

FARM ANIMAL NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY 2024

DEALING WITH SHEEP ABORTIONS

At our annual sheep meeting in January we discussed what measures should be taken when a sheep aborts.

- Always assume that any ewe which lambs prematurely as well as its lambs, afterbirths and vaginal discharges are contagious to other sheep, so isolate her from all other sheep including ewes which have already lambed and geld hogs.
- Remove aborted lambs, afterbirths plus bedding that may have been contaminated from the lambing environment.
- Aborting ewes and their lambs/afterbirths are potentially contagious to humans so always wear gloves when handling abortion material.
- **PREGNANT WOMEN SHOULD AVOID CONTACT WITH ABORTING EWES.**
- If you have over 2-3% of sheep aborting or re-absorptions, mummified lambs, weakly live lambs it is likely that there is an infectious cause of abortion present which should be investigated to determine the cause. Collect freshly aborted lambs and afterbirths, double bag them in leakproof containers and contact the surgery to arrange to drop off for investigation.
- Do not bring abortion material into the surgery building - we have a clearly labelled yellow salt bin for samples which is located outside the new farm building at the bottom site.
- The more information that we are given; the number of ewes aborting, the age of the ewes, how far off lambing, are the aborting ewes off colour, are they purchased or homebred, did you have abortions last year, have they been vaccinated for either Toxo or Enzo, the better advice we can provide.
- If abortion material is not available for testing there are subsidised blood testing schemes available (free lab fees, you are only charged for taking of the blood samples) to check for antibodies (evidence of exposure) to Toxoplasma and Enzootic abortion. These samples can be taken at any time in the 3 month period after the abortions.

Visit our website for further information and fact sheets on Enzootic abortions, Toxoplasmosis and Campylobacter abortions in ewes.



Covering husbandry of the pregnant ewe and newborn lamb.
Top tips for lambing time preparations, and when and how we assist the birthing ewe.

Please contact the surgery if you would like to join us.

£30 plus VAT.

Free to Dalehead Flock Club Members.



PRACTICAL HYGIENE TIPS FOR CRYOSPORIDIA AND ROTAVIRUS CONTROL IN DAIRY CALVES

We hosted a farmers meeting on 8th January at which we discussed practical tips for reducing infection levels of Crypto and Rotavirus in calf buildings including which disinfectant protocols are best for cleansing feeding equipment e.g. stomach tubes and feeders, teats and buckets and which are most appropriate for walls/floors and for disinfectant footbaths. Many of the suggestions are equally relevant to lambing pens for control of rattlebelly infections in newborn lambs. A more comprehensive summary of the meeting is available on our website but some of the take-home messages included:

The calf is not born carrying Crypto or Rotavirus. They become infected by coming into contact with adult cow faeces (the cows are symptomless carriers) so the cleaner the calving pens and the sooner calves are moved away from the cow and into a clean individual pen, the better.

Colostrum management for calves is vitally important (Quality, Quantity, Quickly). Most farmers are confident in using a stomach tube feeder to administer colostrum or to tube a sick calf with electrolytes but a different stomach tube should be used for newborn calves and sick calves. Tubes should always be washed out after use with warm water and detergent (not hot or boiling water) then rinsed, then disinfected (alcohol based disinfectants recommended) and then rinsed again.

Calving pen cleaning

Calf pens can be considered 'all in - all out' so should be thoroughly cleansed and disinfected between animals. How long is the required contact time of your disinfectant? Some need up to 2 hours, is this achievable in your system? Phenol based disinfectants e.g. Kilcox Extra, Bio O Cyst, Cydex, Prophyls are generally considered to be the more effective against Coccidia and Crypto. Disinfectants are tested by DEFRA at 4°C and their efficacy actually improves as water temperature rises so best to use warm water when mixing disinfectants whenever possible.

Biosecurity

Many of the pathogens that cause disease in calves are shed asymptotically by adult cows. It is a great idea to have calves in a separate airspace to adult cows and having a disinfectant footbath at the entrance to the calf area. Iodophor based disinfectants e.g. FAM30, Virophor are ideal to use for this purpose as they work well in cold weather and with a short contact time.

Speak to one of the farm vets/vet techs for more information about cleansing and disinfection protocols, vaccination and colostrum management.



PRODUCT NEWS

Pre-lambing Clostridial boosters

Pre-lambing clostridial or combined clostridial and pneumonia booster vaccinations should be given 4 weeks before lambing is due to start to allow time for the protective antibody levels in the ewe's colostrum to be at their peak at lambing to pass on maximum protection to their lambs.

There have been significant supply issues with these vaccines. We currently have stocks of clostridial vaccines (e.g. **Bravoxin**, **Covexin 10**) and the smaller pack sizes of **Heptavac P** with a further limited allocation of 250ml and 500ml bottles due in February.

WE WOULD RECOMMEND PLACING YOUR ORDER IN GOOD TIME!

Orf Vaccine (Scabigard)

Unfortunately there are supply issues again this year due to a batch failure in production.

Contact the surgery for the latest update regarding availability and alternatives.



February
2024



www.daleheadvetgroup.co.uk

