

April 2016

With lambing well under way we are seeing a few of the age old problems:

1. **Difficult lambings:** The biggest problem has been over sized lambs inside the ewes.
2. **Prolapses both pre and post lambing:** Many of you have tried **salt licks** in the pens pre lambing and have reported that it works very well in reducing prolapses prior to lambing.
Post lambing prolapses can be more difficult to get to the bottom of. I would always recommend after **assisting a ewe** on to give a shot of **painkiller**. This not only **takes away any pain from the back end of the ewe** it also reduces the **swelling in her vagina**. This will **stop her from pushing** and hopefully reduce prolapses.
 - Occasionally after a prolapse the ewe can drop down dead which can be on account of the blood vessels tearing in the prolapse and she will bleed to death internally.
3. **Guts out on lambs:** This is often genetic. We do have good success with repairing these but try to keep them clean and warm. Ideally **wrap the lamb and guts in cling film** and then wrap in a clean towel.
4. **Scouring lambs:** At the moment these seem to be holding their own. The **watery mouth prevention** is working well.
5. **Joint ill** is starting to rear its ugly head. **Every other day treatment of penicillin and steroid** seems to be a good cure. However preventing it is the key through good colostrum intake, excellent hygiene and wearing gloves when helping ewes lambs.
6. **Cocci:** We have had a couple of farms with cocci in 6 weeks old lambs.
 - A blanket dose of **vecoxan** at set times can be very **effective** however the lambs need to **build up immunity** by a low level exposure to the bug. It is very important that you **time the blanket dose just right** or else it can be a complete waste of time and money.
 - **Too early** then **no immunity** to cocci has built up and they can pick up cocci the next day.
 - **Too late** and **lots of deaths** can happen.
 - In order to get the timing right then **monitor the lambs closely**. Think back to **when you have had cocci before** and see if this **ties in for this year!** Do you **suspect you have particular fields** which pose the biggest risk?
 - When you see a scouring lamb, **bring us a faecal sample**. One from that lamb and then 10 pooled poo samples. We can look for cocci under the microscope and tell you if you need to treat today or not.
 - Prevention is dependent on **good hygiene and husbandry** such as keeping troughs clean and dry.
 - Where possible **avoid grazing younger and older lambs** on the same pasture.
7. **Nematodirus** appears to have been very quiet at the moment which is good but please stay vigilant. If you suspect it then **bring us 10 samples from poor doing lambs** and we can look under the microscope while you wait. Don't leave it too long as it can be too late.
8. **Fluke:** With the warm, wet winter this is very difficult to predict this year. We have found evidence of fluke in flocks where we have looked for it, so please be on guard and don't hesitate to contact us for advice.

Cattle:

With the increased pressure on sheds and the humid, wet weather we have seen quite a **few mastitis cases** especially in the first 100 days post calving.

- Whereas this can be put down to the year we have had we should be mindful that hot winters may be a thing of the future so we need to improve the sheds in readiness.

Many of you will be **thinking of turning the bulls out with the cows in readiness for serving**. It is important to get them ready for this well in time. It takes 8 weeks from sperm production to ejaculation, so if we find a problem now it may not be too late to rectify. **Give us a call to check your bulls before they are used for serving**. The cost will be insignificant compared with the amount of money you could lose.

We **physically examine the bulls** to make sure there are no **obvious defects**. We will check they have **2 testicles** of even size, that the testicles are **freely movable in the sac** with **no lumps or bumps** being obvious and **non painful**. We will look at his penis to make sure that is **able to penetrate the cows** and that there is **no damage** to it such as having a wart on it. We will also feel his **glands** to make sure they are **non painful and** have not become infected.

We will also **assess their sperm**; in order to collect this we will use an **electro-ejaculator**. This **stimulates nerves that cause ejaculation**. The male tolerates it perfectly well. With the current price slumps in both beef and dairy it has never been more important to be efficient and with costs of at least £1.23 /day for each open cow on a beef herd and £5/ day for dairy the cost of bull testing is soon a saving!

Microchipping of dogs: Don't forget it is now compulsory to have all dogs chipped. You can end up with a £500 fine. It doesn't matter if they are working or pet they have to be done!!!