

FARM ANIMAL NEWSLETTER - JULY 2020

PRE-TUPPING PREPARATION

There are several techniques available to manipulate the breeding season, they are all very effective but achieve slightly different goals.

REGULIN: *Best for advancing the breeding season.*

The implant increases the levels of melatonin in the bloodstream. This simulates the natural process of onset of sexual activity in the ewes and tups. Melatonin is secreted naturally during the night and the increasing hours of darkness in the autumn means increasing levels of melatonin. Once melatonin reaches a certain level, the sheep breeding season starts.

Tup:Ewe	Timing	Things to note
1:25 1:50 if tup implanted	Day 1: Remove tups Day 7: Implant Day 42: Introduce tups Day 60: Peak mating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ewes will not be synchronised, can't be used for flushing/AI Shortens lambing time, through increasing the number of ewes caught in the first cycle Implanting the tup will increase his fertility and 'tupping power' Increases pregnancy rates, decreases geld rates, doesn't increase multiple births.

PROGESTERONE DEVICE *Best for batch lambing and AI.*

Hormone impregnated sponges or CIDR used to synchronise and stimulate the ewe breeding cycle. It causes the ewes to ovulate at a certain time. This allows fixed time mating and batch lambing.

Ewe:tup	Timing	Things to note
1:10	Day 1: Insert device Day 14: Remove sponge inject PMSG Day 16: Introduce tups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mating is 48-72 hours after sponge removal Results vary with time of year and breed.

TEASERS *Synchronises ewes for tupping and batches lambing, advances the breeding season.*

Useful for controlling natural service and an additional tool for the other hormonal techniques.

The sight, sound and smell of a male sheep causes a hormonal response in the ewes known as the 'tup or ram effect'. These pheromones work to cause a silent heat in all ewes within 2-3 days, followed by a normal fertile heat 17 days later.

Tup:ewe	Timing	Things to note
1:20- 1:50	Day 1: Remove ewes from all tups Day 42: Introduce teaser Day 57: Introduce tups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One fit teaser ram should be enough for 100-150ewes Works best if the ewes have had no sight, sound or smell of tups for at least six weeks before the teasers go out The teaser should run with the ewes min 3 days, max 14 days Separate ewes into groups to allow you to batch ewes and lambs into separate management groups and to tailor your available manpower and housing The teaser needs to have the surgery 6 weeks before you use him. This is to ensure he has healed up well and is no longer fertile.

DO YOUR LAMBS NEED WORMING?

Many farmers will routinely dose lambs (sometimes ewes as well) every 3-4 weeks throughout the summer, the choice of product used being based on price, meat withdrawal period and what there is an opened container of in the medicines cabinet! This can lead to over usage of wormers if the lambs don't have significant worm burdens and increasing levels of anthelmintic resistance developing on the farm.



WORM EGG COUNTS

To check whether lambs need worming we would strongly recommend having a worm egg count performed at the surgery on a pooled dung sample. If you collect fresh dung samples from up to 10 individual lambs and bring them to the surgery we will pool equal quantities from each sample to create a representative sample from the group to test. This will determine the level of the worm burden that lambs are carrying and whether they need treating. Worm egg counts can also be performed after worming (post treatment samples) to determine how much resistance there is to the wormer that you have used. In this case the dung samples should be checked either 1 week after treatment with a levamisole based drench or 2 weeks after a white drench or ivermectin based treatment. If there is a significant worm egg count in a post treatment sample then resistance is suspected. The cost of a worm egg count is £8.49 (Exc VAT) with a further 10% discount for direct debit accounts or payment at the time, and up to 6 per annum are free as part of the Flock Club membership package.

ANTHELMINTIC GROUPINGS

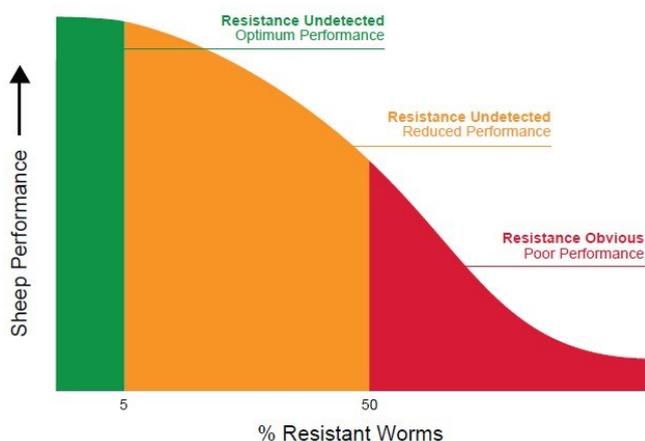
ANTHELMINTIC RESISTANCE

Benzimidazoles (white drenches)	Tramazole, Albex, Rycoben, Panacur	Many farms show evidence of resistance to this class of wormer
Levamisoles (yellow drenches)	Levacide, Levitape, Chanaverm	Up to 50% of lowland farms show evidence of resistance
Ivermectin (macrocyclic lactones – clear drenches)	Animec, Noromectin, Dectomax, Cydectin	Resistance levels lower than in the first 2 groups but present and increasing
Group 4 (orange)	Zolvix	Minimal resistance
Group 5 (purple)	Startect	Minimal resistance

Resistance to a specific wormer is considered to be present when the product is less than 95% effective, in other words 5% or more of the worms survive after dosing. At this level resistance will go undetected and performance is unaffected. The problem will get steadily worse as the resistant worms survive dosing and lay eggs which then hatch out to produce more resistant worms. This means that the percentage of worms that are resistant increases. At resistance levels of 20% the problem will affect performance but may not be dramatic. At levels of 50% resistance the poor performance becomes very obvious.

ZOLVIX AND STARTECT

Zolvix and **Startect** are the 2 new classes of wormer to which there is very little or no known resistance. If you have anthelmintic resistance suspected or confirmed this is the ideal time to use these products. This is because the wormers previously used will have resulted in a high proportion of resistant worms being carried in the lambs ensuring that **Zolvix** or **Startect** will have maximum benefit. Killing off the resistant worms that the lambs are carrying will not only improve the performance of lambs this year but will also help to protect the efficacy of other wormers for future use.



Remember

If worming animals always use the correct dose of wormer. Ensure the dosing gun is correctly calibrated and dose according to the **heaviest animal** in the group and not for the average weight of the group – under dosing encourages development of anthelmintic resistance.

For further information on avoiding anthelmintic resistance in sheep flocks, please visit our website (under Factsheets and Presentations in the Farm Section) or speak to one of our SQP's at the surgery (Anne, Anna and Ruth).

To arrange a worm egg count, discuss the use of Zolvix or Startect or for a quote, please contact the surgery on 01729 823538.

STILLBIRTH



A stillborn calf is defined as a full-term calf (over 270 days gestation) either born dead or dying within the first 24 hours of life.

Unfortunately, despite our best efforts, these deaths can be a major issue on dairy farms. Across several large studies stillborn rates have ranged from as low as 4% to over 10%. Common causes of stillbirth include calving difficulties (dystocia), nutritional deficiencies and infectious diseases.

CALVING DIFFICULTIES

Calving difficulties can occur if calves are too big or are not presented correctly in the birth canal. Stress and lack of oxygen during calving can result in the birth of stillborn calves. Stillbirths are more likely to occur in heifers calving for the first time because of their smaller pelvic size and is more likely to affect bull calves than heifers. Older heifers or cows which have had a long dry period are more likely to be overfit (body condition score over 3.5) and these are more likely not to get on with calving and have an increased risk of producing a stillborn calf. Cows carrying twins are also more likely to produce stillborn calves,



Don't forget about calving pen management. If moving cattle into a calving pen at the time of calving it is important to wait until stage 2 of labour before moving (when feet are showing outside the vulva). Farms that move cattle during stage 1 labour (when the cow is restless, vulva swollen, teats distended) will experience more stillbirths. Heifers in particular may 'stop' the process of labour when moved and then restart later resulting in higher death rates.



Normal labour is estimated to take about 1 hour and usual advice has been to intervene 90 minutes after the appearance of the water bag if progress is not being made. A recent study has shown that earlier intervention may be beneficial. In this study assistance (manual assistance of 2 people pulling on ropes, no calving aids) given 15 minutes after feet appearing in the birth canal was compared to intervening 1 hour after appearing in the birth canal. Late assistance calves had higher stillbirth rates and reduced vigour compared to calves born naturally or those receiving early assistance.

Be wary of applying excessive force when using a calving aid. A cow's uterine contractions will generate about 80kg of force, 2 humans pulling on ropes will generate twice this force whereas one person and a calving aid can early generate 6 times as much force as the cow's contractions(!!) which will severely impact on calf viability.

NUTRITIONAL DEFICIENCIES



Iodine deficiency during the second half of pregnancy can result in the birth of either stillborn calves or calves with a poor suck reflex and reduced vigour. In dairy herds this is more common in calves from heifers calving for the first time, often older heifers calving at 2.5 years of age or older. We can check the iodine status of a stillborn calf at the surgery by weighing the thyroid gland and then having it examined under the microscope will give an indication of the longer-term iodine status. Vitamin E/ Selenium deficiencies can also impact on stillbirths.

If cows 'not getting on with calving' is impacting stillbirth rates assessing the calcium and magnesium status of calving cows to check for subclinical hypocalcaemia (milk fever) is recommended.

INFECTIOUS CAUSES OF STILLBIRTHS

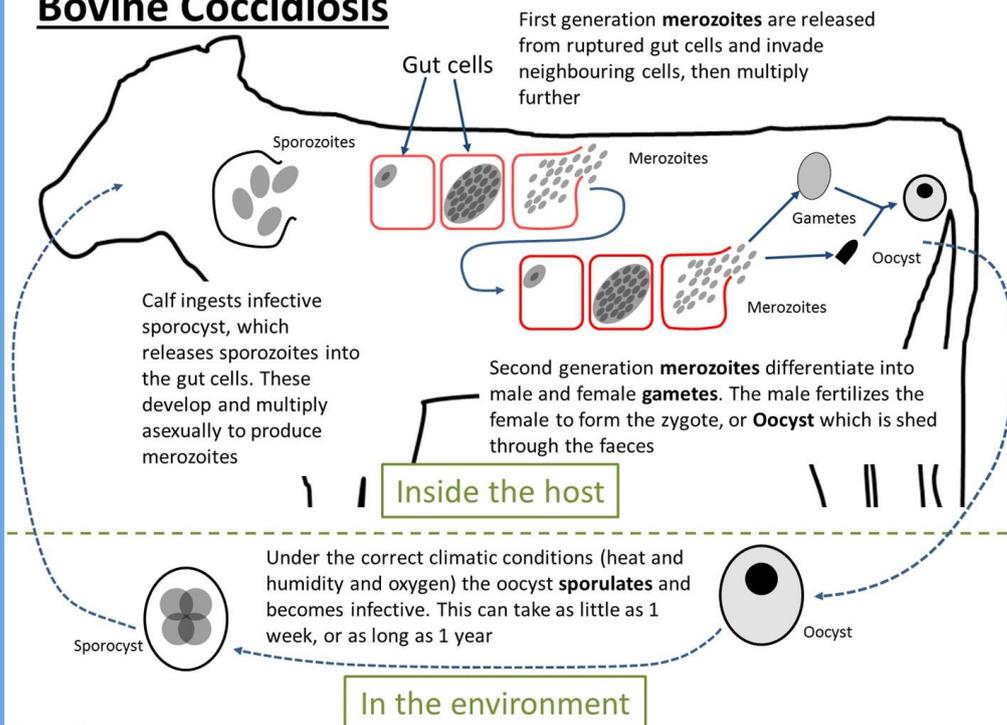


Infectious agents such as *Bacillus Licheniformis* and *Aspergillus* picked up off mould on silage or contaminated water troughs can result in stillbirths as well as abortion. Cow to cow spread of other infections such as BVD, Leptospirosis and IBR can also result in stillbirth as well as abortion.

To discuss a stillbirth or abortion issue in your herd speak to one of the farm vets at the surgery.

COCCIDIOSIS IN CALVES

Bovine Coccidiosis



Coccidiosis in calves is caused by an infection by protozoal (larger than bacteria but smaller than worms) parasites called *Eimeria* which invade the cells lining in the alimentary tract causing significant gut damage.

The life cycle of the coccidial organisms is usually 3-4 weeks meaning that coccidiosis is generally a disease of calves over a month old (typically 2-6 months of age). Infected calves pass huge numbers of oocysts (eggs) in the faeces. These oocysts are the source of new infection for other calves, and can survive for many months in the environment and can even over winter on pasture. Coccidia are species specific i.e. the strains that infect calves do not affect sheep, poultry etc and vice versa.

On many farms the infection is self-limiting with low dose of infection stimulating immunity and calves throwing off the infection before clinical symptoms are shown. On other farms where calves are challenged with a high dose of infection classic coccidiosis symptoms including weight loss with dark diarrhoea, straining with mucus and streaks of blood are seen.

Treatment is by drenching with Toltrazuril (e.g. **Tolracol**) or Diclazuril (**Vecoxan**) although in severe cases calves can be left with residual gut damage leading to prolonged recovery. Targeted dosing of calves after they have picked up the infection but before clinical symptoms appear severe allows calves to develop an immunity before there is a significant growth setback.

For more information please contact the surgery to speak to a farm vet or SQP.

BENTHAM PARCEL COLLECTION

The parcels for collection from Bentham are being taken over with the receptionist for **2pm** to coincide with the current surgery opening times.

If you wish to collect a parcel from Bentham, please ring by 10am for same day collection but preferably the day before.

Many thanks for your cooperation in this matter.

GISBURN AUCTION—DELIVERIES RESUME!

We are pleased to be able to recommence taking your parcels to Gisburn Auction Mart on **Thursday mornings for collection between 11.00am and 11.30am.**

Please ensure that you telephone your order in to the surgery **before 3pm** on Wednesday.

JULY
2020



www.daleheadvetgroup.co.uk

