

**SBV Vaccine** The vaccine to protect cattle and sheep against Schmallenberg virus is now available. Sheep require one 2ml dose in the muscle, and will be immune from 3 weeks post vaccination. They can be vaccinated from 4 months of age. Cattle need two doses (2ml) 4 weeks apart and can be vaccinated from 2 months of age. Again it takes 3 weeks for them to become immune. The vaccine has not yet been proven to be safe in pregnant animals or breeding males, so it should only be used in these animals after discussion with us about the risks. The price of the vaccine is £3/dose (50 dose pack) or £3.20/dose (10 dose pack) +VAT for payment at time (PAT), and we think there is definitely a place for its use especially in breeding animals which are very young (and therefore have not been exposed to the virus e.g. ewe lambs or those which have not been outside such as housed breeding heifers. It appears that a significant proportion of animals that were outside last summer have been exposed to the virus and therefore are immune. The only way to tell if your animals have been exposed is to blood sample a proportion of the herd/flock.

**Ram Testing and Vasectomies** We would like our sheep clients to sell the maximum number of lambs at a time when the prices are highest, whilst keeping costs under control. One way to achieve this is to manipulate the breeding season so that lambs are born early in the season and over a compact period, and although it may seem that you have barely finished with this year's lambing, it is time to be thinking about next year if you want to maximise flock performance.

Many farmers will be familiar with "sponging" ewes which refers to the process of inserting a hormone- impregnated sponge into the vagina and injecting PMSG on removal. The programme can be used to bring forward the breeding season by 4-6 weeks and results in a very compact lambing of about a week, which may suit those who have to take time off from other jobs to supervise lambing. A ewe-to-ram ratio of 10:1 is required for this programme to work well. The sponges cost £2.26/ewe for a pack of 50 (PAT). The cost of PMSG varies as the dose changes with the time of year and breed.

Another method which can advance the lambing period for up to 2 months is putting a small implant into the ewe's ear which releases melatonin. This mimics the melatonin naturally released by the sheep in the autumn in response to the lengthening nights. The reproductive system of the ewe responds as if autumn has arrived, resulting in her cycling and being ready to breed. These implants result in a condensed lambing period over 4-5 weeks, and a ewe-to-ram ratio of 20 to 25:1 is required. The cost of the Regulin implant is £3.50 + VAT per ewe ( for PAT) and the programme should result in an increased lambing percentage.



Vasectomised rams will also have an effect on advancing lambing by 2 weeks. Ideally, one vasectomised ram should be run with 50 ewes two weeks before the fertile rams are put in.

For any of these programmes to work well you need to ensure that your rams are in excellent working condition and are fertile. We are able to fertility test rams at the surgery or on farm at a cost of £57.75 (+ visit) with any additional rams costing £47.25 each.

As promised from last month here is a picture of Rob with his probe – bear in mind that this is the bull one – he has a more suitably-sized one for rams. If you want to see Rob and his probes in action please contact us and book in one of your animals for a test. It costs £84.00 to test a bull, and £63 for any additional ones.

**Lamb Faecal Egg Count Testing** As we get into summer, now is the time to start looking at parasite control in your lambs if you haven't already done so. As we warned last month, there is a high risk of nematodirus in lambs this year. We would recommend the use of white drench to treat this worm, but as we move further into summer it is more likely that mixed infections with other worms are present and therefore different classes of wormer may be required. The best way to decide the right drench for your sheep and when they need to be treated is to carry out some worm egg counts on faeces. A mob test from 10 sheep is the easiest way to check the status of the group. If you would like a fact sheet with details of how to perform this please call in to collect one or ring the office to get one E-mailed out. A mob test costs £18 (£12.60 for additional samples submitted at the same time).

**ZOLVIX: sheep wormer with no reported resistance** ZOLVIX administered once annually to 'every flock, every year', rids sheep of resistant worms and helps limit the build up of anthelmintic resistance. Zolvix can be used to manage resistance build-up in lambs mid season, as a quarantine drench, on farms with resistance to current drenches, and as a broad spectrum wormer to meet any flock specific requirements. 1 litre of Zolvix costs £143.73+vat (PAT) and will worm 400 lambs weighing 25kg.

#### Lambs – mid season

- Used mid-season, at or shortly before weaning, ZOLVIX kills worms that are resistant to the current classes of drench.
- Resistant worms may have built up throughout the grazing season following the use of current classes of drench.
- By removing this worm burden, lambs benefit at weaning and during fattening, an important growth stage.

#### As a quarantine drench (recommended by SCOPS)

- No ZOLVIX resistant worm populations exist, so by recommending ZOLVIX as a quarantine drench, you can be sure all worm burdens will be removed.
- Buying-in worms resistant to the current white, yellow and clear classes reduces a farmer's rotation options and increases reliance on the new 4-AD class.
- ZOLVIX should be used as a quarantine drench in all sustainable worm control programs.
- Farmers should follow SCOPS advice on good quarantine protocol. Keep imported sheep off grass for 24-48 hours then turn out to dirty pasture.

#### For farms with resistance

- Farms that have diagnosed resistance to current wormer classes will need to integrate ZOLVIX into their worm control programs.
- Those farms with established triple resistance will have limited options. ZOLVIX with some narrow spectrum wormers may be the mainstay of worm control.
- It is vital SCOPS guidelines are followed on such farms.

**Rob's Motto – "Always be Prepared"** As many of you will be aware in the last year or so Rob has taken to wearing disposable green plastic overalls when doing some kinds of cattle work. He has affectionately nicknamed them his "green condoms". Anyway, a few months ago Jane thought she would like to try these overalls and borrowed a few (unused) off Rob. A week or so later Rob was walking across the yard in front of the office and he suddenly thought "I wonder how Jane got on with those overalls". He turned and shouted across the yard to Jane, "Jane, how did you get on with those green condoms I lent to you?" Well, Jane went bright red and the mouths of the mechanics in the garage dropped. Only then did Rob realise what he had shouted and he went beetroot colour himself. (Anyway Jane did like the overalls and now uses them herself).