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FARM NEWSLETTER

Wishing a Happy and Prosperous New Year to all our Clients!

STAFF CHANGES

Unfortunately Jim Adams is leaving us in February to move on to a teaching post at the Royal Veterinary College, London and then probably back to Devon. His replacement will be a local farmer's son, Chris Gasson, who is an experienced farm vet and has been working in an XLVet practice in Somerset for the last few years.

SHEEP

Early lambers are underway; however the main bulk of lambing begins in March. A few points to remember:

1. Copper Supplementation

We advise monitoring your flock status by blood sampling 10 ewes from each management group. This will allow us

to give you advice on the required level of supplementation to prevent **Sway Back** and Copper related problems. This is best done **pre-scanning** so that, if necessary, a Copper injection or bolus can be given when you handle the ewes for scanning.

2. Disappointing Scanning Results?

After the dry summer scanning percentages are down in most flocks. However, if you are experiencing a higher percentage of barren ewes than usual, it may be due to trace element deficiency or infections like Toxoplasma. *Before* you sell the barren ewes it is worth blood sampling 8 for a 'Barren Ewe Check' which involves both trace element and Toxoplasma blood testing.

3. Housing Doses

We advise giving a dose of wormer and flukicide to all housed pregnant ewes 2 weeks after housing to remove any fluke and worm infections which can be exacerbated in late pregnancy and cause problems at lambing. Don't wait until lambing or afterwards to treat as this is too late and may allow problems to surface.

4. Housing Lameness Problems

Depending on your flock's status and previous problems, it may be sensible to discuss with a farm vet precautions that can be taken pre-housing - e.g. **Footvac** footrot vaccination and/or footbathing with **Lincospectin** for Scald and other feet problems. This protocol will reduce problems with lame sheep after housing if implemented at the correct time.

5. Help at Lambing

Get it sorted NOW! With the value of the lambs at market (£80?) can you afford to lose lambs at lambing time? NO - an extra pair of hands could pay for itself many times over so put plans in place now.

6. More Help at Lambing!

We are always available to lamb your ewes or do caesareans at the Surgery. Try to make your decision early, before exhausting the ewe and compromising the lambs' survival. Please ring **before** leaving to come in so that we can ensure the duty vet at night is called or a vet during the day is available. As always, we can visit but it is much more economical to bring the ewes to the Surgery.

7. Finally...

Lambing Lists are available from the Surgery or online at:

CATTLE

T.B. TESTING

Whilst cattle are housed, this is the ideal time to test your cattle so that if any problems are found like Inconclusive Reactors or Reactors they can be retested in 60 days well before turnout. Due to pressure of testing, please contact the Surgery in good time so we can have enough time and make sure the appropriate vet can attend.

SUCKLER COWS PRE-CALVING - JOBS TO BE THINKING OF

1. Are They In Calf?

Make sure you get us to P.D. the cows so you can act accordingly.

2. Rotavec Corona

Vaccination to protect against calf scour should be given 4 -12 weeks pre-calving.

3. Trace Element Supplementation

Selenium and Iodine are critical for calf viability so it is vital the cow has adequate supplementation either via the food through supplements for mild deficiencies or, for more severe cases, **Cosecure I bolus** given pre-calving will correct the problem. It is best given at least 4 weeks pre-calving.

The dose for Cosecure is 2 boluses which will provide supplementation for Copper, Selenium, Cobalt and Iodine.

If you are unsure whether supplementation is required, a blood sample from 6 cows will give an indication. The value of a lost calf will more than pay for the cost of blood sampling and supplementing 50 cows!!

4. Colostrum

Make sure you have a supply of frozen colostrum or artificial alternative at hand in case of problems with the cow.

5. Drug Cupboard

Check that all your drugs are in date and that you have a plentiful supply of gloves and lubricant. We would advise the following drugs as basic requirements:

- a) Intra-uterine pessaries;
- b) Navel dressing e.g. 10% Iodine or antibiotic spray such as **Cyclopray**;
- c) General purpose antibiotic for the cow, e.g. **Penstrep** or **Betamox L.A.**;
- d) General purpose antibiotic for the calf, e.g. **Resflor**;

- e) Anti-inflammatory, e.g. **Metacam injection**;
- f) Oxytocin to aid cleansing and milk release;
- g) Mastitis tubes, e.g. **Orbenin L.A.**;
- h) Scour treatments, e.g. **Rehydrion Gel**;
- i) Clean and undamaged calf stomach-tube;
- j) Calcium and Magnesium injections, e.g. **Calciject No6**;
- k) Surgery Phone No: in case of problems!!

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