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24 hour
dedicated
farm cover

FARM ANIMAL NEWSLETTER—MARCH 2023

ABORTION IN SHEEP

Any farm experiencing over 2% abortions or premature lambings is likely to have an infectious cause of abortion present. It is always worthwhile investigating the cause of abortion as control measures will vary depending on what is found. Contact the surgery to find out which samples from aborted lambs are most appropriate to test or what we can tell from blood samples taken from ewes which have aborted. For information on control measures for Enzootic abortion, Toxoplasma and Campylobacter visit our website www.daleheadvetgroup.co.uk.

RATTLE BELLY/WATERY MOUTH CONTROL

As many of you will be aware, Spectam Scourhalt, the only licensed antibiotic oral doser for the prevention/treatment of rattle belly has been taken off the market. Preventative strategies focus on maximising good quality colostrum intakes ASAP after birth and environmental hygiene in the lambing pens to avoid build up of infection. Preventative antibiotics should only be considered for the most vulnerable lambs. Speak to one of the farm vets to discuss your options. For more details on colostrum requirements please contact the surgery or visit our website.

HUSKVAC (LUNGWORM VACCINE)

To prevent lungworm infection, heifer replacements should be vaccinated from 8 weeks of age, with a course of 2 doses of **Huskvac** 4 weeks apart with the second dose being at least 2 weeks prior to turnout. This means that the vaccination course should be started at least 6 weeks prior to turnout. Do not use any wormer in vaccinated cattle for at least 2 weeks after vaccination as the wormer will kill the irradiated larvae in the vaccine. Order your Huskvac from us now to protect your cattle for this grazing season.



SHEEP CLOSTRIDIAL/ PNEUMONIA VACCINES

As many of you will know there have been significant supply problems with Heptavac P, Bravoxin 10 and Covexin 10 for pre-lambing boosters this spring. We currently have limited supplies available—if you need vaccine please phone the surgery for the latest situation.

SCABIVAX/ SCABIGARD ORF VACCINE

We have now exhausted the supplies of Scabivax and Scabigard that we were able to secure with no firm date as to when the next batch of Scabigard will be released (hopefully only a few weeks). To be on the waiting list for the vaccine when the next batch arrives contact the surgery.

CEVAC CHLAMYDOPHILA—ENZOOTIC ABORTION VACCINE



At last there is a vaccine in good supply!!

As in previous years, Ceva have an early user offer on Cevac Chlamydophila Enzootic abortion vaccine with a significant discounted price on 50 dose bottles ordered in February, March and April. The vaccine has an expiry date of 26th July 2023. Please contact Ruth or Lousie to place your order on 01729 823538.

**MARCH
2023**



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LEPTOSPIROSIS AND BVD VACCINATIONS FOR CATTLE PRIOR TO TURNOUT

In the spring, prior to turnout, is when the majority of breeding cattle are vaccinated to give protection against BVD and Leptospirosis. Previously unvaccinated animals may require a course of 2 injections approximately 4 weeks apart to become fully vaccinated (Leptavoid and Bovilis BVD) or if using Bovela BVD vaccine only a single injection is required to establish immunity followed by annual boosters. It is recommended to complete the initial vaccination course prior to service so consideration needs to be given to which animals are going to be served through the summer. It is particularly important that BVD vaccinations of replacement stock are completed prior to service to avoid infection of susceptible animals during the first 3 months of pregnancy leading to the production of persistently infected (PI) calves. Whilst there are supply issues with Leptavoid we do currently have good stocks of vaccine. For further information on appropriate vaccination protocols for your cattle this spring please speak to one of the farm vets.

FEBRUARY'S MEETINGS

This last month has been very busy with day and evening meetings. We have had a brilliant mix of one to one, small and large group meetings both on farm and at the practice meeting room. There has been something for everyone ranging from practical lambing courses to data gathering from robotic milkers. With all these topics being covered by nationally renowned speakers you would expect some pearls of wisdom to appear. Here is what I learnt:

The nutritional meetings with Dr Emma Redfern covered transition cow management, yield underperformance and carbohydrate sources for grass silage-based diets.

- With Soya coming under pressure from contracts, rape meal needs to be used with care due to the intake reduction and anti-nutritional aspects of this feed at higher inclusion levels.
- Alkawheat can be a very effective feed especially if cut to an appropriate length as it has gut conditioning, alkalinising and energy supply properties.
- Chop length of straw needs to be in the region of 1.5 to 2.5 inches to maximise intakes whilst maintaining structural fibre function for rumen health.

At the practical lambing course Karen and Rachel talked about tubing lambs, glucose injection into the peritoneum, colostrum and lambing techniques.

- In the last 3-4 weeks of pregnancy, ewes carrying multiple lambs may need extra high quality protein and energy for lamb growth and colostrum production.
- Get your silage tested.
- Lambs need 50ml per kg of good colostrum in the first feed and 200ml per kg in the first 24 hours.

At the beef meeting Neil, Karen and Rachel discussed colostrum management and scours as well as body condition scores and preparation for calving.

- A caesar gate makes handling so much easier and so improves the outcomes of both calvings and, if needed, caesareans.
- Prevention is better than cure, scour vaccines help turbo boost the colostrum's 'stopping power'.
- Calves need 3 litres of good quality colostrum in the first 3 to 6 hours and another 3 by 24 hours.

The lameness meetings with Dr James Wilson were an interesting mix of practical trimming advice and cutting edge research that will influence the worldwide dairy industry in years to come.

- The deep wide model as part of the five-step trim will maximise the time between trims and promote good foot health.
- Hoof testers and blocks (not shoes) are a vital part of the first aid needed for lame cows.
- Terramycin spray for digital dermatitis is an effective treatment only if the whole lesion is cleaned and sprayed thoroughly.
- Mobility scoring once a fortnight as well as a trim+block+painkiller approach will give an 85% success rate for lame cows.
- 60% of treatment failures are due to over trimming.
- In heifers - using three days of Ketoprofen (pain relief/anti-inflammatory) at every calving and every lameness episode caused a 30% lower cull rate over 3 years!
- Formalin (3%) and copper sulphate (5%) footbaths are the best things to use; anything else is unproven and expensive. Copper sulphate needs acidifying.
- Accugroove or Tracright were the preferred grooving techniques using long lines rather than diamond or other patterns
- Bandages should not stay on longer than 48 hours.

The robot dairying meeting discussed high tech solutions to some very low-tech problems. This wide ranging discussion covered the whole farm from diet to data, milking machines to muck.

- Chopped straw as a pre-processed feed prior to mixing is vital to diet stability, maximising intakes and getting higher yields off the same feed due to a more efficient digestion.
- Footbathing for lameness control is more difficult in robot herds and ideally should be situated well away from the milking unit.
- Scraping yards and keeping feet away from slurry is a vital part of digital dermatitis control.

So there is a packed month of meetings summed up in a few lines! I think if I were to try and condense this further it would have to be, every farm of every type needs:

1. Chopped straw as an ingredient in the diet
2. Anti-inflammatory drugs (painkillers) need to be used more for long living replacements
3. Foot bathing is the mainstay of any foot control plan.