



White Hills Surgery, Sibford
Road, Hook Norton, Banbury,
OXON OX15 5DG

Tel: 01608 730085

Fax: 01608 730439

www.hooknortonvets.co.uk

FEBRUARY 2010

FARM NEWSLETTER

SHEEP

EARLY SPRING SHEEP MEETING

We would like to invite you to a meeting on **'AVOIDING LAMB LOSSES BEFORE AND AFTER LAMBING'** on the 10th February 2010 at 7.30pm. We have a guest speaker Ms Harriet Fuller MRCVS who is a specialist sheep vet. The meeting will be held at the Horse and Groom Pub in Milcombe with the usual refreshments provided!

LAMBING LISTS AND NO VISIT FEES!

I know I say it every month at this time of year but please get your lambing lists from the farm shop or from

www.hooknortonvets.co.uk.

These lists are effectively an order form for anything you

could possibly want for your lambing season. Please **telephone, post or fax these into us at least 24 hours in advance** of date of collection. Payment at the time will win you a 5% discount!

Remember, bringing your difficult lambings or poorly sheep to the surgery during normal surgery hours will mean they can be seen by a vet without a visit fee! Every little helps...

EWE PROLAPSES

In previous years some of our farms seem to have suffered from more ewes prolapsing

before lambing. These vaginal prolapses are fairly common in commercially bred animals and in particular those in too good a body condition! The method for dealing with these prolapses is fairly straightforward and the equipment for dealing with them can be bought from the farm shop. Wash the prolapsed **gently** with warm water and hibiscrub and then replace it into the ewe using a bit of lubricant. Then the prolapse can be retained using - preferably a ewe truss or harness rather than a plastic retainer. Sometimes stitches are needed if the ewe is straining a lot, please call the practice if you feel this is needed. An injection of anti-inflammatory **Finadyne** and a long-acting antibiotic are indicated and remember - she

won't be able to lamb over a harness so keep an eye to remove it when you think she is getting ready to lamb!

PREGNANCY TOXAEMIA AND HYPOCALCAEMIA

Twin Lamb disease or pregnancy toxaemia is a condition you are probably all fairly familiar with. Housing at lambing can be stressful and can often trigger the onset of this problem. Usually occurring in the last 2-3 weeks prior to lambing the animals generally go downhill looking slow, dull and reluctant to feed. Early treatment is vital to achieve a cure. The cause is a lack of energy in the body due to carrying multiple lambs so you need to administer an energy source quickly. Many supplements are available but we favour a drench of **Ketol**, plus a multivitamin injection to stimulate the appetite and a long-acting antibiotic to prevent pneumonia. If the ewe does not respond and is still not eating then abortion may be needed to save the ewe. Please phone us to discuss if this is the case.

Another commonly occurring condition around housing is hypocalcaemia. The ewe may again become slow and depressed and lag behind the group. As it progresses she may lie down, drool profusely (very key sign!) and may even start to fit before death. Giving calcium

is essential to save her. Give **100ml of warm calcium No6** into several sites under the skin. Please contact us immediately if you feel she is severely affected and you do not feel capable of giving an intra-venous injection as some sheep will need the calcium to be injected into the vein. Remember to mark the ewe as she may need repeat doses of calcium.

If in doubt give calcium to those sheep you feel may be suffering from twin lamb disease as the conditions are easily confused!_

CATTLE

COLOSTRUM, JOINT ILL AND NAVEL ILL

The good, the bad and the ugly! Hopefully you will be able to work out which is which.

Remember to ensure that calves get adequate quantities of good quality **colostrum** within six hours of birth. Only in the first six hours is the gut wall open to the vital antibodies needed to prime the immune system of the calf.

Poor colostrum intake in calves is linked to poor performance in young calves. Animals that develop navel ill and joint ill have often been shown to have poor antibody levels in the blood, due to lack of colostrum early on. Similarly there is a clear link with poor antibody levels and pneumonia in young calves.

Combiclav injection can prove useful in treating early cases of navel ill and joint ill, but **must be continued for 7-10 days** if a cure is to be achieved.

It is now recommended that calves are given 3 litres of good colostrum in the first six hours of life. This is quite a big volume and most calves cannot be relied on to obtain this by sucking alone. Remember that as new born calf often spend a lot of time playing with the teats rather than actually swallowing; it can look like they are taking on more than they really are. It may be better to use a feeding bag and to tube colostrum into calves that look as though they may struggle to take on this volume.

We have excellent bags of **dried bovine colostrum from CALF'S CHOICE TOTAL**. This supplement is easy to mix with warm water and contains bovine antibodies and, if given in the first 24 hours of life, will provide additional health and productivity benefits. It can be used to replace or supplement maternal colostrum when the quality or quantity needed is not available on the farm. The price is £19.58 plus VAT so it can be very worthwhile purchasing a bag to have as spare in case you have a high value calf born and lack the required colostrum._

HUSK – LUNGWORM

With Spring starting earlier (I know it doesn't feel like it yet!)

and Summers becoming warmer and wetter, there is an increasing risk of husk (lungworm). The use of long-acting wormers in herds is often reducing the opportunity for lungworm immunity to develop in young cattle as they are not exposed to sufficient levels - leading to more cases being seen in older cattle. If you know you have a problem on your farm or had husk problems in 2009 then give consideration to planning a vaccination regime using **Huskvac**.

Bovilis Huskvac has a short shelf life (only 8 weeks) so make sure you order it from us at the right time. Two doses are given four weeks apart, with the final dose given two weeks prior to turnout so careful co-ordination is needed! Huskvac still remains a very cost-effective option for lungworm control. Go to

www.huskvac.co.uk

for the latest disease information and Frequently Asked Questions.

