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## FARM ANIMAL NEWSLETTER - DECEMBER 2025

### A CALF'S CHRISTMAS LIST

#### OFFICIAL LETTER TO

#### ★ FATHER CHRISTMAS ★

TO BE SENT DIRECTLY TO THE NORTH POLE

Dear Father Christmas,

My name is UK181061 200865 I am 5 days old and live in a calf building in the Yorkshire Dales.

For Christmas this year I would like you to bring me:

- ★ A Cosy Calf jacket from Dalehead Vets
- ★ Extra Milk
- ★ Deep dry bedding, so I can snuggle up warm
- ★ Fresh water for when I get thirsty
- ★ Starter concentrates
- ★ Chopped straw
- ★ No draughts coming into my cosy pen
- ★ Vaccinations to keep me fit and healthy!



I can't wait for you and the reindeers to come and visit me and the other calves on the farm.

Lots of love

UK181061 200865

P.S I will save some of my cake for the reindeer.

In the last few weeks, we have reached for our winter coats and a few extra hot drinks. We also need to think about the extra bits our calves need now the winter temperatures have set in. Keeping calves warm helps them turn feed into growth rather than energy to stay warm. **Calf jackets, deep dry bedding** that calves are able to nest in and **eliminating drafts** at calf level are all relatively easy fixes to help calves stay warm and reduce the chances of a growth check due to cold weather.

**Increasing milk feed** volume and/or concentration is also an option, giving calves extra calories to turn into energy for growth and warmth. This should be done with care and as directed by milk powder manufacturers instructions. Calves always need access to **fresh water, starter concentrates** and **chopped straw** to nibble on. We can also boost calves' immune systems with respiratory **vaccinations**, some of which can be given at a day old. To work out the best vaccination regime for your calves please speak to a vet.

The vets and vet techs are always on hand to discuss calf health; the vet techs provide calf health services such as weighing, disbudding and vaccinating. Call the surgery and speak to either Anna, Karen G or Claire to find out more.

## SEASONS BLEATINGS

A summary of some of the factors to be considering in your flock this festive season.

**B** is for BOLUS

Probably the most effective method of supplementing trace elements in lambing ewes. Copper, cobalt, selenium and iodine are all important pre tupping and in pregnancy. Sampling over the last years has shown that many flocks are high in copper rather than deficient. A blood screen is extremely useful.

**L** is for LAMBING

Our early lambing flocks should be thinking about Heptavac P boosters, shed and equipment hygiene and stocking up on navel treatments and colostrum. Our vets can assess energy levels, colostrum quality and advise on BCS and feeding rates.

**E** is for ENDOPARASITES

Gut worms and Fluke are the endoparasites to think about. The levels of both have been very different this year than last. Sampling and strategic treatments are fundamental in controlling these. Do you know the status of your flock?

**A** is for ANALYSIS

Forage analysis to tailor the quantity and quality of forage and concentrates to the ewes requirements is a definite recommendation. Your feed firm will often do this free for you.

The ewes nutritional requirements varies with BCS and whether she is carrying twins, triplets or singles.

**T** is for TOXOPLASMOSIS

This is a parasite which commonly causes geld sheep due to embryo reabsorption. We can get free lab fees to screen unvaccinated geld sheep for this pathogen. Just phone!

**I** is for ITCHY

Itchy sheep around this time are usually either infested with lice or scab. The treatments are different unless you are dipping. We recommend getting a diagnosis instead of trial treating.

**N** is for NUTRITION

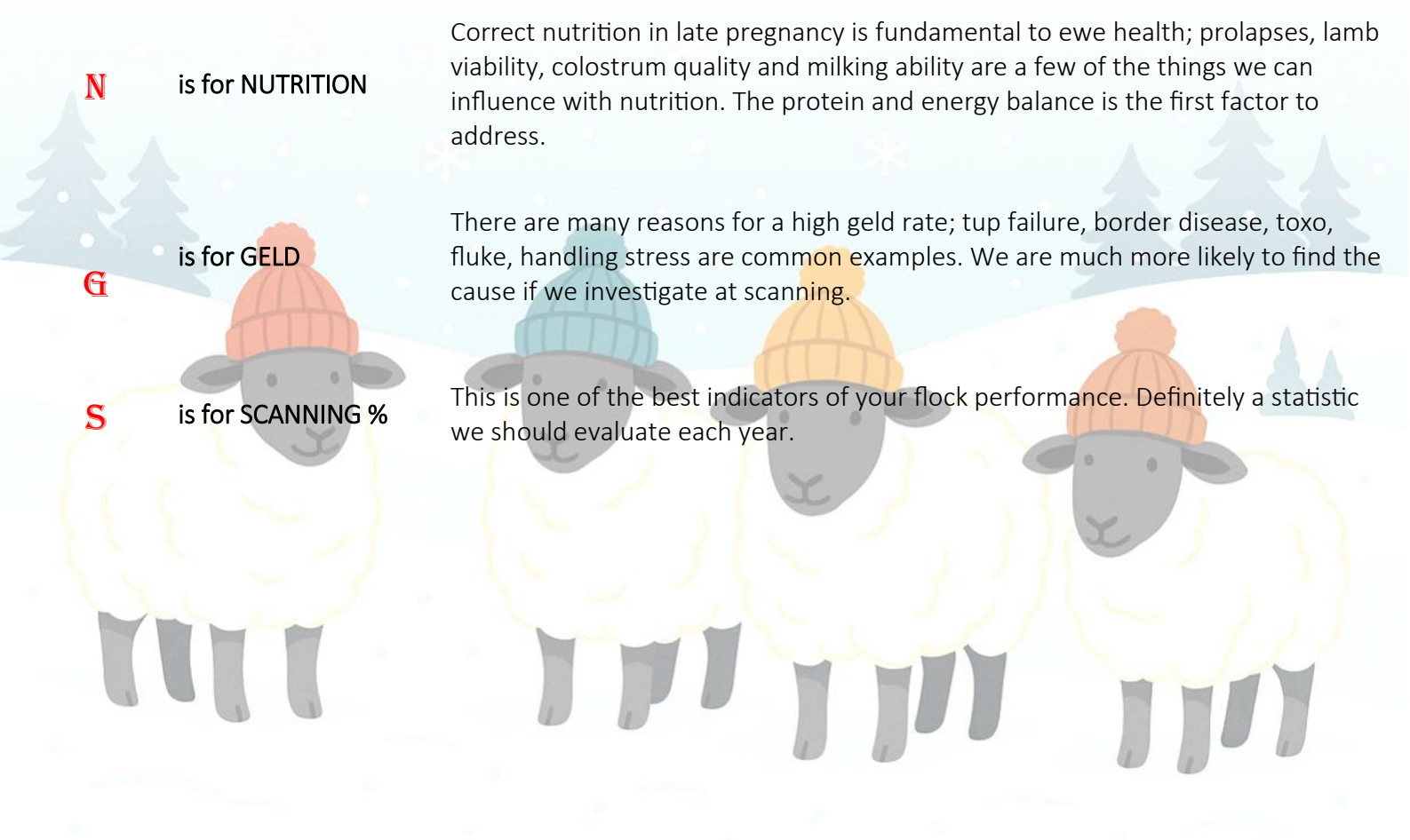
Correct nutrition in late pregnancy is fundamental to ewe health; prolapses, lamb viability, colostrum quality and milking ability are a few of the things we can influence with nutrition. The protein and energy balance is the first factor to address.

**G** is for GELD

There are many reasons for a high geld rate; tup failure, border disease, toxo, fluke, handling stress are common examples. We are much more likely to find the cause if we investigate at scanning.

**S** is for SCANNING %

This is one of the best indicators of your flock performance. Definitely a statistic we should evaluate each year.





## CALVING CHRISTMAS LIST

The days are certainly short now and the temperature has dropped meaning one thing – Christmas is round the corner. For many suckler farmers this means the start of the calving period is looming, and for you dairy guys calving all year round it is a good reminder of a few extra problems we might see at this time of year. There might even be a few things you spot for your Christmas list!

<b>C</b>	<b>Colostrum</b>	Getting good quality colostrum into newborn calves within the first 2 hours of life sets them up for the best start. We advise 10% body weight in litres <i>e.g. 40kg calf requires 4L as soon as possible, and again after 6–12 hours</i> . Colostrum provides energy and essential immunoglobins to protect them from all those nasty bugs lurking around.
<b>H</b>	<b>Handling Facilities</b>	A good crush or calving gate makes calving time so much easier and safer for everyone – and makes for a happy vet!
<b>R</b>	<b>Ropes, Lube and a Good Calving Aid</b>	Stock up on clean ropes, plenty of lube and a well serviced calving aid – you never know when you might need them!
<b>I</b>	<b>Intakes</b>	Around calving, cows may eat 10–20% less dry matter, so it's important that available forage is good quality to support energy needs and milk production. Providing easy access to fresh water, good-quality forage, and a calm environment helps encourage a swift return to normal feed intake.
<b>S</b>	<b>Stomach Tube</b>	Make sure it is sterilised between each use to avoid introducing harmful bacteria into the gut. Take care if the mouthpiece becomes chewed as this can cause damage internally and introduce infections.
<b>T</b>	<b>Trace Elements</b>	Key minerals such as copper, selenium, iodine, and cobalt support functions including immunity, calf viability, thyroid activity, and energy metabolism. Deficiencies can lead to issues like poor fertility, weak calves, retained placentas, and reduced growth rates. Boluses tailored to your farm's needs are a good way of preventing issues.
<b>M</b>	<b>Mange and Lice</b>	A common problem in housed cattle. If your cows are looking a little itchy and bald in places, they probably need treating for mites or lice. Injectable or pour on treatments are available – speak to one of our vets.
<b>A</b>	<b>Abortion</b>	There are a range of infectious and non-infectious causes but even a small number should be taken seriously. Prompt veterinary investigation and submission of samples are important to identify the cause and prevent further losses in the herd.
<b>S</b>	<b>Scours</b>	A build-up of bugs in the calving pens can result in some nasty diarrhoea. E.coli, cryptosporidium and rotavirus are all common causes – caused by bacteria, protozoa and viruses meaning that treatment is not the same for all. We can perform a quick diagnostic test at the surgery to aid treatment and prevention.
<b>C</b>	<b>Calf Resuscitation</b>	<p>Top tips for calves that are slow to get going:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clear the airways including the throat</li><li>• Sit it on its chest with the back legs in out in front to allow the chest to open up</li><li>• Rub the chest vigorously</li><li>• Pinch the nasal septum</li><li>• DO NOT throw the calf over a gate or hang it upside down – this causes major organ damage and can squash the lungs when we need them to inflate. Often the fluid seen when we swing a calf is not from the lungs but actually stomach fluid.</li></ul>
<b>A</b>	<b>After Calving Care</b>	Once the calf is out and it is sat up looking happy it is time to think about the cow. We need to think fluids and food. A cow can lose up to 50 litres of fluid during calving, so it is important she has access to fresh water, alongside good quality silage to replace lost energy. If there were any complications during calving pain relief should be administered.
<b>L</b>	<b>Liver Fluke and Worms</b>	Adult cattle in good condition should not need routinely worming at housing however liver fluke may be present. A muck sample 12 weeks post housing, 6 blood samples or 10 lateral flow tests from youngstock 2 weeks post housing could indicate infection and help time dosing.
<b>V</b>	<b>Vaccines</b>	Vaccines to prevent scours need to be administered 12-3 weeks pre-calving for effective immunity to be passed to the calf via colostrum.

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## I Intervention

Knowing when to intervene can be tricky. Intervention is usually required if the cow has been pushing for 15-30 minutes without progress, the water bag has been visible for over an hour without progress or if there is an abnormal presentation. Take care not to dive in too early and always make sure that the cervix is properly dilated prior to pulling.

## N Naval Care

Naval care is essential to prevent joint ill and naval infections. 10% Iodine or NoBACZ applied immediately after birth and again after 2-4 hours will help dry the naval quickly. Antibiotic sprays are really not necessary for this job!

## G Good Hygiene

The backbone of a successful calving period is good hygiene – during calving and beyond. Keeping pens well bedded and dry prevents bacteria build up reducing scours, pneumonia and uterine infections.

## S Snotty Noses

It's that time of year we see an increase in pneumonia. Good ventilation, colostrum management and hygiene are paramount to reducing the risk of pneumonia. Reduce stress factors by ensuring calves are getting enough milk, pens are draught free at calf height with plenty of dry bedding and are not overcrowded. We can take blood samples from stirks over 4 months old to screen for pneumonia pathogens to help tailor a vaccination plan to your farm.

## DRUG COLLECTIONS

Just a little reminder to all our clients:

**We kindly request 24 hours notice for all drug collections, allowing time for prescription authorisation and preparation.**

All veterinary practices are required to adhere strictly to current legislation. We may only prescribe POM-V medication for animal under their care. It is a legal requirement that before we can prescribe medication to your animal/animals, we must ensure that we have seen them, at least, within the last 12 months. Should you require a repeat prescription, please telephone the office, giving a minimum of 24hrs notice.

## ANNUAL SHEEP MEETING

**Date: Monday 19th January 2026**

**Time: 7pm to start at 7.30pm**

**Venue: North Ribblesdale Rugby Club, Settle**



At this years meeting we shall discuss neonatal lambs scours, the different causes and how we can Plan, Protect and Prevent for lambing 2026.

*As in previous years extra discounts will be available on lambing list products for attendees on the night.*

*Hotpot supper provided. Please RSVP by Friday 9th January 2026*

## PRACTICAL LAMBING COURSE

**£35.00  
+ VAT**

**Date: Wednesday 14th January 2026**

**Time: 6.30pm**

**Venue: Dalehead Veterinary Group, Farm Services Building, Settle, BD24 9AA**



Use the lambing simulator, practice injections, stomach tubing, castrating all while having vets on hand to ask questions. We will cover the lambing process from care of the ewe, the lambing process, colostrum management and looking after newborn lambs. Please contact the surgery if you like to book a place or to purchase a voucher for a loved ones Christmas present!

**DECEMBER  
2025**



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