



Farm Newsletter - February 2018

LAMBING SUCCESS MEETING

WEDNESDAY 14TH FEBRUARY 2018

7PM SOUTH MOLTON SURGERY

The aim of this meeting is to:

Understand how and why lamb losses occur at lambing time and their economic significance

Discuss how good management can decrease disease occurrence in the lambing shed

Consider common neonatal diseases and how losses from these diseases can be minimised

Learn how to reduce antibiotic use at lambing time without risking increased disease incidence



Antibiotics - Saving Money and planning for the Future

March 2018 - Date and Venue to be Confirmed

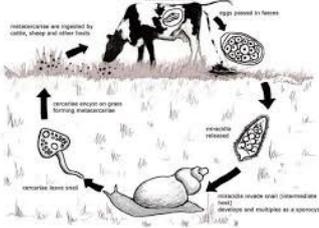
Following on from our meeting last year we will be discussing antibiotic usage on our dairy farms and planning the next steps. Areas we will be discussing will include:

- Responsible use of antibiotics on farm
- When we don't need to use antibiotics
- Selective Dry Cow therapy
- Avoiding critically important antibiotic and what alternatives are available



Lungworm in Cattle

The disease is caused by the worm *Dictyocaulus viviparus*. Adult worms live in the animal's lungs where they produce eggs which hatch quickly. The first stage larvae then move up the windpipe are then swallowed and passed out in the faeces. These then mature on the pasture to stage three larvae, once eaten by an animal the larvae migrate through the gut wall towards the lungs. Over the next few weeks the larvae reach the lungs and mature into egg laying adults. An adult worm can produce several thousand eggs.



All cattle are at risk of lungworm until they have been exposed to the larvae/worms and developed immunity. It is essential that cattle keep this immunity but it can be lost if animals do not receive a degree of regular exposure.

Clinical signs An increased rate and depth of respiration, with a **dry cough**, in any age group of cattle while at grass should raise suspicions of infection. In some cases with adult animals, the symptoms may only be a drop in milk yield, weight loss and occasional coughing.



Diagnosis requires veterinary clinical examination and usually laboratory testing of faeces or of blood samples. Accurate and fast diagnosis is important in order to provide effective treatment of affected animals and to avoid the unnecessary use of expensive anthelmintics.

Treatment & Prognosis Lungworm can be treated with wormers (anthelmintics). Ensure they are effective against *D. viviparus* (your vet can help you to choose an appropriate product). Sick animals may also benefit from antibiotics and anti-inflammatories. All animals in the group should be assumed to be infected if one or two animals show clinical signs therefore treat the entire group. Prognosis is very much dependent on the level of infection and the amount of damage that has occurred. Some animals can die or have to be culled after a heavy, chronic lungworm infection. Secondary lung infection is also a common sequel to lungworm infection.

Prevention.

Husk is a much less predictable disease than that caused by gut worms and requires a different approach to control. Husk will not be controlled by a dose and move strategy.

There are two strategies for controlling lungworm:

- 1) Vaccination - by far the most effective way to control husk
- 2) Suppression with regular worming

Lungworm prevention is based upon development of immunity and is best achieved by vaccination. Periods of natural exposure to lungworm (and other parasites) during the grazing season to allow for immunity to develop, then infection controlled by applying strategic anthelmintic treatments, is a very risky strategy for lungworm prevention but would control PGE (gut worms) in most situations. Therefore, PGE is often a secondary consideration to the more important lungworm disease.

Vaccination is the best course of action to prevent lungworm infection. Vaccination uses irradiated live lungworm larvae to cause a controlled infection. A course of the vaccine is given to young stock with the second dose being given at least 2 weeks **before** turnout – vaccinated and unvaccinated stock should not be mixed for at least 2 weeks after the second dose has been given. It is preferable for calves to be exposed to low levels of lungworm larvae throughout the grazing season to maintain this immunity.



If you would like to discuss lungworm control or if you would like to order your lungworm vaccine, please call us at the surgery.

Sheep News - Feeding the Ewe

We held ewe nutrition meeting at the practice on 16th January. During the meeting we covered several topics including explaining the fundamental role of ewe nutrition in health and profitable sheep production, how the sheep's digestive system functions, how to assess forage and concentrate feed quality and how to choose a suitable ration for your pregnant ewes.



The importance of body condition scores

Nutrition of the ewe is a year round issue. Her body condition at one stage will affect not only her performance at the next stage, but as the AHDB Key Performance Indicator (KPI) project has shown, those effects can be seen for a whole production cycle. It can often take 2 years to return ewes to their optimum performance after an episode of poor body condition.

Body condition should be monitored throughout the year – focusing on the key production times – pretupping, scanning/mid pregnancy, late pregnancy, 8 weeks post lambing and weaning. The target is that >95% of the flock should be at the target body condition score at any one time. The target body condition for lowland ewes in late pregnancy is 3.0. Over thin and overfat ewes will need to be separated and fed separately according to their requirements to prevent the development of metabolic diseases such as pregnancy toxemia.

Ewes in poor body condition throughout the year tend to give birth to lighter lambs, and also produce less milk, so lambs at 8 weeks are lighter too. The **lamb 8 week weight is a KPI** and an indicator of maternal performance. The target is for the flock to have <15% light lambs at 8 weeks. The target 8 week weight for a 70-75kg lowland ewe would be 20kg, and a light lamb would be classified as being <17kg at 8 weeks. These light lambs are significant within a flock, as they rarely finish well, and tend to become overfat.

Maintaining Rumen health

The key to good ewe nutrition is to maintain rumen health – FEED THE RUMEN TO FEED THE EWE! The rumen is the most important digestive organ in the sheep, and it uses microbes to digest the food within it. These microorganisms break down the tough cellulose coating of the forage and grains, releasing the nutrients within and also producing microbial protein which can be used by the sheep. Without the rumen bacteria, the sheep would not survive. Therefore it is very important to maintain a suitable rumen environment and to provide the rumen microbes with the nutrients that they require – fermentable energy and a protein source.

TOP TIPS FOR GOOD RUMEN HEALTH

Avoid sudden changes in diet – 3 week transition period

Maintain constant frequency and timing of feeding

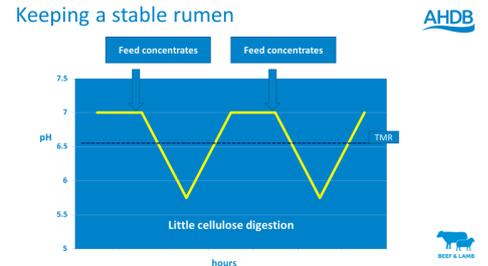
Feed whole grain not crushed or bruised – to slow fermentation in the rumen, allows more time for the microbes to digest the starch

Minimise stress – plan events to avoid periods of fasting – affects microbes

Good general health – prompt tx of problems e.g. lameness as leads to poor feed intakes

Adequate access to feed to prevent bullying, overeating, pushing and shoving

For digestion to occur, the rumen must remain at a constant pH of approx. 6.5. If conditions become too acidic then the microbes either slow their digestion or at less than pH5.5 begin to die. A forage based diet maintains the correct rumen pH, however the addition of starchy concentrate feed or cereals decreases rumen pH. In order to maintain good digestion, never feed >500g concentrate feed in any one meal. If facilities are available, the use of a complete diet feeder eliminates the swings in rumen pH by providing a constant diet, leading to the most efficient digestion. Overfeeding of concentrates will lead to poor rumen health and a decreased appetite – the last thing you want in late pregnancy. The food then moves out of the rumen to the abomasum, where classical digestion can occur.



Assessing Forage quality

The nutritional composition of forage will vary between fields and between years. 2017 has certainly proved to be a very challenging year to make good quality forage! This variation means that the nutritional value it can give to your ewes also varies year on year. To maximise the contribution that forage can make to your sheep's diet, and to keep the rumen happy, a forage analysis is required in order to

Silage for sheep

		Benchmark
Dry matter	(%)	>25
D value	(%)	>65
ME	(MJ/kg DM)	>10.5
Crude protein	(%)	>12
pH		>4.0
Ammonia	(as % of total N)	<10



then provide a balanced ration where the compound feed complements the forage provided. The feed required, and the amount required to be fed, will vary annually dependant upon the forage quality. For maximum intakes, sheep prefer good quality, dry, short chopped silage. Here are the targets for a good quality sheep silage. How silage is stored is also important. The aim is to lose as few nutrients as possible between the field and the sheep.

Big bales must be securely wrapped so they do not get punctured. It is particularly important that big bale silage ferments well in order to kill any soil borne listeria bacteria within. Clamp silage should be taken from the feed face with a shear grab to minimise the surface area available for secondary fermentation. Silage troughs should be cleaned out daily, old uneaten silage removed to prevent spoilage. Silage must be fed truly **ad lib**. It must be pushed up to the feed face regularly so the sheep are never without feed. Trough space requirements should be checked – the minimum for ad lib feeding of forage is 12cm/ewe.

Choosing a concentrate feed

A lot of information is available on the statutory label on the feed bags. However, it is generally useful to also try to find out the energy content of the ration (ME) and also its DUP (bypass protein content). The aim is to choose a ration that complements your forage to provide an adequate energy and protein source for your ewes.

The ingredients will be listed in descending order of inclusion rate. As a guide, molasses is generally included at a rate of 5-7%. Look for good quality sources of energy and protein high up in the ingredients list. Poorer quality ingredients should be low on the list. Also check the vitamin E and selenium content of the feed as this also varies with

Targets for Good Quality Concentrate Feed

- Oil – 4-5%
- Ash – <10%
- Fiber – <10%
- Crude protein – as required (%)
(18-21% for last 6 weeks of pregnancy)

Other information:

- ME > 12.5 MJ/kg DM
- DUP 5%
- Good protein source >10%
- Cereals >20%
- 150mg/kg vitamin E
- 0.5mg/kg selenium

feed quality and is vital for lamb vigour and immunity.

Examples of good quality feed ingredients (not exhaustive) :

Energy source	Protein source
Wheat	Wheat distillers grains
Barley	Soya
Sugar beet	Rapeseed meal

Nutritional advice

The quality and quantity of colostrum produced by a ewe is mainly determined by the energy and protein content of the diet in the last 3 weeks prior to lambing. Also, a ewe receiving an inadequate ration is more likely to produce small weak lambs.

Our vets are very happy to provide nutritional advice for your flock. Please contact us for further details.

Preparation for Lambing

With the 2018 lambing season fast approaching it is time to make sure you are prepared. It is a good idea to make a list and get everything ready in advance. Check all your equipment is clean and functional before lambing starts.

Dispensing of Lambing Drugs

The blanket prophylactic use of antibiotics at lambing time is no longer deemed acceptable by RUMA (the body that oversees antibiotic use on farm). When you phone up for your lambing drugs you will be asked to speak to one of our senior vets regarding your antibiotic usage at lambing time. We will discuss how to take a more risk based approach to antibiotic use at lambing time. This is to ensure that antibiotics are being used appropriately and responsibly, and does not mean that we are not going to supply them to you. Going forward, a written antibiotic usage plan for each farm will be required for key areas such as lambing and lameness.

Good ewe nutrition and adequate colostrum intakes can help to reduce the disease threat to newborn lambs, and therefore significantly reduce antibiotic usage in neonatal lambs. To aid you in the reduction of use of antibiotics at lambing time, we presented our ewe nutrition meeting in January and we will be running a "Lambing Success" meeting in February (details below).

Maximising colostrum intake

Colostrum provides a vital source of energy and immunity to new born lambs. It is vital that all lambs receive a sufficient quantity of colostrum quickly after birth to protect them against infection and disease.

From birth, a lambs' ability to absorb the antibodies in colostrum slowly wanes over the first 24 hours of life. The first feed of colostrum should be given as soon as possible, and no later than 2 hours after birth, and their full quota of colostrum is received within 24 hours. This equates to 250ml first feed for a 5 kg lamb, and a total of 1 litre of colostrum over the first 24 hours of life.

It is recommended to monitor colostrum intake in all lambs , but some are more likely to be at risk of not consuming sufficient colostrum quickly and should be paid special attention. Wherever possible, supple-

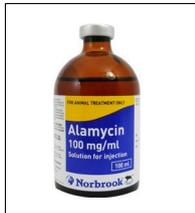
THE 3 Q'S OF COLOSTRUM
QUANTITY-QUALITY-QUICKLY
50ML/KG within 2 hours of birth.
200ML/KG total in first 24 hours of life
#colostrumisgold

mentary colostrum should be milked from the ewe, or spare colostrum stored from another ewe. Stored colostrum must be refrigerated quickly and will keep in the fridge for up to 5 days. It can be frozen for longer storage but must be gently thawed in a water bath. Cows colostrum and powdered colostrum can also be used, but there are risks to this, please discuss with one of our vets or come to our Lambing Success Meeting for more details.

HIGH RISK LAMBS
born to young or thin ewes
triplet lambs
very small or overlarge lambs
stressful lambing

Drug News

Alamycin 100mg/ml has now been discontinued so will not longer be available to order. We have a limited amount of stock still available but will shortly be changing over to alternatives. Currently we are stocking Engemycin 10% which is available in either 100 or 250 ml bottles. Alamycin LA and Alamycin 300 are unaffected by these changes.



Bovidec BVD vaccine has also been discontinued we are currently able to obtain 5 dose bottles through our wholesaler however the 50 dose bottles are no longer available. There are 2 alternatives available for ongoing vaccination. Bovilis BVD which is an inactive vaccine effective against BVD Type I. It requires 2 doses for the primary course followed by a single annual booster and is available in 10, 25 and 50 dose bottles. Alternatively there is a live vaccine available which is effective against BVD Type 1 and 2 and requires a single injection for both the primary course and annual boosters. Bovela is available in 5 and 25 dose bottles.



Vitamin D injections for Alpacas

Vitamin D is essential for the growth and maintenance of a healthy skeleton and deficiencies can cause rickets and other skeletal abnormalities. Ultraviolet rays from sunlight are essential for its synthesis by the skin and unfortunately the UV levels in Britain are not enough for alpacas and growing crias, especially during our cold dark winters! **Therefore it is very important to supplement Vitamin D in alpacas, especially growing crias.**

A single injection of Vitamin D can last for up to 3 months and the injection schedule can be adapted to suit your animals based on their age and specific needs. Oral preparations are available but absorption is not as reliable as with the injections and so we recommend the injection rather than the paste.

We have managed to source 'Hipravit ADE Forte' which contains Vitamin D as well as Vitamins A and E and can now offer our clients this injection for their alpacas. Please contact us on 01769 572176 to speak to a large animal vet for more information.



If you would like to discuss this further particularly vaccination protocols please speak to a member of the farm team.