

COVID-19 UPDATE

In light of the latest government guidance we will now be operating a full closed door policy across all three offices. You **MUST** call to pre order medicines. Where possible, please give at least 24 hours notice before collecting.

Thankyou for your understanding and cooperation.

Lambing Preparation!

Lambing can be a very stressful time for all involved..sheep included! When you've got such a lot to do, it's really important to prevent problems which can be costly in time and money to correct. Working smart is vital and the following are a few tips to help this spring go to plan!

1. Cleanliness is Vital

Lambs, like all young animals, are more likely to succumb to infections than older animals. It is for this reason that hygiene of loose pens, bonding pens, feeding equipment; bottles/tubes etc is so vital. A lot of problems such as watery mouth, joint ill and crypto can be prevented almost exclusively by maintaining a clean environment. Little pens should be cleaned out, washed, disinfected and allowed to dry completely at least once during the lambing period. It is also vital to maintain large amounts of straw bedding as this is the best way to prevent bacterial build up in the environment.

2. Colostrum Matters

Colostrum intake is imperative and prevents a whole host of diseases due to it's antibodies and energy provisions. How much and how quickly a lamb gets colostrum are the main factors that influence colostrum's benefit. Due to the lamb's stomach stopping absorbing the antibodies with time, it really is the sooner the better. Ideally lambs should receive 50ml/kg colostrum within the first 2 hours and then a further 150ml/kg over the next 24 hours. High risk lambs (triplets, tight pulls, early or low birth weight lambs and those born to thin ewes) should be targeted and supplemented to ensure that they receive this. Maternal colostrum is best but if this is not plentiful or available then colostrum from other ewes or colostrum substitutes should be fed.

3. Keep antibiotics for when they're needed so that they work!

Historically large quantities of antibiotics have been blanket given to lambs at birth. This practice has been shown to build up resistance on your farm and can mean that these antibiotics will not be effective for your farm in the future which is very concerning. As long as lambs are given colostrum and born into a clean environment they are unlikely to require these antibiotics as standard. Also, these antibiotics are relatively short acting (approx 48hours) and are long gone before the lamb develops an infection. It is best to conserve these antibiotics for when you are concerned a lamb needs treatment and focus on management for prevention. However, if you are really

concerned about going "cold turkey" for the first year then you could try not giving it to lambs until you see a problem and then starting it as soon as you do. Lambs at the beginning of the lambing period do not experience the bacterial load that "builds up" with time.

4. Investigate abortion/barrens

During lambing every lamb really matters and losing lambs is frustrating and costly. If you are having above than average levels of abortion (>2%) then we should investigate in order to reduce losses as much as possible. Most of the abortion agents in sheep are infectious and if you are having a problem all we will require is a dead lamb and a placenta in order to collect samples and send off to the lab. Once we know if there are any infectious agents at play we can advise you on how to prevent this for next year!

5. Vaccinate to keep out disease

Clostridial and pasteurilla vaccines (heptavac P) in pregnant ewes should be given 4-6 weeks pre lambing to give immunity to lambs in the colostrum. When lambs are over 3 weeks they can then start the primary course of two injections four to 6 weeks apart. It's easy to lose track of time when you're so busy around lambing time, so keep an eye on when vaccines are due!

So hopefully here's to a successful lambing season!



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

Vets: Dominic Alexander • Will Allman • Mike Bellamy • Andrew Cooke • Joel Galloway • Nick Gibbon • James Hipperson • Louise Lafin • Hannah Mitchell • Matthew Pugh • Caroline Rank • Harry Walby • Charlotte Watkins • Sarah Watson

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

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

Johne's Disease in cattle

Johne's disease is a chronic disease affecting cattle, sheep and goats with no treatment available. Animals will lose weight quickly and ultimately death will occur. This disease is of high welfare and economic concerns and, with the potential link to Crohns disease in humans, will become a higher priority for its eradication. Johne's disease is caused by *Mycobacterium avium paratuberculosis* (MAP). Animals usually become infected in the first few weeks of life, usually from their dams, but infection can be picked up at any stage of life. MAP then hides within the white blood cells within the gut lining and can remain hidden for many years before its emergence, usually during periods of stress.

Clinical Signs – Usually weight loss is the first sign. In cattle scouring can be very watery and often bubbly but not always. A bottle jaw swelling under the jaw can appear as well. Appetite can remain and animals can appear normal however some will show signs of general un-wellness such as milk drop or reduced fertility. Some animals may appear to recover however death is inevitable.

Diagnosis – There are several tests that can be done including blood, milk and muck samples. Any animal with severe weight loss or chronic diarrhoea in cattle should be tested. Whole herd tests for cattle can be achieved either by blood tests or individual milk tests. Blood tests must be performed 90 days after a TB test as they can supply a false positive. An animal testing negative is not necessarily Johne's free due to ability of MAP to hide from white blood cells and therefore not create an immune response.

Prevention – testing animals prior to coming onto your farm along with purchasing from accredited farms is the best way to help prevent Johne's entering your farm. Once Johne's is on your farm, it is very difficult to remove due to the hidden nature of MAP. Remember, once Johne's has established onto your farm, it is very difficult to remove completely and usually we are looking at a 5 year reduction plan to have Johne's under control.

If you have any concerns, please don't hesitate to speak to one of our vets.



Metabolic Disease in Ewes

Metabolic profiling can be very useful for some sheep farmers to ensure adequate nutrition for their flock at an essential time of year.

Approximately 75% of lamb growth occurs in the last 6 weeks of pregnancy so providing enough energy to your ewes at this time is crucial. Profiling will aid reduction in diseases such as pregnancy toxemia (twin lamb disease) and will ensure good colostrum/milk production in the ewes.

To determine the ewes energy status, bloods should be taken 3-4 weeks before the start of lambing. Before this time problems may be missed as ewes are only just entering the risk period. Conversely, any later will be too late to adjust nutrition. A handful of ewes bearing twins and triplets should be selected for sampling. Several markers can be measured in the blood samples.

1. Beta hydroxybutyrate (BHB/Ketones). This is a breakdown product of fat metabolism. High levels indicate energy imbalance and a risk of twin lamb disease.

2. Urea. A marker of protein intake and directly related to colostrum quality and milk production.

3. Albumin (protein). An indicator of long-term underfeeding and liver damage which may be associated with fluke.

4. Magnesium/Calcium. Levels can give an indication of risk of hypocalcaemia and staggers.

5. Copper/ LYT6ow copper. In late pregnancy a deficiency can cause "swayback" in lambs, but supplementation when not necessary can cause toxicity so samples must be tested before providing extra copper.

If you would like to discuss testing your flock please call the practice and speak with one of the team.



Belmont Farm & Equine Vets

Keep up-to-date on all the goings on here at Belmont Farm & Equine by following us on Facebook. We will be posting important COVID-19 updates along with what are vets are getting up to during our busiest time of year!

We would love to see your pictures, please feel free to send them in to farm@bfevets.co.uk for us to share on Facebook.

Emergencies and Out of Hours

In the unfortunate event that your animal requires veterinary attention out-of-hours please dial the usual office number where you will be given the telephone number of the on-duty vet.

It may be useful to keep a pen and paper handy to take this number down.

On the rare occasion that the duty vet is out of reception your call will be forwarded to a helpful member of our answering service who will ensure someone attends the emergency as soon as possible.

The answering team at Kernow can be contacted directly on 01432 381 440, if for any reason you are unable to reach the duty vet.

Stop Press!

After a long period of very limited mastitis tube availability, we are now able to get and are stocking 3 different types of tube.

Unfortunately we can't advertise brands here so please call one of the surgeries or speak to one of the vets about the current options.

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

Vets: Dominic Alexander • Will Allman • Mike Bellamy • Andrew Cooke • Joel Galloway • Nick Gibbon • James Hipperson • Louise Lafin • Hannah Mitchell • Matthew Pugh • Caroline Rank • Harry Walby • Charlotte Watkins • Sarah Watson

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

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