

May 2014.

What a difference to this time last year! There is grass on the ground, the temperatures are around normal and it is relatively dry..... but we are still seeing our fair share of **sick animals** both in the cattle and sheep.

The lambs have so far stayed **dry at the back end**. As ever if in doubt please bring us some **poop samples** so we can **determine if your animals need worming or treating for cocci**. If they have worms what **type** have they got? Also is your **wormer working??**

We are seeing a few **sudden deaths in the lambs and sheep**. These have been attributed to both **pneumonia and clostridial disease (strike)**. If you haven't injected your ewes prior to lambing then your lambs will be very much at risk... **vaccinate with either hepatvac P plus, ovivac P or bravoxxin**.

We have even seen a couple of cases of blow fly strike..... get **clicking!!**

In the cattle we are seeing a few **outbreaks in pneumonia**..... the temperatures are **very changeable** with a 10 degree shift in 24 hours. This certainly tests the **ventilation in your sheds**.

- With the nice weather people have **turned out early** which has brought problems.

Staggers..... there is a lot of grass but it is very watery, with high potassium. This is ideal conditions for staggers.

Make sure you are **supplementing** your cattle with mag. Possible ways include, in the **feed**, as a **bolus**, in the **water** or as a **lick**. If using a lick remember that the badger also likes a lick so try to suspend in the air to keep out of reach for our black and white friends..... this is tricky if you have dexters.

In the dairy world we are seeing a few **LDA's** and even **right displacements / ulcers**. This is often indicative of not enough **fibre** in the diet. Please talk to us about your **dry cow and fresh calved diet**. Interestingly, where used appropriately, the **kexxtone bolus is reducing the incidence of LDA's**.

Successfully rearing heifers part 2:

As mentioned in the last newsletter the target to **first calving should be between 22 and 24 months** with a weight for a Holstein fresian of 650kg. In order to achieve this it is important to **start straight away from birth!**

- The **food conversion of a pre weaned calf** is fantastic.
- There is a positive relationship between **growth at this stage and milk yield**, as well as increasing the chance of the **animal reaching second lactation**.
- Currently the **national average** for heifers dying in their **first lactation is 15 – 20%**. It takes around £1000 to bring a heifer into the herd and so a heifer is not profitable until it reaches its second lactation.
- In practical terms a calf should be fed **6 litres of milk / day**. Ideally in 3 feeds. Increasing the feed to greater than 6 litres / day is not economical but neither is decreasing the feed.
 - This will lead to an **optimum growth rate of 0.8kg / day**. Do we all know what are calves are doing?
 - It is excellent that a few of you are producing **record cards** for each calf which include birth weights, colostrum quality and intakes, as well as live weight gain.
- They should also have **water offered** at all times.
- They should be offered **chopped forage ideally straw at 2 cm length**.
- It has also been proven that moving to a group of **5 – 8 calves pre weaning** is more beneficial than post weaning, as the calves "help" each other over the weaning process!
- **Minimizing disease** is also very important. Pneumonia, scours and of course BVD are the major problems. Calves with 4 or more cases of pneumonia live at least 100 days less over life time.

A bit of **good news** in that at the moment. In our area the TB incidence does **appear to be getting better**. Hopefully it is **not a temporary blip**. For all those with **outstanding tests**. Please can you give us as **much notice as possible**. We are very grateful to those which book in **at least 1 month in advance**. For those who give us 1 week it is really difficult to find a slot and we do not want you to lose some of your **single farm payment**. We know it is a pain to do but please be prepared. We can also help **provide a crush** as we don't want people or animals getting hurt.