

ISSUE 69 Winter/Spring 2020

Livestock NEWS

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ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

Staff News

Welcome!

Rhys Hopkins

We are pleased to welcome Rhys to the farm team! Rhys joined the team in January so is already getting stuck in and will have met many of you. He will be working between our Dalston and Newbiggin practices. He has been working in a farm practice in Worcestershire since qualifying in 2018. Rhys grew up in the Brecon Beacons in Wales on his family's beef and sheep farm so Cumbria will be a home from home!



Updates!



Emily Tinning

Emily is now back from maternity leave and will be working a Tuesday and Friday alongside Karen as Farm VetTech & Administrator.

Karen McNeil

We are pleased to let you know that Karen is now fully qualified as our Farm SQP (suitably qualified person) after passing her exams late last year. This means she is now able to advise and supply VPS products such as wormers, flukicides and fly control.

We have some competitive prices so get in touch today!



Cowstoppers

Implanting 'cowstoppers' embryo's is a method which can help problem, or repeat breeder cows to achieve a pregnancy. The cow is Aled on Standing heat, and an embryo implanted 7 days later. This helps improve maternal recognition of pregnancy and improve pregnancy rates in these cows. Success rates are around 50%. The majority (around 70%) of pregnancies established are to the AI mating, with the remainder being the embryo. Cost is £70 (including visit, embryo and transfer).



By Rob Simmons

Liquid gold: Colostrum management

Colostrum management is key to giving a calf the best start in life. Not only does it provide energy and immunity it is rich in nutrients that set the calf on the right track. Some of these nutrients actually promote development and maturation of the intestine meaning the intestines will be more efficient. Others have been shown to actually change the genes which are expressed in the calf which affect further development of the gut and the immune system.

Therefore, colostrum provision is important both short and long-term including better **growth rates, age at first calving, reduced risk of culling** in 1st lactation and even **better yields** in first and second lactation!

The 3 Qs of colostrum management are:

1. **Quality:** Measure colostrum with a colostrometer or Brix refractometer.
2. **Quantity:** All calves to receive at least 105 of body weight - approximately 4 litres for most Holstein calves.
3. **Quickly:** Within 2 hours if possible and definitely within 6 hours this is because the gut cannot absorb important antibodies after this time. Give a second feed within 12 hours of birth.

Aside from these 3 crucial points other things to think about are:

Colostrum storage: Bacteria numbers increase rapidly if not stored in a fridge and this negatively affects how well the calf can absorb antibodies as well as risking infection spread.

Time after calving colostrum collected: There is a decline in quality with time after calving so collect ASAP.

Testing calving using total proteins: This involves blood sampling and measuring the protein level of the blood and can be used to tell if the calf received enough colostrum. Interestingly a study found that farms which regularly measured total proteins were at a lower risk of failure of passive transfer (a calf which hasn't received enough colostrum).

Pasteurising colostrum: This improves antibody absorption and also reduces spread of important pathogens such as Salmonella, Mycoplasma bovis and Johnes'.

Transition milk can improve calf health for an extended period of time compared with just 2 feeds of colostrum. This is because it supplies more antibodies and nutrients which act locally to further protect the calf, particularly against scour. This involves feeding milk taken from 2nd to 6th milkings. As milk is pooled it is only possible if the farm has a pasteuriser.

Don't forget **Johnes'** needs to be considered when thinking about colostrum management so talk your vet to discuss what the best options are for your farm.

Pictures taken from AHDB calf management guide



By Charlie Bradshaw



An Orf-ful lot to learn

Orf is a highly contagious virus that infects sheep classically seen as lesions around the mouth and nose. It is a zoonosis (a disease which can infect humans) so is seen as an occupational hazard. It is said to cost the British economy £10 million a year as around 126,000 ewes and 900,000 lambs are infected in England every year. This is surprisingly high despite a vaccine being available. Because of this a study was done to make sure the vaccine was being used correctly.



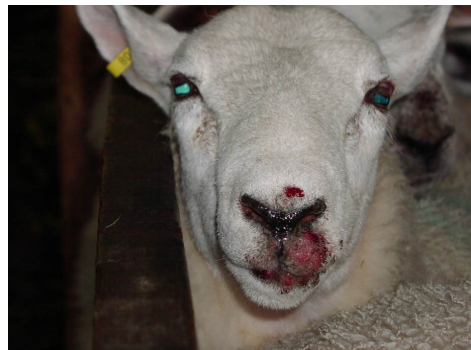
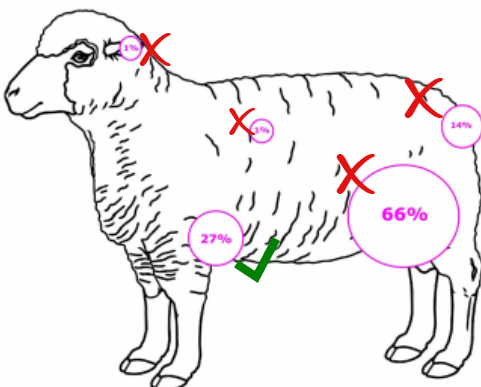
By Annie Kerr

The licensed orf vaccine in the UK is Scabivax Forte which is a live vaccine.

For this reason, it is not advised to vaccinate if you do not already have orf on your farm as you do not want to bring it in. The study showed that:

- 66% of farmers were vaccinating in the groin area but it is licensed for use in the axilla (under the front leg) but only 27% of farmers said they vaccinated here. It is recommended here because lambs are less likely to put their noses here to look for milk and so the chances of mastitis are reduced.
- 37% of farmers said they would use the vaccine up to a week after opening the vial whereas it is supposed to be used within 8 hours of opening the vial.
- Only 535 of farmers said they would wear gloves which is worryingly low as a lot of farmers are putting themselves at risk of getting orf themselves.
- 7% of farmers did not separate vaccinated and non-vaccinated animals (both leading to infection risk for non vaccinated animals)

These results show that the orf vaccination is not always carried out correctly on sheep farms which is highly likely to affect how well the vaccine works. If you have any questions about using Scabivax please speak to one of us.



Abortion in ewes

With the lambing season well under way, one thing we all hope to avoid is abortion in ewes. With each abortion potentially costing around £85 per ewe, if you suspect you have an issue it is worth discussing it with your vet to find out why it may be happening. Depending on the cause, it may unfortunately have to run its course this year hopefully you can put measures in place before tupping time next year to prevent it happening again.



By Shona Mouncey

Enzootic abortion is a bacterial infection which classically causes abortion in late pregnancy. Infection is introduced to flocks via carrier sheep and so the best way to prevent infection is to run a closed flock. Buying in vaccinated sheep will help to prevent the introduction of disease, but vaccinated sheep can still be carriers if they were infected prior to vaccination. Toxoplasmosis infection is caused by a parasite for which cats are an essential part of the lifecycle. Sheep become infected by eating feed or water contaminated by infected cat faeces and so control measures include secure storage of feed. Toxoplasmosis can present either as an increased barren rate when ewes have been infected early in pregnancy, or as abortion in late pregnancy. Weak live lambs may be born alongside dead littermates. Both these infections can be vaccinated against prior to breeding.



If you have more than 2% of ewes abort it is worth investigating to try to find a cause. A simple tally can be kept to keep track of how many there have been as some are often forgotten when everyone is busy. Investigation can either be done by submitting the dead lambs and placenta (the placenta is essential) for post mortem which can also help to diagnose other infectious causes such as campylobacter and salmonella, or by blood sampling ewes. Subsidised blood sampling can be carried out in unvaccinated flocks for toxoplasmosis and enzootic abortion in flocks with either a high barren rate or high abortion rate. This can be a useful tool if you are left with a number of barren ewes at the end of the season which had previously been scanned in lamb, and so must have aborted at some point. There are also various other non-infectious causes of abortion which include poor nutrition, metabolic disease and stress due to handling or poor weather conditions.

Whilst awaiting a diagnosis, all aborted ewes should be isolated and identified so that they can be found at a later date for future management. It must be noted that these infectious causes of abortion can infect humans and so pregnant women must not come into contact with sheep or contaminated equipment or clothing. Whilst it can be hard to keep on top of at lambing time, prevention is always better than cure so maintaining strict biosecurity is essential to protect the health of your flock.



Do you heifers measure up? Pelvimeter in action

We now have a pelvimeter at the practice! Calving difficulties can be one of the major problems for beef farmers. A pelvimeter is a device used to measure the internal area of a heifer's pelvis. This is done by taking two measurements of the horizontal width and vertical height of the pelvis via the rectum and multiplying the figures together to obtain a total area in cm^2 .

This measurement can be compared against a known minimum normal internal area for either a native or continental breeds of a certain age.

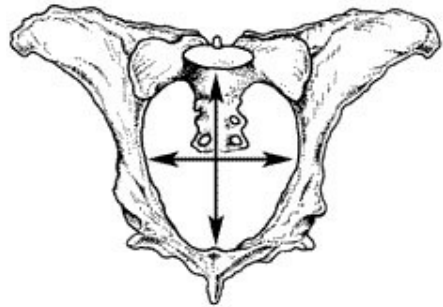


By Annie Kerr

Calving problems mainly in females having their first calf. One of the major contributing factors of calving problems is size or weight of the calf which we can influence with choice of bull. The other factor is the size of the pelvis of the mother as we cannot control abnormal calf presentations e.g. leg back.

The factors that influence pelvic area in heifers are:

- Genetics of the sire and dam
- Breed
- Level of nutrition



The rice pelvimeter is a good way for assessing accurate pelvic skeletal conformation and to select animals with a larger pelvic area and hence leading to less calving problems. If you are interested in having your heifers measured give me a call at the practice.

Sheep worming update

Concerns have recently been expressed about the use of Cydectin 2% injection in sheep and a potential for further increase in resistance in sheep parasites. Cydectin is used for both internal parasites and external parasites (primarily scab) so increased resistance could lead to a reduction in availability of effective treatments for both conditions.



By Anne Abbs

SCOPs and Zoetis have therefore recommended the following guideline when using Moxidectin 2% injection:

- If ewes are treated with Moxidectin, some should be left untreated (older ewes in good body condition particularly if they are rearing a single lamb)
- It should not be used as a treatment more than once a year in any flock (there are challenges here as larger containers are generally cheaper per ml so there is a temptation to buy a big bottle and use it all up before it goes out of date!). If its is used in ewes at turnout, alternative treatments should be used for scab if required e.g dipping.
- Check the dose rate and ensure that you are treating for the correct weight. Underdosing is particularly good at creating resistance as worms or scab get a sub-lethal dose of the treatment.

Resistance is a major problem for the sheep industry - lots of farms struggle with fluke resistant to triclabendazole so anything that can help preserve the effectiveness of currently available treatments are worthwhile.

Shared Out of Hours Service

As we strive to balance efficiency, improved productivity and a better work/life balance for our team of vets, we have for the past year or so been supporting Ben Dustan of Tarn vets, primarily out of hours with his on call.

From 1st February we have decided to embark on a reciprocal arrangement and we have merged our on call rotas. As such, roughly every 5th night and weekend, Ben will be on call and so will be attending your out of hours on call requirements.

Ben is an experienced farm animal vet and has been practicing for 13 years, the last 5 as owner of Tarn Farm Vets. He is based near Shap and we are confident he will be a highly able and competent addition to our team. All billing and charging will remain the same and through Paragon as it is currently.

We trust this transition will be seamless for everyone and Ben will be made as welcome as our team of Vets however should you have any queries, please speak to Victor, Bruce or Philip or one of the vets in the first instance.

Upcoming Events

Borderway UK Dairy Expo 2020 - Saturday 14th March

We will be attending the UK Dairy Expo again this year. It's a great chance for us to catch up with everyone so please come along and see us for a chat and refreshments.



H&H Borderway Mart, Carlisle CA1 2RS

Mastering Medicines Course

Our next mastering medicines course we will be running will be on Friday 17th April 2020. Please contact Karen or Emily to book your place.



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