

Colostrum Feeding to Lambs As a rule of thumb or minimum, lambs should receive 50ml/kg in first 6 hours, preferably within 3 hours, followed by 200ml/kg in first 24 hours. This would mean that a 5 kg lamb would need 250ml(almost 1/2 a pint) within 3 hours of birth, followed by 1 litre (1 $\frac{3}{4}$ pints) in the first 24 hours.

There is increasing evidence that powdered colostrum does not provide enough nutrients and even less antibody protection, so it is a good idea to harvest milk off milky single-bearing ewes, which can be stored in freezer for years.

An alternative is to find a goat farm and buy colostrum, hopefully from clostridia-vaccinated does. The next best source is cows' colostrum. However the colostrum from 4 cows should be diluted to reduce the risk of cow antibody induced anaemia. This is rare but usually fatal when it occurs. Any harvested colostrum should be poured into several suitable sized units and frozen.

Twin Lamb Disease on Ewes Twin lamb disease results when a ewe's energy demands in late pregnancy are not met by her diet. The first sign of Twin Lamb Disease is often a ewe which doesn't come to eat. She may be dull or depressed; star-gaze, teeth-grind or head-press; become blind; have facial tremors and become recumbent.

The best way to treat these ewes is to provide them with energy on the form of propylene glycol. They need 50 – 100 ml daily which should be given in 3-4 doses. In addition, a painkiller such as Flunixin or Metacam seems to help these ewes and has been proven to help survival rates. A vitamin B12 injection will help the rumen bacteria produce energy. Glucose is only any use if given intravenously, which is not easy on a sheep. The ewe should be offered rich palatable food, to tempt her to eat and kept hydrated.

If none of the above treatments are working, a final resort would be to induce the ewe to lamb with an injection of corticosteroid injection. As well as removing the lambs, one of the drains on the ewe's energy supply, the corticosteroids directly help the ewe's metabolic state and stimulate her appetite.

Bull MOTs The stock bull may not be at the forefront of most farmers' minds as they battle with rain, wind, mud and lambing, but for herds which want to produce a good calf crop next spring, now is the time to start preparing the bull for his work in the next few months. A fit bull can cut your calving interval, reduce input costs and provide greater financial returns. Research has shown that 20% of bulls are subfertile, which will result in disappointing conception rates in the cows.

MOT your bull well in advance, ideally 10 weeks before the start of the breeding season, as semen production takes over 8 weeks. The things to check can be remembered as the five "T"s. **TOES:** Assess the bull's gait when standing and walking. Lameness can impair movement, increase body temperature and reduce semen production. Investigate any lameness promptly, so that remedial foot trimming can be carried out at least 8 weeks before the breeding season. **TESTICLES:** Scrotal circumference is positively related to sperm output. The testicles should have a minimum circumference of 34 cm in bulls over 2 years of age for most breeds. The testicles should be even in shape, and have the firmness of a tennis ball. **TONE:** Bulls should be fit not fat. Too little or too much body condition can lead to reduced libido and semen quality. Investigate any causes of loss of condition e.g. teeth, lameness, parasites, disease. To achieve a body condition score of 3, good nutrition is essential. Bulls should be on a rising plane of nutrition at the start of the breeding season. Feed good quality forage along with 2-3 kg of a high fibre, 14%CP good quality concentrate, depending on body condition. Include a general purpose mineral supplement, ideally one formulated for the specific farm conditions. Avoid feeding high levels of concentrates over a long period of time as this can adversely affect sperm production. **TREATMENT:** In the

weeks preceding the breeding season ensure that routine vaccinations for BVD, leptospirosis, IBR are up to date and give any necessary fluke or lungworm treatments. **TEST:** Observe the bull serving cows and look for issues such as lack of libido or physical problems. One month before the breeding season a breeding soundness examination should be carried out by a vet. This will entail a thorough physical examination of the bull and collection of a semen sample for evaluation. This is often the only way of detecting a subfertile bull, other than waiting for the cows to be PD'd, by which time a lot of months will have passed.

If hiring a bull or purchasing one that has worked in other herds, be aware that he could bring disease into your herd, as these bulls have an increased risk of disease. Ask for them to be blood tested for BVD, Johnes and possibly other diseases. Discuss with your vet treatments that can be given to eliminate any leptospires that may be living in the kidneys, and have a sheath wash carried out to prevent introduction of Campylobacter.

Insurance Claims Occasionally we are asked to provide insurance certificates for animals which have been injured or have died. Examples would be livestock that are injured in transit or when straying. It is really important that you contact us and the insurance company as soon as an incident has happened. Sometimes, the insurance company will require a full clinical examination or post mortem. In other cases they just need a certificate to confirm the identity, diagnosis or death of the animal, but we still have to see it. Even if the incident happens at the weekend and you cannot contact the insurance company, please speak to us. It is too late once the animal has been sold or collected by the Fallen Stock company, as we can only certify what we have seen with our own eyes.

Lime Many of you will be using lime in housing, either in cubicle housing or on straw, to reduce bacterial growth and prevent infections such as joint ill. One of our dairy farmers was recently introduced to a product called Hydramix Lime produced by a company called Nadins. They claim it causes a rapid rise in pH, but won't burn the skin. Our client says that it is far less unpleasant to use than the lime that he was using previously, and it's cheaper, so we thought we would share this with you. Currently he sources it from ACT.

Vaccine Orders When ordering vaccine, please can you consider the exact numbers of doses you need and how they are to be split, as the vaccines do not have preservatives in and have to be used within 8 hours of being opened. For example, if you have 75 cattle to do for BVD and 25 are heifers having their first vaccination, the heifers will need 2 doses at 4-6- week intervals. So you would need to order 75 doses for the boosters and first doses, and 25 for the heifers' second doses- a total of 100. However, 2 packs of 50 doses would not be suitable, so we need to know the breakdown of doses so that we can order the correct pack sizes for you.

Parking As mentioned last month we are moving to the unit at the front of our current building, and from now on our clients can use the parking on the forecourt and under the canopy. Please feel free to use this more convenient area when visiting the office.

Car sticker Competition The winner of this month's car sticker competition is Pete Jones of Parc Gwyn Farm. Once again the prize was sponsored by our veterinary wholesaler NVS, so many thanks to them. If you would like to be in with a chance of winning, please ask one of the vets or at the desk for a sticker.

And finally... An American tourist goes into a restaurant in Spain and orders the specialty of the house. When his dinner arrives, he asks the waiter what it is. "These, senor," replied the waiter in broken English, "are the cojones, how you say, the testicles, of the bull killed in the ring today." The tourist swallowed hard but tasted the dish and thought it was delicious. So he comes back the next evening and orders the same item. When it is served, he says to the waiter, "These cojones, or whatever you call them...are much smaller than the ones I had last night." "Yes, senor," replied the waiter, "You see...the bull, he does not always lose."