Why did you join VetPartners? Was there a problem with your business?

Willows Vet Group is a thriving business, however, the profession across the country is changing with larger groups of practices, joining together, becoming the norm. So, we made the proactive decision to join with a like-minded group. As Willows evolved into the successful business it is today, it became apparent that the existing partnership model had some challenges, and that the best way to secure the future for both employees and clients was to look at other business models. We see this as just another phase in the evolution of the Willows Vet Group.

Will there be vets from other practices coming to my farm?

No, although we will benefit from the support of a wider group, we will remain the ‘Willows Vet Group’ just as we were before. The only new vets coming on to your farm will be those that we would have recruited anyway.

Does this mean you will be told how to run your business?

As a company, VetPartners appreciates the importance of an independent spirit and aims to provide support to allow practices to carry on doing what they do best. We don’t envisage being told how to run our business, rather we may find ourselves being asked to share what we do with other practices around the country, so that we can all work together in providing the best possible care for our clients.

Will your prices change?

As you know, we have always strived to give you the best medicines and service prices we can, and this will continue. Prices can’t stay fixed forever though, and just like before, prices will change from time to time.

So do the partners still care about the Willows?

Many of the partners have spent a lifetime building the practice that we have today and their enthusiasm for the practice continues. They have all become shareholders (owners) of VetPartners, and very much continue to think of it as their business.

We will try to address some questions you may have, but if you would like to discuss any of this further, please speak to one of the partners by calling them directly or contacting our Hartford practice on 01606 723200.

Reminder

BANK HOLIDAY OPENING TIMES

All practices will be closed on both Monday 7th and Monday 28th May. Of course, if you have a veterinary emergency you can still contact us at any time on your usual practice number.
Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatories and their role on farm

Many of us might reach straight for the ibuprofen when we have a headache, a sore throat or a sports injury, but are you as quick to reach for these products on farm?

Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatories (NSAIDs) are a group of medicines that can reduce pain and inflammation, helping animals to quickly feel better, getting them up and about to milk and feed. In some cases, using an NSAID alongside an antibiotic will shorten the course of antibiotic required to treat that animal and as such these medicines can be a powerful adjunct in an attempt to reduce antibiotic use on farm.

The two biggest opportunities for use of NSAIDs are in our two most common endemic diseases on farm; lameness and mastitis. Lameness is a costly, painful condition in dairy cows usually caused by claw horn lesions such as sole haemorrhage (bruising); sole ulcer; and white line disease. These conditions can result in chronically affected animals and when severe, lesions are difficult to cure. A recent study looking at different treatment techniques found that when Ketoprofen and a block were used, alongside a therapeutic trim, cure rates more than doubled compared to a trim alone.

These days many people see the benefits of using NSAIDs to improve clinical outcomes, but did you know that using Metacam® alongside antibiotics to treat mastitis has been shown to significantly improve fertility performance compared to cows treated with antibiotics alone?

A study carried out on over 500 dairy cows with mild to moderate mastitis showed that those receiving Metacam in addition to antibiotics showed:

- A higher percentage of cows conceiving to first service (31% vs 21%)
- A lower number of AI’s per conception (2.43 vs 2.92)
- A higher percentage of cows pregnant by 120 days post calving (40% vs 31%)

Cows treated with Metacam in addition to the antibiotic also had a significantly higher bacterial cure rate. This provides even more evidence that using Metacam alongside antibiotic treatment of mastitis can bring real economic and welfare benefits. Metacam had already been shown to reduce culling rates and somatic cell counts but now we know that it also improved the reproductive performance in cows that have mastitis, there really are plenty of reasons to reach for a jab of Metacam even in mild cases of mastitis.

Proactive use – alongside procedures carried out on farm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use to treat conditions on their own</th>
<th>Use alongside antibiotics</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Disbudding, dehorning</td>
<td>Calf pneumonia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Castrating</td>
<td>Mastitis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traumatic injuries / nerve damage</td>
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<tr>
<td>After calvings (many people use NSAIDs after every calving but they are especially important after an assisted calving)</td>
<td>Lameness where an antibiotic is required</td>
</tr>
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</table>

When shouldn’t you use NSAIDs?

Generally it is not a good idea to use these products in very young animals (check the data sheet for details) or alongside steroids, which are a similar group of products. Animals with gut problems should only be treated on a case-by-case basis after speaking to a vet.

Trade names of some commonly used anti-inflammatories. These have different lengths of action and withdrawal periods so please speak to a vet to discuss further.

- Metacam (meloxicam)
- Ketofen (ketoprofen)
- Finadyne (flunixin)