA-issued specific licence, offering an opportunity to boost herd and flock resilience ahead of the 2026 vector season. Please speak to your vet early about vaccination timing and suitability, particularly in higher risk areas or where animal movements are planned.

Colostrum supplements - know the IgG levels in your supplement

Using a good colostrum supplement could make a huge difference to your lamb survival rates and future productivity – after all, half of UK lamb mortality occurs within the **first 24 hours of life**. Getting this right is key, but there are lots of different options on the market.

It's suggested that when looking at effective colostrum supplementation for successful passive transfer in lambs, 3g of IgG should be absorbed shortly after birth. Maternal or ewe colostrum from your flock will provide better antibodies. In an ideal scenario if maternal colostrum is of low quality or quantity, then maternal or ewe colostrum should be split across the lambs and **supplemented**. Therefore, it's best to have a high quality supplement on hand.

The key things to look for on the label - colostrum powder inclusion is at the top / near the top of ingredients, which means it is the ingredient with the biggest percentage.

Another tip – if you haven't got a Colostrum Calculator, it's very handy to work out how much supplement is required based on the ewes colostrum quality on your phone, [Download the SCCL Colostrum Calculator App](#). You will need a BRIX refractometer, a simple, quick and cheap tool, to assess the colostrum.

We can manually assess how much colostrum to use as a replacement feed (no natural colostrum available) by using the formula:

Weight of powder to use is—Weight of Lamb in kgs x 19. then add water to this powder depending on weight of lamb @ Weight of lamb in kgs x 50ml.

Eg, and 3 kg lamb would need powder @ $3 \times 19 = 57\text{g}$ mixed into $3 \times 50 = 150\text{ml}$ water
Any questions, please speak to your vet.

Prevent coughing this Summer with the Lungworm Vaccine Now

Hoos, Husk or Lungworm has increased over the years and appeared much earlier in the season than normal. There are some reasons for increased incidence of lungworm infection: Control strategies incorporating highly effective wormers can actually reduce the stimulus and therefore reduce the level of acquired immunity in young stock.

The majority of lungworm outbreaks occurring in adult cattle are due to exposure to lungworm following a reduction in immunity, commonly caused by lack of exposure due to too effective worming protocols, or prolonged housing! **Bovilis Huskvac** can provide effective immunity against the challenge of lungworm in at risk dairy cattle in the second year of grazing and in insufficiently exposed adult cows. Hoos is most commonly seen during the summer months. Ask a Parklands vet for more info.