



Dalehead
Veterinary Group Ltd

STATION ROAD, SETTLE BD24 9AA

MOUNT PLEASANT, HIGH BENTHAM LA2

GISBURN AUCTION MART, GISBURN BB7



24 hour
dedicated
farm cover

FARM ANIMAL NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY

New Farm Vet—Andrew Linney

We are very pleased to introduce a new additional farm vet, Andrew Linney, to our team, meaning that we now have seven dedicated farm animal vets. Andrew qualified from the RVC in 2010 and spent his first two years in a farm only practice in Somerset. In 2012 he moved North and spent four years in practice in Cumbria with dairy, beef and sheep clients, during which time he completed a certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice. In 2016, with his focus on preventative medicine and disease control strategies, he joined Elanco Animal Health as a Ruminant Technical Consultant where he got the opportunity to visit farms around the UK and also in America and Canada, investigating transition cow management and dairy data analysis. In his spare time Andrew enjoys spending time adventuring with his wife and daughter or out in the field with his two working Labradors and watching but no longer playing rugby. We are sure that you will all help us to welcome him to the practice and the area.



PINK EYE PROBLEMS



A few flocks have said they are experiencing eye problems just recently. Here are two conditions that are common at this time of year.

'PINK EYE'

A bacterial infection often caused by rough weather, high winds and driving rain/snow. It can affect many sheep at one time and is also contagious, so is easily spread between sheep that are close together when feeding at troughs and silo bales. Infection can be brought onto the farm with bought-in animals if they are not quarantined.

You'll first notice sheep that are partly closing their eyes with tear staining down their face. Then the conjunctiva becomes red and sore which will progress to a white cloudiness on the surface of the eye. You will see a thick discoloured discharge as well. Left untreated the eye surface can become ulcerated. Any sheep showing early signs should be treated. Badly affected

ones could be housed with easy access to food and water, this helps to prevent misadventure and lack of nutrition for sheep that are struggling to see. This is particularly important for pregnant ewes as they could be at risk of twin lamb disease if not eating well. An injection of long acting oxytet can be used to treat pink eye but treatment may need to be repeated as the condition can often reoccur. Topical antibiotics can be used directly into the eye, but this would need to be done for 3-4 days so is not easily achievable. To help prevent pink eye select winter grazing that provides plenty of shelter from driving winds. Providing plenty of feeding space for both forage and concentrates may limit the spread of infection throughout the group. For small ewes: 45cm/head for troughs and 15cm/head for ad-lib ring feeders.

'SILAGE EYE' (ANTERIOR UVEITIS)

This condition is often linked to feeding big bale silage to sheep. It is caused by a conjunctival infection from *Listeria* bacteria found in silage. You may notice excessive tear production, closed eyes, and aversion to light. Within a couple of days, the surface of the eye develops a bluish-white cloudiness leaving the sheep temporarily blind in this eye.

To prevent silage eye, make sure you have low risk silage. Ensure minimal soil contamination of the forage, have a good mole catcher! Make sure bales are well wrapped and avoid punctures so that fermentation conditions limit growth of *Listeria* bacteria. Making bales or clamp silage with a shorter chop length for sheep makes it easier for them to feed without having to bury their heads in the long fibres and should help reduce irritation to their eyes that allows that bacteria in.

Long acting antibiotic and anti-inflammatory injections can be used to treat the infection which we will often administer into the eyelid.

#COLOSTRUMISGOLD

With lambing time upon us we thought it was worth discussing the principles behind the #ColostrumIsGold campaign.

COLOSTRUM FACTS

- Colostrum provides protection for a new-born animal from disease until it develops its own immunity.
- An adequate colostrum intake reduces the need for antibiotic treatments in the new-born or older animal.
- The new-born animal has limited body fat, so it is highly dependent on the fats and carbohydrates in colostrum as a source of energy to maintain body temperature. Insufficient energy at birth can lead to hypothermia.
- Colostrum provides lots of important nutrients as well as energy.
- A dam in good BCS with sufficient protein and energy intake in the last months of pregnancy will produce good quality colostrum.



REMEMBER THE 5 Q'S

- **Quantity:** Increased Quantity leads to better immune protection. See below for amounts to feed.
- **Quality:** Use the best colostrum you can. Good colostrum contains at least 50g/L of IgG antibodies.
- **Quickly:** A new-born's gut is porous allowing absorption of antibodies from the colostrum; this ability starts to decline rapidly after a few hours and is non-existent at 24 hours. If bacteria get ingested before the colostrum it will cause disease.
- **SQueaky clean:** Good hygiene is essential when harvesting, feeding or storing colostrum. Bacterial growth in colostrum can double every 20 minutes when left at room temperature! If storing colostrum, you can keep it in the fridge for 2 days or keep it frozen.
- **Quantify:** Measure the quality of the colostrum using a colostrometer or BRIX refractometer. Calves can be tested to evaluate transfer of antibodies by blood testing for serum protein levels. You want results over 5.5g/dl. Our Farm Vet Tech can blood sample calves and advise you on colostrum management.

CALVES

- Give a first feed of **4 litres or 10% of bodyweight within 4 or preferably 2 hours of birth. This should then be followed up by a further 2 litres within 12 hours of birth.**
- A calf requires approximately 20 minutes of continuous suckling to consume enough colostrum in the first feed. Good quality cow colostrum has IgG levels of greater than 50mg/ml.
- Calves fed enough colostrum (at least 120g) more than halve their risk of pneumonia. Over 30% of dairy farmers now test the quality of colostrum before feeding it.

LAMBS

- **A 5kg lamb at birth needs 1 litre of colostrum in its first 24 hours of life. The first feed of 60mls/kg should be within 2 hours of birth.**
- Adequate colostrum fed at birth could eliminate watery mouth in lambs. Half of UK lambs are currently estimated to receive unnecessary oral antibiotics as protection.
- 50% of neonatal lamb E coli are resistant to spectinomycin (most commonly used Watery Mouth treatment) .
- Over 80% of lambs dying in the first 48 hours are found to have received either no colostrum or to have inadequate colostrum uptake. This shows how important colostrum is.

COLOSTRUM

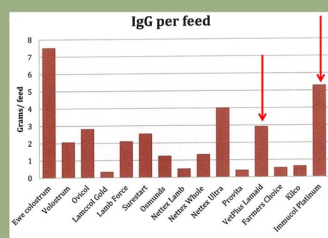
	Ig G level
Lamb Requires	20g
Good Ewe Colostrum	50g/l
Ewe Colostrum 6 hrs Lambed	30 g/l
Good Holstein Colostrum	35g/l
Good Quality Artificial Colostrum	20g/l

The best colostrum you can use is that from the mother as it contains the antibodies needed for your specific farm. If you're vaccinating breeding stock for disease prevention in new-borns i.e. Clostridial Disease and pneumonia this protection is transferred in the antibodies carried in the colostrum. Don't forget though, unwanted disease can also be transferred in colostrum from infected dams i.e. Johnes, Maedi Visna and Mycoplasma. Take care with cleanliness and check the disease status of the animals/farm that the colostrum comes from.

If feeding artificial colostrum to lambs (if the ewe has an insufficient supply) then choose a good quality colostrum which has a high antibody and fat content. The two powdered colostrums which we stock are those with the highest antibody contents (**Immuco** **Platinum** and **Lamaid**) and have fat (energy) contents comparable to good quality ewe colostrum. Because the antibody content of any supplement is less than the ewe's own colostrum, they should be used to top up the colostrum from the mother rather than replace it.

If we ensure our new-born calves and lambs receive adequate colostrum, we can easily comply with the responsible use of antibiotic regulations that the industry is pushing out. The blanket treatment of all new-borns with antibiotics is unnecessary, indeed it

COLOSTRUM



Mass of IgG contained in recommended feed volumes of colostrum supplements.

only hastens the development of drug resistance. We would recommend that the lambs that are treated with preventative antibiotics are the vulnerable ones (hard lambings, small multiples needing colostrum supplementation etc.) and those born later in lambing when the bacterial contamination in the shed has built up. There are several non colostrum supplements available that are advertised as providing extra energy and gut active ingredients to enhance local immunity in the gut. These can be used as an addition to colostrum to help prevent disease. An example is Agri Lloyd's Colitox which contains EU approved probiotics alongside good energy and vitamin levels.

SHEEP SCAB

Thank you to all who attended the annual Sheep Meeting. This year we updated you on the topic of sheep scab as we are currently confirming numerous cases of sheep scab and/or lice infestations in skin scrapings taken from outbreaks of itchy sheep. Sheep scab is caused by the mite *Psoroptes Ovis*. The whole life cycle of the scab mite takes place on the sheep but the mite **can survive off the sheep in the environment for up to 17 days**. As lambing time approaches it is **vital** to clear up any infestation to prevent new born lambs becoming infected.

Sheep scab can be introduced into a flock via carriers including:

- Purchased sheep
- Sheep returning from grazing

Recently infected sheep may not show signs of the disease so sheep which appear healthy that are introduced to the flock should always be considered as a potential source of infection. Exposure to mites in the environment, including contaminated fields, handling facilities, trailers and clothing of staff can also result in the disease. It is important to confirm a diagnosis of what is causing the sheep to itch as lice infestations can easily be confused with scab. Other than plunge dipping with O/P dips **no treatment** will provide complete control for both scab and lice.

HOW CAN YOU TREAT AND CONTROL SCAB WITH INJECTABLE PRODUCTS?

It is essential that every animal in the group is treated with either an O/P dip, Moxidectin (**Cyductin 1%** or **Cyductin 2%**), Doramectin (**Dectomax**) or Ivermectin (e.g. **Bimectin**, **Ivomec**). O/P dips will kill mites on contact as well as wash the sheep removing the mites' faeces (which causes the irritation and itchiness), the injectable products require scab mites on the sheep to feed off skin debris to be killed off (scab mites on the sheep may only feed once every 14 days) so shorter acting preparations (e.g. **Bimectin**, **Ivomec**) require 2 injections 7 days apart. In addition, because scab mites can survive for up to 17 days off the sheep in the environment only the longer acting preparations (**O/P dips** or **Cyductin 2%**) persist long enough to allow treated sheep to be returned back to 'dirty' fields or buildings after treatment without risk of becoming re-infected.

Product	Instructions	Meat Withdrawl	Cost/50kg Ewe
O/P Dips	1 treatment Keep sheep in 1 minute and submerge head twice Maintain correct dip strength	Osmond's Gold Fleece 49 days	£1 (approx)
Ivermectin	2 injections 7 days apart (1ml/50kg S/C) Move to clean pasture	37 days	12p (2 injections)
Dectomax (Doramectin)	1 injection (1ml/33kg I/M) Move to clean pasture	70 days	36p
Cyductin 1 % (Moxidectin)	2 injections 10 days apart (1ml/50kg S/C) Not to be used if sheep vaccinated with Footvax No need to move to clean pasture	70 days	36p (1 injection)
Cyductin 2% (Moxidectin)	1 injection (1ml/ 20kg behind the ear) 60 days persistency No need to move to clean pasture	104 days	76p

For more info on sheep scab control options or to arrange a skin scraping on itchy sheep please speak to one of the Farm vets or SQP's.

HEPTAVAC P PLUS BOOSTER VACCINATION FOR EWES

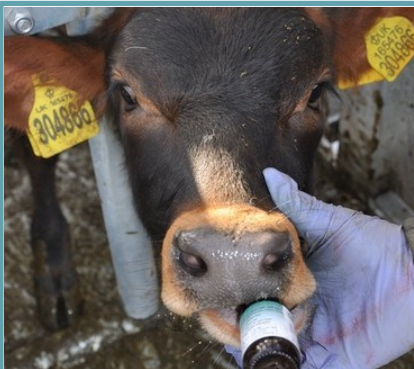
Giving ewes their Pasteurella and Clostridial booster 4-6 weeks prior to lambing not only continues their protection against these killer bacteria, but also ensures that their lambs are protected by antibodies in the ewe's colostrum. The pre-lambing booster vaccination must be given 4-6 weeks before lambing because this is when the ewe is starting to make her colostrum. The ewe produces an immune response to the vaccine which increases the concentration of protective antibodies in her colostrum. These pass to the newborn lamb when it suckles giving it 'passive' protection to these diseases which last until the lamb itself can be vaccinated.

For optimum protection the interval between the primary course of **Heptavac P Plus** (2 injections of 2mls 4-6 weeks apart) and the annual booster or between boosters does not exceed 12 months. Vaccination should take place on a dry day and care taken that every sheep is correctly vaccinated subcutaneously. Vaccines should be correctly stored in fridge between 2-8 degrees C until ready to use.



CALF SCOUR VACCINE

Rotavirus, Coronavirus (a different Coronavirus to the one that is in the news!) and K99 Ecoli are the most common causes of scours in young calves. Rotavec Corona and Bovigen are vaccines which provide protection against these diseases and are given as a single dose to cows between 3 and 12 weeks prior to calving to pass on protection to their calves via colostrum and milk. A single injection generates at least 60 times more antibodies than an antibody paste at birth. The vaccine is particularly useful in suckler herds but is now being increasingly used in dairy herds as well.



VACCINATION REMINDERS HUSKVAC (LUNGWORM)VACCINE FOR CALVES

Although turnout may seem a long way off some farmers are already planning ahead. Calves need to be at least 8 weeks old before they are vaccinated and 2 doses of the vaccine are required with an interval of 4 weeks between the first and second dose. The second dose should be administered at least 2 weeks prior to turnout.

CALF DISBUDDING

It is best to disbud calves at between one and six weeks of age. At this age the hornbuds are small, easily felt and not yet attached to the skull and calves are usually feeding well and have passed the greatest risk period for scours. Stress is minimal compared to an older calf which would have to be dehorned. Disbudding with a hot iron is done using a local anaesthetic block and an injection of pain relief. There are many benefits to using pain relief, the main one being to minimise discomfort and stress which aids a faster recovery and reduced growth check.

Anna, our Farm Vet Tech, is able to disbud calves for just £5 plus VAT per calf including drugs. If you are short of time and assistance is needed for handling, an extra pair of hands can be brought along at a cost of £7 plus VAT per calf.

BARREN EWE CHECK



Toxoplasmosis is a protozoal (coccidial type organism) infection caused by eating hay, straw, grass or concentrates contaminated with infected cat faeces. Depending on the stage of pregnancy that ewes are exposed, infection can result in barren ewes at scanning, re-absorptions, mummified lambs, stillbirths or weakly live lambs. Often the first indication of a problem can be a higher barren rate at scanning than expected (target less than 2-3% geld). With this in mind we are able to take blood samples from barren ewes to check for evidence of exposure to Toxoplasmosis in sheep that have not already been vaccinated against the disease. The laboratory fees for the Toxoplasma testing can be processed free of charge. Please contact the surgery for details of the subsidised scheme.

Health and Safety Notice For Farm Clients

At this time of year we would like to remind our sheep farm clients to be aware of the risk of abortion to pregnant women who come into contact with newborn lambs or aborted fetuses and placental material. We have a responsibility to our members of staff and to members of the public entering our premises and their safety and that of their unborn child is of paramount importance.

Please ensure that your hands and clothing are clean when entering the surgery.

Please DO NOT bring any abortion samples into the surgery.

Sheep abortion samples must be packaged in **leak proof** containers and labelled with your surname and the farm name. They **MUST** be left **OUTSIDE** in the yellow salt bin by the Portakabin and a member of reception informed.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

February
2020



www.daleheadvetgroup.co.uk

