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NSVETS TOTAL VET CARE

Pre lamb preparation

Keeping more lambs alive may be easier than lifting scanning percentage.

Paddock choice

- Sheltered area, on lea of prevailing wind, avoid steep slopes, rushes provide good shelter but reduce visibility for the ewe.

- Paddocks with multiple shelter areas are ideal as ewes often lamb away from where the main flock may be sheltering.
- Some paddocks for unknown reasons always have better tailing percentages.

Birth site

- Often lamb in places away from flock chosen for the ewe comfort not the lamb safety! Sites already used are attractive to other ewes.
- Should not disturb from birth site for 2-6 hours, and ideally not shift for 2-4 hours to avoid mismothering. After 12-24 hours the lamb should be able to follow the ewe.

Lamb care – Hypothermic orphans

- Dry new borns.
- Less than five hours old give glucose (10ml/kg 20 % into the abdomen) prior to warming, and feed once they can lift their heads.
- Feed 2-3 hourly with colostrum (50ml/kg) for 12 hours (total 150-200ml) then 3-4 feeds per day for two to three weeks then twice a day is sufficient.
- Provide roughage (hay or grass) from one week for rumen development.

Record keeping

Often we discover that we have a problem after it has already happened. Therefore it is a good idea to keep track of day to day conditions.

- Weather conditions each day.
- Numbers of losses of lambs and ewes in each identified paddock each day.

This may help to find trouble areas or paddocks and to determine how many losses can be attributed to the weather, and how many to management.

Sleepy sickness

- Dullness, not eating, may appear blind or aimlessly wandering, may lean on posts etc, may stagger, wool plucks easily, sometimes twitching muscles, champing jaw and slobbering. Later stages, star gazing, recumbent, death.
- Sleepy sickness usually shows up near the end of the winter rotation before lambing, often after a period off feed. It is best to set stock early if you start to have an issue with this.
- Treatment: Glucose 60-100 ml of 40 % into the vein (i/v) and/or, Oral solution of glucose precursors (glycerol or propylene glycol) e.g. ketol.
- Clinical ewes may just be the tip of the iceberg there will also be lambs of poor vigour being born.

Milk Fever

- May occur after a feed check or a change to young or fresh grass. Usually occurs at lambing or shortly after.
- Staggering, initially hyperactive then recumbent on chest, head turned into the flank, or comatose, often no blink reflex, may have regurgitation of gut contents at mouth.
- Treat with calcium borogluconate or calcium plus magnesium or glucose solutions. A response is usually seen within 30 minutes, starting with urination, muscle tremor, then feeding (if delayed response, treat with glucose, as well, as may have pregnancy toxaemia also).

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Sheep Reminders

- Order lambing requirements
- Blood test ewes metabolic profile
- FEC ewes
- Vaccinate ewes clostridial vaccine
- Reassess ewe feed levels
- Vitamin E/ selenium to brassica fed hoggets
- Assess spring feed budget
- Drench ewes iodine
- Anthelmintic treatment of ewes
- Ensure PAR/RVM authorisation is current

"No wife of mine is going to have to work! You'll stay right here and take care of the farm!"

Horse Reminders

- Hoof care reminder
- Check for lice
- Boost pregnant mares diet
- Arrange brood mare consorts for coming season

Situation Comment

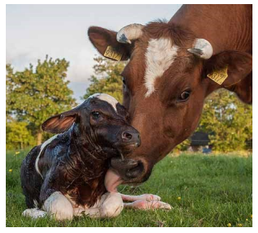
Bill English has been to China twice, apparently because of the economic situation but given the state of the weather it was probably just a mid winter break. Frozen pipes and troughs (and ponds) and snow and sleet and fog and frost or a trip to China?

Calving season is almost underway and cows are all on the move again. Remember when you are shifting stock to make sure they are sound on all feet and not likely to calve on the journey.

With tough times forecast for the economy in general and particular the dairy sector the risks to animal health remain. Feed and fertiliser are highly significant contributors to animal production and health and cutting back on them can be expensive. Hopefully spring will be mild, prices will rise, summer will be warm with plenty of rain. Hope for the best….

Calving Kit Essentials

- Two litre container of lube
- Ropes/chains with loops (check the ropes are supple and strong. Ropes may have deteriorated since last use)
- Disinfectant
- Gloves (long and short)
- Spray paint
- Medications - flunixin, rimadyl, oxytocin, penicillin



- Note book and pencil
- Metabolics- calcium, magnesium, dextrose combinations
- Clean needles and syringes
- Old towel and soap for cleaning hands before and after assisting calving
- Bucket
- Pocket knife (a knife with a brightly coloured plastic handle is easier to find if dropped in the paddock)
- String/bailing twine
- Torch and spare batteries
- Ear tags or other calf ID system
- Vet phone number: 03 202 5636

Malignant Catarrhal Fever

MCF is a fatal disease caused by ovine herpes virus 2 that occurs most commonly in late winter and early spring in deer, typically greater than 1 year of age, with direct or indirect contact with sheep shedding high numbers of virus during late pregnancy. Transmission via wind carried virus has been recorded.

The virus typically only causes disease in a small number in a group of animals with increased incidence in stags compared to hinds. Outbreaks of disease appear to be reducing in number and severity on a national scale.

Clinical signs-

Blood stained diarrhoea and death is seen in acute cases. Discharge from the nose and eyes, clouding of the eyes, drooling, erosions in the mouth, crusting of the muzzle and vulva and enlarged superficial lymph nodes may be witnessed in chronic forms of infection.

Post mortem signs-

Blood within the intestines, which are reddened and swollen grossly. Enlargement of the mesenteric lymph nodes within the abdomen. Small points of haemorrhage (red dots) may be seen on the surface of the bladder and kidneys.

Risk factors-

- Intensive management, crowding
- Co-grazing with sheep, especially sheep under stress (i.e. lambing)
- Deer under stress (feed shortage, concurrent illness etc.)

Recommendation

Avoid close contact between deer (especially stags) and pregnant ewes in late winter and early spring (July to October). Attempt to limit loss of condition in stags over late winter by maintaining dry matter intakes.

Justin Hogg BVSc

September is Dental Month– Book your pet in for a Free Dental Check

Dental disease is the most common disease seen in cats and dogs.

We see it in up to 70-80% of cats and dogs over the age of two. A quick check can reveal if there is tartar build up, gingivitis or broken teeth. Animals are good at hiding dental disease and it can be quite advanced before we see obvious signs. These include a painful mouth, bad breath (halitosis), difficulty eating and loss of teeth. These things can all lead to a decreased quality of life and also increase the risk of heart disease (from bacteria circulating in the blood).

What are ways you can help prevent dental disease?

- Get your pets teeth checked regularly
- Brush your pets teeth with a toothbrush and animal toothpaste
- Feed a biscuit diet
- Feed a specialised dental diet (e.g. Hills T/d)
- Provide chew bones, dental chews, large raw cannon bones (that cannot be swallowed)
- Mouthwash that can be added to their water
- Dental work at the clinic if required (e.g. scale and polish, tooth extractions)

We can help ensure your pet has a healthy, pain free mouth. Book a **free dental check** in for September. If any dental work is needed you also go in the draw to win the cost of the procedure back. What are you waiting for?!

Rebecca Morley BVSc BSc

Pre-lamb Treatments of Ewes

What treatments do ewes need before lambing? Options include drenching, clostridial vaccination and mineral supplementation and whilst it would be nice to apply a rule for all farms to follow, it is not that simple. Treatment options will differ markedly between farms and between seasons on individual farms. The one constant is clostridial vaccination. A booster administered 3-4 weeks pre-lamb will provide protection of lambs for 8 weeks, assuming they receive adequate colostrum and that ewes have received sensitiser doses. Drenching and mineral supplementation is another kettle of fish and should be tailored to your individual property. Long-acting drenches continue to receive a lot of press regarding both benefits and pitfalls of their use. Put simply, long acting drenches **WILL** increase the likelihood of resistance developing but managed correctly these effects can be minimised whilst productivity and return on investment can be maximised.

Some general rules around pre-lamb drenching:

- Capsules are better than injectables
- Combination products are best
- Targeting treaments to ewes that will benefit most will see the best return on investment (i.e. skinny ewes, multiple bearing ewes)
- Treating all animals in a mob will increase the incidence of resistance
- Using priming and/or exit drenches, especially if using injectables

Talk to one of our vets to tailor a plan that will best suit your farming situation.

Andrew Cochrane BVSc

Pet Reminders

- Check teeth and clip nails
- Check for signs of unexpected pregnancy in cats
- Flea prevention

Spring Mastitis

Mastitis during the calving season is often caused by environmental bacteria - most often *Strep. Uberis* - and is the result of new infections during the dry period, or calving down in wet, muddy conditions.

To help prevent mastitis and control somatic cell count in the early spring period, ensure that heifers, in particular, have good milk let-down and are milked out fully at each milking. It's also good practice to check all cows with an RMT paddle when they are due to leave the colostrum mob. Treat any infected quarters and observe the milk withholding before cows enter the milking mob. The bacteria involved in spring mastitis are often very responsive to a short antibiotic treatment which allows you to get these cows back into the milking mob quickly.

It's good practice to take a milk sample before treatment of any mastitis case—just label this with cow number, quarter and date and store it in the freezer. If the quarter doesn't respond to treatment, we can send the sample for culturing to ensure the right antibiotic is chosen.

Health and Management Issues Arising at Calving

Calving time can often be a stressful period and things inevitably go wrong. The following table shows the herd targets that we would consider to be standard. If you are finding that your farm is exceeding these levels, further investigations may be required to prevent issues getting worse or in following seasons.

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POTENTIAL ISSUES	HERD TARGET
IMMEDIATELY AFTER CALVING	
Calves that don't survive more than 24 hours (including stillborns)	<1%
Assisted calvings	<5%
Retained afterbirth	<2%
WEEKS AFTER CALVING	
Discharge from vulva 2 weeks post-calving	<1%
Milk fever and other metabolic cases	<5%
Proportion of calves surviving to weaning	>95%
CALVING TO NEXT MATING	
Fatalities	<4%
Lameness cases acquired	<5%
Mastitis cases acquired	<5%

Red-water Reminder

Left over brassica crops can be poisonous if they have flowered. The common name for the condition is Red Water, from the colour of the urine. Red Water has multiple causes, tick borne disease, Post-Parturient Haemoglobinurea(PPH), "Taranaki" anaemia, lepto and others that all produce the same blood stained urine. With brassicas, especially kale and rape, the cause is SMCO(S-methyl-L-cysteine sulphoxide). Toxicity occurs in cattle and more rarely sheep. SMCO is converted in the rumen and causes damage to red blood cells. This results in anaemia, difficult breathing, collapse, red-water, and death. Stock can adapt to SMCO but trouble occurs when put suddenly on crop, and with little supplement. Signs of poisoning usually take about 1-3 weeks to show up. Crops can be tested for SMCO at laboratories, but levels can fluctuate.

Prevent SMCO poisoning by gradual introduction onto brassica, up to 50%-60% of the diet, over a 7-10 day period.

Risk factors for SMCO poisoning:

- Older plants
- Secondary growth and flowering
- Short day and falling temperature
- Sulphate fertiliser increases SMCO (don't apply if the soil sulphate is ≥ 10mg/kg - unlikely to lift crop yield, could increase SMCO)
- Frosts will increase SMCO
- Rain after a prolonged period of dry weather will increase SMCO
- Any factor that stresses the plant and causes a reduction in yield
- Withdrawing nitrogen (N) supply to a growing Brassica crop reduces SMCO

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Cattle Reminders

- Magnesium supplementation
- Yearlings—worm drench
- Vitamin A, D, E to milk fever prone cows
- Drench cows post calving
- Booster dose BVD vaccine to heifers
- Monitor conditions post calving
- Blood test bulls for BVD & vaccinate

Deer Reminders

- Copper as required
- TB test
- Supplementary feed stags
- Weaners—check parasite levels
- Sort stags into velvetting mobs