

March 2013

Finally a bit of sunshine to cheer everyone up, as it seems to have been a long old slog for us, let alone the poor animals. One of the biggest problems we are seeing this year is **from calcium deficiency (milk fever) and twin lamb in the ewes**. This is triggered by **poor nutrition, change in diet and stress**.

This year we are finding people have been getting **good scanning results on account of feeding at scanning time**. They then **stopped feeding for a couple of months** before restarting.

- They are getting good big lambs but the condition of the ewes has been so poor that they are unable to cope leading to milk fevers and twin lamb.

Ways to minimize these problems include:

1. **Scan and divide your ewes up into groups** depending on number of lambs they are getting.
 - if you scan then make the most of the information.
2. **Condition score** the ewes and divide them up into groups of thinner and fatter ewes.
 - Often we find if this is not done then the fat get fatter and the thin die.
3. **Look at the amount of feed space** the sheep have!
 - For ab lib forage they need 10cm / ewe, but if feeding concentrates they need 30cm / ewe!
4. **Look at your group sizes!** Are there too many sheep in the group!
 - Not only are they more at risk from aborting due to the jostling but the fat sheep bully the smaller ones.
5. **Assess the energy concentration of the diet.** A standard 70kg ewe in late pregnancy needs 20mj/day and a lactating ewe needs 30mj/day.
 - If feeding a silage of 10mj and a DM concentration of 25% they need 4kg of silage and 1 kg of cake in late pregnancy. If feeding straw to reduce prolapses the numbers are still around the same.
6. **Look at your cake quality** see box below: Beware some are better than others.

What to look out for in a good concentrate

1. Dry Matter: 86%.
2. Energy content: 12.5 mj/kg DM any lower is false economy.
3. Protein content: At least 18%
4. Ash. Less than 10%
5. Crude fibre: Less than 10%
6. Ration formulation: Have they bulked it up with crap!
What is its composition? A dusty blend is unsuitable for sheep. It should look like alpen!

Abortion watch:

This year we have seen the usual 2 suspects of **enzootic and toxoplasma**. Remember **toxoplasma** is bought in by **6 month old cats pooping on bedding and feed**. One cat can infect every human in the world!!!! Toxo is **not** spread from sheep to sheep. We have also seen **campylobacter**. This is bought in by **wildlife and other sheep**. It can cause big storms and there is no definite treatment. If you are getting abortions then take a lamb and after birth to the VLA. **We are seeing very little Schmallenberg!**

Parasite watch for March!

Still watch out for abnormally high **immature and mature fluke** in sheep!

Nematodirus: This may cause a problem due to the colder weather we have just experienced. If in doubt bring us 10 poo samples.

Cocci: There is a high risk of this due to the wet conditions we have experienced. Again bring us some poo!

BVD free There is a big initiative in England to eradicate BVD from the national herd. BVD is a major cause of disease in cattle and can cause losses both with fertility as well as calf / young stock deaths from scours and pneumonia. It is well worth becoming BVD free. **Many of you will already be free but not accredited.**



No.	TESTING OPTION	DAIRY/ BEEF
1a	5 animals between 9-18 months per separately managed group	Either
1b	10 animals between 6-18 months per separately managed group	Either
1c	If neither above are possible – 5 animals 18m+ on holding since birth per separately managed group	Either
2	All calves	Either
3	All animals in the herd	Either
4	Bulk milk plus dry	Dairy
5	Quarterly bulk milk	Dairy
6	First lactation	Dairy

- 1a-c requires a blood sample.
2. Can be done either by blood sample or tag and test at birth (this is very cost effective)
3. This can be done by milk sample or blood sample.
4. This is from a bulk milk sample and blood sample of cows.
6. Is from milk samples.

Talk to us at the vets about how to get accredited, there may be some help towards it this year!!

Calf academy

We are holding our calf meeting on April 4th 2013 at Andrew and Brian Thomas's, Gwyns Barn. We aim to start around 11am and finish at 15.00. **Please register at the surgery if you are interested.**