

Booster Time for Ewes Pregnant ewes should be given booster injections in the last 6-8 weeks before lambing in order to protect the newborn lambs against clostridial diseases and pasteurella during the first few weeks of life. Heptavac-P and Bravoxin 10 are the two vaccines available, both of which provide clostridial cover. Only Heptavac-P provides cover against pasteurella. Any bought-in or young ewes, which have not been previously vaccinated, will require two vaccinations given 4-6 weeks apart. The lambs will only be protected if ewes have been correctly vaccinated and the lambs receive **sufficient colostrum** in the first 6 hours of life.

Ewe Abortions The abortion season has started, and although some abortions are likely in every flock, if you get an abortion rate above 2% it is likely that an infectious process is present, and we should try to get a diagnosis. The best way to do this is to submit placenta and samples taken from aborted fetuses to the lab. If you are concerned about the losses in your flock, please contact us to talk to a vet or arrange for samples to be taken. The cost of sampling lambs from 1 ewe, including lab fees, postage and reporting is £90.64 + VAT. For lambs from 2 ewes the cost is £100.94 + VAT. If you do bring any aborted lambs down to us, don't forget the placenta – it is one of the most important samples to send off.

Useful colostrum advice ahead of lambing: SAC Consulting (part of SRUC) provided a useful reminder about colostrum supplementation in its December edition of Beef and Sheep News, with sheep specialist John Vipond providing the following tips:-

- The first protein feed **must** be **ewes colostrum**
- If it is life and death, don't give a full feed of substitute, but 60ml first and then get them warmed up and sucked on real colostrum.
- The amount of colostrum needed to protect a newborn lamb against infection is less than that needed to prevent hypothermia
- For disease prevention lambs need about 60ml/kg birth weight as the first protein feed after birth, with another 60ml within six hours.
- 50-100ml at a time is plenty when using a stomach tube, to avoid over distension of the stomach, but you will need to top up within 6 hours
- Target male lambs if supplies are tight, as their mortality rates are higher

Mr Vipond added: *“To prevent hypothermia twin lambs born outside need a total of about 210ml/kg in the first 18 hours, those inside needing about 180ml/kg. That adds up to about 850ml for a 4kg housed twin and 1,100ml outside. That's a lot of colostrum! A well-fed 60kg hill ewe will easily produce one litre of colostrum in the first 18 hours, but if underfed only about 600 ml. So if you are short of colostrum, make up the difference with substitutes but only after they have had the 'real mccooy'. Even expensive colostrum substitutes are no comparison with the real thing when it comes to immunoglobulin content. They are sold as a food resource only, not as a source of passive antibody protection, despite what hints may be made.”*

Lambing Check List Here is a list of things you should get together before lambing. Please speak to us if you would like advice on any of the medication.

- Arm length disposable gloves.
- Lubricant.
- A head rope or lambing snare.
- Disinfectant solution.
- Calcium injection.
- Energy supplement like propylene glycol to treat twin lamb disease.
- Syringes and needles.
- Antibiotic injections for treating mastitis and metritis.
- Anti-inflammatory injection for use after lambing.
- Prolapse retainers.
- Strong iodine (10% tincture of iodine) for dipping navels.
- Colostrum (ideally frozen sheep colostrum, if not goat or cow or powdered colostrum substitute).
- Thermometer.
- Stomach tubes.
- A warming box.
- Glucose for intraperitoneal injection for hypothermic lambs.
- Oral antibiotics for watery mouth.

Calf Scour Tests We have started using an in-house test for some of the common causes of calf scour – rotavirus, cryptosporidia and coronavirus. It is often at this time of year that we start to see a rise in the number of calf scour cases, and getting a diagnosis is crucial to putting a prevention and control programme in place. The tests cost £15 per sample and samples should be taken from calves which are under 2 weeks of age and which have only been scouring for 1 or 2 days. The results will be available the same day that the samples are brought in.

Calcitrace D3 Boluses These are the first and only long-acting boluses to offer slow and fast releasing calcium for over 48 hours, together with magnesium, phosphate and vitamin D3, all of which can be involved in the development of milk fever. The boluses dissolve rapidly after administration to release calcium quickly, and also contain a slower releasing form of calcium which means that they have up to 48 hours action. So, in most cases a single bolus given at the first signs of calving will last throughout the critical risk period for milk fever. The boluses cost £21.12 (pat price) +VAT for a pack of four, and there is an offer on at the moment of a free gun worth £18 with purchases of packs of 12 boluses

Car Sticker Competition This month the sticker was spotted in the back of a pick-up belonging to Messrs Phillips of Dairy Farm, Penrhos. The prize was a selection box of Waitrose products that was kindly sponsored by our wholesaler NVS. If you haven't got a sticker and would like to be in with a chance of winning next month's prize, please ask for one at the desk.

Meetings Rob and Vicky are speaking at a Farming Connect meeting on "The Countdown to Lambing" on Thursday 23rd January 2014 at The Huntsman Hotel, Shirenewton. The meeting starts at 7.30 p.m.

The South and East Wales TB Eradication Delivery board are holding a meeting at Monmouthshire Livestock Centre, Bryngwyn, Raglan on 6th February 2014 at 7.30 pm. The title of the meeting is "Bovine TB: a way forward". There is no need to register for this meeting, just turn up. Tea and coffee will be served.

## And Finally

### What to avoid at Staff Christmas Parties

Lesson no.6 - Cheap party hats (thanks Brigitte!).



It took our esteemed boss a number of attempts (and the loss of several layers of skin) to remove this orange stripe the morning after. Thank you to all the staff who made helpful suggestions as to which products would aid removal - Robert really enjoyed his trip to Neville Hall later the same morning.

Note the reflection in the glass above Robert's bald head!