

## July 2015:

With the changeable weather people are managing to snatch bits of silage here and there. The big problem with the **constant changes in temperature and humidity** is that livestock don't **have time to adapt and so they become stressed and ill**.

One of the major problems we have seen is in an **increase of pneumonia in adult cattle**.

There are a few **trigger factors / causes** as well as the poor weather, such as:

**Lung worm.** Make sure your cattle are suitably covered whether this is from a **good worming programme** or via the use of the **vaccine (huskvac)**. If you hear lots of cattle coughing then **contact us for a diagnosis**. Leaving it too long can lead to deaths.

**IBR.** There are a variety of **quick and reliable tests** which can tell you the level of disease in your herd. Know your herd IBR status. **Vaccination** is the simplest form of **control**. Without doing it you can end up with **big losses**.

**BVD.** The **persistently infected animal** will **suppress the immunity** of other animals.

- This will stress the animals out allowing them to go down with pneumonia from passing bugs.

**Poor calf management:** A calf which has pneumonia is more likely to **suffer later in life** with pneumonia.

**Poor nutrition:** A poorly balanced diet can lead to an **increase in ruminal acidosis**. This allows **bacteria** to leave the **stomach** and enter the **blood vessels**. These settle out in the **liver leading to an abscess**. Eventually this **abscess grows** and erodes into other **major blood vessels** which **infect the lungs** with bacteria. This situation is irreversible.

In **lambs** we are seeing **high nematodirus worm egg counts**. These can easily be treated by either a **white drench or a levamisole drench**. A **clear drench is effective** but will not get down to the **first stage larva** of this worm so increased dosing is required. In the correct conditions **nematodirus can have a life cycle of 14 days**.

- It is a **lamb to lamb spread**, the **ewe has no involvement** at all. The egg can last on the pasture for 2 years!

In preparation of tugging we are often asked about **drenching ewes with minerals**.

- A lot of **money is wasted** in this area and so consultation with someone in the know is advisable.

For **tugging** you need a **short sharp burst of minerals** to get the ewe and tup in tip top condition making **sure they are cycling**.

- We recommend a mineral **drench** such as Pardevit, which contains **Cobalt, selenium, and Iodine**.
- Be very careful when drenching with **copper as it can easily kill sheep**. If it has been diagnosed as **deficient** in your sheep then it is required but be careful.

We would **recommend a mineral bolus** for ewes at **housing / 1 – 2 months prior to lambing**. This will benefit the ewe in her last stage of pregnancy as well as topping up the levels of minerals in the milk during lactation. This way it benefits both ewe and lamb.

- Bolus the lambs once they are 3 months of age.

### Selenium deficiency

Clinical signs include:

1. New born lambs being weak and unable to stand.
2. Later on lambs can scour and are poor doers.

### Cobalt deficiency

This can be bought on by liming the farm.

Clinical signs include:

1. Loss of appetite.
2. Reduced weight gains
3. Dry coat and tight

### Copper deficiency / molybdenum toxicity.

- Growing lambs can show growth retardation
- Poor wool growth and structure.
- Swayback in lambs.

The molybdenum is able to block the copper from being absorbed in the rumen.

Unfortunately there is no reliable test for molybdenum in the blood stream and so it can be very difficult to diagnose.

### Copper toxicity.

- Sudden death.

Copper toxicity can be breed specific. It can cause sudden death in growing sheep. The course of action that was chosen needs to be carefully monitored.

### Iodine deficiency

More often associated with sudden death in lambs but recent work has shown that in later life lambs can be poor doing and are more susceptible to other diseases.

### Synchronisation of ewes:

**Option 1:** Regulin implant.

**Option 2:** Insertion of sponges for 12 – 14 days.

**Option 3:** Teaser tups:

- Introduce your teaser tup to the group of ewes and leave in there for a minimum of 2 days ideally 1 week. It needs to be a sexually active ram with good libido.
- Introduce your fertile ram 14 days after the introduction of the teaser tup. The ratio of rams to ewes should be 1 : 30.