



Velactis -a new product that will optimise the way we dry off cows

Ceva Animal Health have launched an innovative product that facilitates the dry-off process which could be of real benefit for you and your cows. Velactis is the first and unique dry-off facilitator that improves management, udder health and welfare of dairy cows. This product helps the cow at drying off by significantly reducing milk production. It does this by blocking prolactin, one of the hormones involved in milk production.

With Velactis, cows can be milked right up to the point of dry-off without the hassle of having to dry them off gradually by changing their diet, skipping milking's or having to do group changes. Abrupt dry-off with Velactis as opposed to gradual dry-off means more milk in the tank in those last few days of milking which is of economic benefit. Udder engorgement, milk leakage, new intramammary infections and udder pain and discomfort are common problems seen after dry-off. **Velactis reduces udder engorgement after dry-off by 50% and udder over-pressure by 60%** which means milk leakage and dry period infections are reduced and the cow is more comfortable.

There has been extensive trial work carried out by Ceva using this product before its launch. One large scale trial involving 900 cows in 63 farms in Europe showed that Velactis reduced milk leakage by 81% on the day after dry-off. In this same trial **Velactis showed a 21% reduction in new intramammary infections in the dry period.** If you are currently drying your cows off abruptly without diet or group changes, you will see a reduction in milk leakage and intramammary infections, and an improvement in the welfare of your dairy cattle on the days after dry-off. This was demonstrated in another trial in which **cows treated with Velactis were much more comfortable and lay down for 2 hours and 21 minutes more** compared to untreated cows.

Visit the following website for more information on all the above: dryyourbest.com/uk. We currently have this product in stock so don't hesitate to ask our team about it.

Rispoval Intranasal Rispoval IntraNasal is a single dose intranasal vaccine which can be used from just 9 days of age, providing the earliest possible protection against 2 key respiratory viruses, BRSv and Pi3v. This protection lasts for up to 3 months, and can protect young calves from getting severe viral pneumonia. This vaccine is now available in single dose vials, as well as 5 and 25 dose vials. Although the single doses are a little more expensive, this approach may suit farmers buying in groups of calves or those with small batches being born at a time.

Pre-tupping preparations Although we have only just finished lambing on some units, we need to be looking forward to preparing for our breeding sheep for mating. Pre-tupping preparation of both rams and ewes is key to ensuring a healthy lamb crop is conceived at tupping time, and profitability is not compromised from the start. Fertility, in both ewes and rams is affected by many factors, including health, nutrition, body condition, genetics, age, season, stress and the environment.

Rams should have a body condition score of 3.5 to 4 at tupping. So it is vital to ensure good nutrition and care for **at least two months prior** to this, as this is when sperm maturation takes place. Rams may benefit from a high protein (18-20%) ration. If testicles have excess wool on, it is advisable to remove this during shearing. The normal temperature of a ram's testicles is 4-5°C lower than the rectal temperature; this is the optimum for spermatogenesis, and higher temperatures can cause a decrease in production.

Genital examination of all breeding rams should be carried out. This is best done by putting them into a 'sitting' position. Then examine the scrotum and testicles: start by feeling from the base of the testicles and check for any abscesses, hernias or injuries. As a rule of

thumb, mature rams should have a scrotal circumference of more than 36cm and ram lambs more than 34cm.

Semen quality is important too, so ask your vet to test all your breeding rams in the run-up to tupping. Semen samples will need to be examined immediately under a microscope, to assess its density, and sperm motility and live:dead ratio. The breeding ability of rams reaches its peak between 2 and 5 years old and will decline after this. The average lowland ewe: ram ratio is 40:1, but can be as high as 80:1 to 100:1 in some systems. With the right 'fit' ram, many more ewes can be served.

Both young and old rams would be inappropriate for an intensive breeding system. A fertile mature ram should be able to successfully inseminate 85% of a batch of 60 ewes in their first reproductive cycle. Ram lambs should be able to get 85% of 40 ewes pregnant after one mating.

Vaccination against clostridial diseases, Pasteurella, Louping Ill should be done at least 10 weeks prior to tupping. The foot health of both ewes and rams is also important: Check all feet and identify causes of lameness. Cull any sheep which have been infected more than twice with footrot. Similarly, all breeding animals should have their teeth, eyes and fleece checked over.

In order to maximize returns, all factors must be considered and improvements made where necessary; pre-tupping examination is an excellent area to focus initial efforts on and which pays dividends if carried out thoroughly.

Microchipping 187 dogs were chipped on our second microchipping day held at the office on 24th May. Many thanks to the Dogs Trust and their hardworking staff for providing the free microchips and expertise. If you have dogs which have still not been chipped please let us know, as we may be able to organise another session if there is enough demand.

Have a go Hero Some of you may have heard about Rob's recent brush with the law. No he wasn't arrested but attempted to stop a burglary at his house in his underpants and (Farm First) T shirt. He stood in front of the thieves car as they attempted a getaway but thought better of it when one of them threatened him with a crowbar. The car they were driving subsequently entered (and stopped) the Velothon as they were being chased by police (reported in the Abergavenny Chronicle) Rob suffered no adverse effects from his escapade (apart from being reprimanded by Marcell for being so stupid). The burglars however, are now receiving counselling after seeing Rob in his pants



Rob's Trip Not another holiday for Rob I hear you say! Yes it's true, Rob, Marcell, Caitlin and Aine are off for 5 weeks touring Australia this July. Don't worry we have 2 experienced locums covering his time away. Pam Brown who some of you will have met before as she locumed for us a few years ago and Elaine Gardner who is an experienced farm animal vet are working for us whilst he is away. And no Rob doesn't need anybody to carry his bags- the girls in the office have already asked!

Car Sticker Competition Please remember to ask at the desk for a car sticker if you want a chance of winning one of our fantastic prizes. No prize will be awarded this month as all our vets have been walking around with their eyes shut.