

FARM ANIMAL NEWSLETTER

Examination of the breeding ram

Your ram is half the solution to getting a high percentage of ewes in lamb quickly to give a tight lambing period and help get lambs away early.



He may also have cost a lot of money in the hope of either improving the genetics of the flock or producing better lambs for sale. However, too often his ability to mate ewes and get them in lamb is taken for granted, often until it is too late and ewes are returning. A pre-breeding exam can rule out common problems and may indicate the need for collecting and testing a sample of semen to confirm fertility

A ram that is both fertile and in good health for mating will:

- Last longer in the flock saving on replacement costs
- Get more ewes in lamb so fewer are lost as barren
- Get ewes in lamb faster giving a tighter lambing period
- Give you more lambs on the ground so a more profitable season

Generally fewer than 10% of rams will be infertile, however up to 30% of rams may be subfertile, meaning they get fewer ewes in lamb and take longer to do so. Furthermore a sub-fertile ram can badly affect your lambing percentage with knock on effects on lambs sold per ewe and in turn profits.

Sperm production takes 6 weeks to recover after a problem, which is why it is important to test early. This examination

involves the collection and examination of a semen sample if necessary. A semen sample can give more information on amount of semen produced and if there are any abnormalities in the semen.

A subfertile ram can be hugely costly as he can affect the performance of all the ewes he runs with. Even if multiple rams are used in a group, an infertile dominant ram can stop the other fertile rams from working. The fit and fertile ram can serve 80-100 ewes in 3 weeks, allowing a higher ratio of ewes to rams than is generally used. A breeding examination of all rams 10 weeks before tupping gives time for problems to be corrected and replacements purchased if necessary.

Please contact the practice and speak to a vet for more information or to book in your tups. 2020 prices are £86.88 for the first tup and £68.14 for each subsequent tup.

Welcome to the team!

We are excited to tell you all that we have a new vet joining us this month.

Ally Reid will be joining us towards the end of July. Ally is coming from a practice in North Scotland and is originally from Australia. Ally will be part of our fantastic farm team.

I'm sure you will all join us in giving Ally a warm welcome to the Belmont Farm & Equine family!

Find us on



Please visit our Facebook page 'Belmont Farm & Equine Vets Limited' to keep up to date on interesting and topical practical Farm meetings over the coming months.

Out of hours

A reminder that if there is ever any difficulty in reaching the vet on call out of hours, we have a permanent answering service, Phoneta, who will take your call and then go on to contact the relevant vet. They can be reached on 01432 381440.

HEREFORD: 01432 351471 • BROMYARD: 01885 488440 • LEDBURY: 01531 806129

Clinical Vets: Dominic Alexander · Will Allman · Mike Bellamy · Andrew Cooke · Nick Gibbon · James Hipperson · Hannah Mitchell
Matthew Pugh · Caroline Rank · Harry Walby · Charlotte Watkins

TB Testers: Jacek (Jack) Andrychiewicz · Petre Balanescu · Ovidiu Mircea-Oltean · Tudor Patcas · Diego Sainz Garcia · Javier Sisamon · Krasimir (Kris) Stefanov

Support staff: Sadie Davies · Michelle Harris · Lucy Hughes · Sybil Legge · Laura Langford · Alice Mainwaring · Ros O'Sullivan · Sophie Powell · Andrea Smith
Pam Strange · Victoria Tully · Millie Whitlock

The True Cost of Abortion:

It will not be news to you all that lambing is already a very busy and stressful time of year! Adding in abortions to the mix means huge economic losses and a reduction in staff morale.

It's often easier to be the token emu and bury our heads in the sand about the level of abortion present in our flocks. However, the costings below show that only small increases above the industry accepted level of 2% have major financial effects!

Example:

The below example shows the effects of the level of abortion in a flock of 5% compared to a flock with 2%. It is based on a lowland 500 ewe flock achieving a 190% scanning percentage and averaging a lamb sale price of £80 across the season.

% Barren	Reduction in ewe value	Cost of treating ewe	Blanket treatment with antibiotics	Loss of lamb sales	Treatment of weak lambs	Increased labour of treating weak lambs	Total losses / year
5%	£50 x 25 = £1,250	£2 x 25 = £50	£1.20 x 500 ewes = £600	£80 x 48 = £3,840	£0.5 x 38 = £19 (4% weak)	£4 x 30 = £152	£5,911
2%	£50 x 10 = £500	£2 x 10 = £20	N/A as below threshold	£75 x 19 = £1,425	£0.5 x 19 = £9.50 (2% weak)	£4 x 19 = £76	£2,030

Increased losses from abortion rate rising from 2% to 5% £3,881

Cost of vaccinating for Toxo and Enzo yearly (assuming ewes average 4 crops) £753

This financial loss is huge and the levels of abortion we see in effected flocks are often far greater than 5%, making the potential savings even bigger!! As you can see, with losses this large it makes vaccination incredibly easy to justify. It's simple, effective and a single dose 4 weeks prior to tupping lasts a ewe's lifetime!

If you would like any further information then do get in touch with one of our vets!

Vaccination – Live vs dead

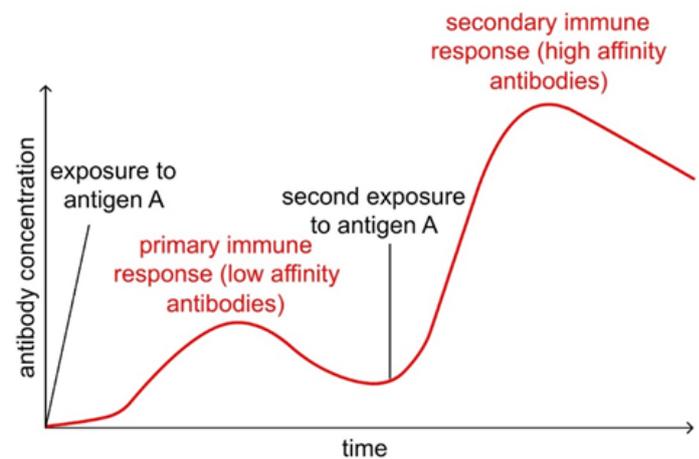
You may be wondering why some vaccines only require one vaccine whereas others require a double dose. The two main classifications of vaccines are: live and dead vaccines.

Live vaccines are derived from disease-causing 'wild' bacteria or viruses that have been weakened or 'attenuated' in a laboratory. After being injected, live attenuated vaccines grow and replicate in the animal and produce an immune response. Generally, modified live viral vaccines provoke a strong and satisfactory immune response with a single dose.

Dead or inactivated vaccines consist of killed or inactivated forms of the bug or their toxins, inactivated with heat, chemicals like formalin, or radiation. The immune response to inactivated vaccines is initially not as strong as for live vaccines and usually a primary course of two doses of vaccine are needed, with a short interval between these doses.

Follow the instructions exactly, dead vaccines that require two doses must be given at the stated time. This is to ensure that a strong immunity is triggered and that the protection lasts as long as it should.

See picture below, the antigen A corresponds to a vaccine and the antibodies corresponds to the animal's immune systems response. This second wave gives the immune system a reminder and it develops the memory that it needs to protect the animal as you would expect.



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