

## March 2012.

So far the lambing season seems to be going well! No major problems to report apart from **abortions**.

- If you are getting these then please contact us at the vets and then take the lambs down to the lab at Shrewsbury.

### Joint ill in lambs.

If you are suffering from a large number of these it can be very depressing, a **few tips to help reduce it include:**

1. Make sure the lambs are getting a **good amount of colostrum at birth**. The ideal is **50ml per kg of weight in the first 6 hours with a total of 200ml / kg in the first 24 hours**.
  - This not only provides vital antibodies against bugs on your farm it also provides energy for the lambs.
2. **Good hygiene:** Clean the lambing pens out and regularly disinfect.
  - Try to reduce pools of liquid standing in the sheds.
  - Keep all your lambing equipment clean and regularly disinfect the milk bottles and tubes.
3. **Wear arm length gloves when lambing the ewes.** We think that we spread the bugs that cause joint ill from ewe to ewe. By wearing gloves we reduce the risk of spreading the bugs. It also protects your delicate hands!!!
4. Provide **good shelter** when out at grass, but try and **regularly move the shelters** about as it can get dirty behind these shelters leading to an ideal soup for the bacteria to survive in.
5. Talk to us about **preventive antibiotics** that can be used as a last ditch attempt.

### Are you feeding your dairy heifers enough??

More and more people believe that we are inadvertently starving our dairy heifers? If you disagree then read on?

- A suckler calf consumes up **to 16 – 24% of its body weight per day of milk** this equates to a 30kg calf consuming 6 litres per day. For a dairy calf to do this she needs to be fed **900g of milk replacer / day for 9 – 10 weeks**.
- Most people only feed 4 litres per day with a total of 600g.

### What are the benefits to feeding more?

- a) The **heifers calve down earlier**.
- b) The calves' nutrition is key to mammary tissue development when they are adults.
  - A well fed calf has more mammary tissue **meaning more milk being producing** in later life.
- c) The calves appear to have a **lot better immunity** thus there is less pneumonia, less scours etc.
- d) The net result is **better welfare for your animals and more money in your pocket**.

### How do we achieve this:

- i. Good colostrum management. Feed 10% of the newborn calves body weight to her for 3 – 4 days.
- ii. Move over to feeding 900g of milk replacer, ideally over 3 feeds, in 6litres. This means 150g / litre.
- iii. Aim for:
  - 115 – 120 kg at 3 months of age.**
  - 400 kg at first service at 13 – 14 months old.**
  - 600 kg at calving at 23 – 24 months old.**

**BVD and lepto**  
vaccination is due  
now.

### Sub clinical milk fever..... what is this?

This is where we are not seeing full blown milk fever, instead the cows exhibit subtle signs such as **not getting on with calving!**

- It can be very difficult to detect but there is a lot of it out there.
- The sort of things we see are a high incidence of **retained cleansings**, leading to a lot of **whites**.
- A high incidence of **LDAs**.

One of our clients has recently started to bolus all of his cows 1 hour after calving with **Bovicalc**.

- As a result he has drastically reduced the number of whites in his herd as well as his LDAs. He believes that the £4.50 / bolus more than pays for itself time and time again through being able to get his cows back in calf sooner.

### Foot courses.

We have just held our second foot course. I am hoping to hold another 4 day course in the **summer**. If you are interested then please let us know at the surgery. The last 8 people said they really enjoyed it and got a lot out of it. They are now trained up to certificate level.

### Forth coming meetings.

We have a fertility meeting on **14<sup>th</sup> March** at Welshpool Livestock market.

- Please see the reverse of the news letter.