

March 2016:

- Lambing is well under way with lots of the normal problems rearing their ugly heads as well as some bizarre cases that have left us scratching ours.

So what are we seeing / expecting!

Vaginal prolapses / reeds out. I refer people to the last newsletter about ways to try and reduce these.

- Salt licks appear to work very well but please make sure there is adequate water for the ewes to drink.

Ring womb: The exact cause of these is not fully understood. It is always worth injecting the ewe with calcium under the skin before bringing her down to us.

- A cause can be due to calcium deficiency so please talk to us about them if you are experiencing problems.

Watery mouth: We have not seen lots of this yet, but due to the weather we have had I am full expecting to see this later on. Make sure the lambing shed is kept as clean and dry as possible. (very easy for me to say but not as easy to do!!)

- **Lime** works very well at sterilizing and drying pens. Make sure the lambs are getting good amounts of **colostrum**, if in doubt we can test the lambs at 7 days old to make sure you are on the right track. The **scour halt pumps** can work well although we are seeing increasing times where they are failing, which is worrying. **Tight lambing periods** help reduce watery mouth, as we all know the sheds get tired and heavily infected towards the end of lambing.

Nematodirus: This has not been seen yet but the weather has been mild we have only had a few days of cold. This may mean a **hatch early** on just when young lambs are on the fields. Keep an eye out for this. There has been 1 recorded case of **white wormer resistance to nematodirus** so please make sure you rotate your wormer against this. **Levamisole (yellow drench)** also works very well against this.

In the cattle:

Fertility: On the dairy side fertility is not marvelous. Understandably people have cut back on feed costs and tried to make efficiencies where possible. Just be careful with regards to feeding and the knock on effect with fertility. Never has it been more important to **get cows in calf** and pumping out milk. If cows can calve down without any problems, ie no whites, no mastitis and no gut up sets then they will pump out the milk and get back in calf. **The dry cow housing and diet** is so important and if we can get this right hopefully everything else will follow.

Mastitis: It has been an ideal year for the bugs as it has been wet and warm. Straw yards are getting damp and so even in the cleanest of looking yards we are seeing an increase in the number of cases of mastitis in the **first 100 days post calving**. Often this relates back to the **dry cow yards and calving pens**. If you are struggling please give us a call to have a look and help you out.

Pneumonia: With the constant change from hot to cold, excess amounts of moisture and over stocked sheds we are still seeing pneumonia in the young stock. As already mentioned, keep them as **dry** as possible, with good **ventilation**. Try not to **mix age** groups if possible and think about **vaccination** where applicable.

Following on from the December newsletter and the discussion about **Johnes these are the management strategies** that have been devised. They are applicable to **dairy, beef and sheep**:

After testing for the disease we then need to do something about it. This does include all those who are lucky enough to be negative because you do not then want to go and buy it in.

6 strategies have been developed which include:

1. **Biosecurity:** Protect and monitor: This is for farms with no evidence of disease.

- A good buying in plan needs to be in place as well as taking into account the risk of infection from neighbours.
- Regular monitoring also needs to occur.

2. **Improved farm management:** Aims to control the disease by breaking the transmission from mother to youngster.

- The 2 main areas to look at are the birthing environment and colostrum management.

This involves a large commitment to labor and resources.

3. **Improved farm management and strategic testing:** Aims to identify the high risk animals through regular recording.

- These animals are clearly identified ie via a red tag and managed in a separate group at birthing time.

4. **Improved farm management and test and cull.** This is aimed at herds with low levels of disease.

- Regular testing through milk recording and instantly culling positive cattle. In this case you still need to think about improving calving management as testing and culling is not enough to eradicate it.

5. **Breed to a terminal sire.** This is aimed at the commercial herd with a high prevalence of disease. The herd becomes a flying herd which buys in from a low risk / monitored farm. May only need to do for 6 years. Must sell the off spring as beef stores and not to suckler guys.

6. **Fire break vaccination:** This is aimed at very high risk / high disease level farms. It is intended to buy some time in order to get on top of the disease. The vaccine simply delays the onset of clinical signs but does not stop the excretion of the bug. It makes monitoring impossible as everyone has high antibodies. There needs to be an exit strategy in place.