



Welcome

In January the practice at J36 experienced a power cut which made me realise how reliant we are on technology, no computer meant no booking of medicines, no diary etc. The same can be said regarding farming as we push for efficiency, accompanied by staff shortages, we are seeing an increasing amount of technology on farms. Examples in dairy would be robotic milkers and motion collars but also in the beef and sheep world we are seeing virtual fences and weigh scales that calibrate a dose. However good these technologies are, they only help the farmer, they cannot replace the skills of good stockmanship.

Mark Stott

Included this month

- **Teaching an Old Dog New Tricks** - Sarah Harker
- **Local TB Meeting** - Jim McKinstry
- **Joint Ill in Lambs** - Rebekah Carling
- **Metabolic Profiles** - Rebekah Carling
- **Schmallenberg Virus alert** - Hannah Tatham
- **News and Diary Dates**

Teaching an Old Dog New Tricks

The first lambing course of the season took place last month and included a very enjoyable farm visit, kindly hosted by the Robinson family at Wharf Sutton. Their early lambing, synchronised flock provided some guaranteed excitement for our visitors, with beginners having the chance to lamb a real sheep for the first time. Every year, our lambing courses attract young and old, complete beginners and the more experienced, and family and staff from established farms. Feedback shows that everyone finds value in discussions around ewe health, lambing and care of the newborn lamb, and wider flock management.

My mam and dad were keen to attend this year. Having spent their farming life lambing predominantly swaledale ewes, they are easing their way into retirement, lambing texel-cross ewes to texel and beltex tups!! This feeds their hobby of taking a small trailer load of good fat lambs to Hawes mart each week so they can have their dinner. Despite the number of sheep they have lambed over the years, neither was confident in putting a head rope on, because before the texels, they had never really had to. They are now looking forward to putting the skills learned with the lambing simulator into practice this spring. They also very much enjoyed the discussion and debate that flowed and this is something that I continue to learn



from every time I present the course. It just goes to show that you can teach an old dog new tricks!

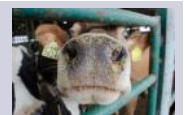
If you are interested in attending a lambing course, whatever your level of experience, look out for our adverts or contact the office.

Sarah Harker



Turnout Vaccines

Please think about your turnout vaccines needs, we have good stocks of Lepto, BVD, IBR with no expected issues with Huskvac.



Local TB Meeting

Along with the NFU and 2 neighbouring vet practices, we had a well-attended TB meeting at J36 this month. The meeting came about due to the radial zones that have sprung up in our area.

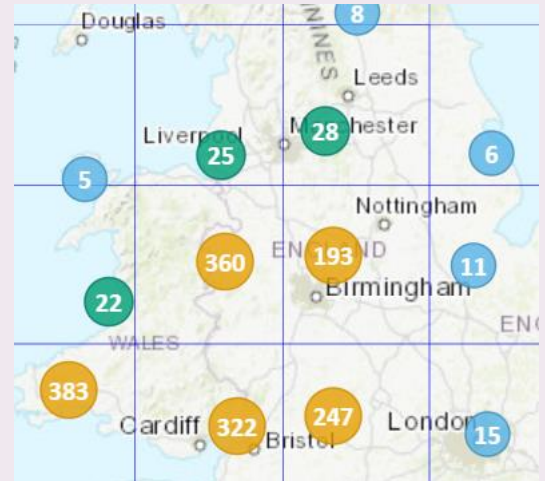
Sarah Tomlinson who is a vet with the TB advisory service, gave a very informative presentation about TB and how to prevent it entering into herds. Helen Forrester from the NFU gave us an update on the current TB situation in the area.

The main points from Sarah were

- TB is an infectious disease that spreads between animals
- Ask sellers of cattle when they last had a reactor in the herd. If it was less than 3 years ago, do not buy from that herd
- Keep cattle away from wildlife as well as you can.

Helen filled us in about the on-going cases in the county which thankfully are getting less. She reminded us about the www.ibtb.co.uk website map that shows on going and resolved TB cases over the whole country. A very useful map to see what is happening locally and if you are wanting to buy in animals from certain herds.

TB is a very emotive subject as it can cause a lot of problems if you end up under restrictions. We are not seeing wildlife spread in our area which is excellent. TB usually enters herds in our area by cattle to cattle spread so watch where you buy cattle from and keep nose to nose contact with neighbouring cattle to a minimum.



Jim McKinstry

Joint Ill in Lambs



As lambing season starts to occupy our thoughts, so will the threat of joint ill.

There are two main types of joint ill – an early version which affects lambs generally around 1-2 weeks (but always <1month of age) and a late version which affects weaned lambs.

The early version is mainly due to *Streptococcus dysgalatiae* where the ewe's vagina is thought to be the main source, with contamination of the environment from birth fluids the most likely cause of spread (**Strep has been recorded to survive for 35 days on straw or hay**); whereas the late version is due to *Erysipelothrix rhusiopathiae* which lives in the soil so infection is likely through a skin wound such as tagging or even rough grazing (it is also associated with post-dipping lameness).

There is a vaccine available for the Erysipelas form so it is well worth speaking with us if you find you struggle with older lambs getting joint ill.

The earlier Strep form is a lot more common and this is best controlled with hygiene in the lambing pen (and not going from one lambing straight to another without washing your hands/changing gloves) and naval dipping. However, there have also been links with trace element deficiencies and tickborne fever so if you seem to be having a particularly hard time of it despite good hygiene and dipping practices then definitely get it touch.

Joint Ill Continued ..

Treatment of joint ill can be very frustrating as it can be difficult to get antibiotics to penetrate the joint and even if you do manage to clear up the infection, the arthritis caused will likely be permanent. Treatment options are steroid and Synulox at the start and thereafter Synulox every day for at least 4 more days or Florkem twice 48hours apart. Either way prevention is definitely better than cure so please do get in touch if joint ill is ruining your lambing season.

Rebekah Carling

Metabolic Profiles in Sheep

Blood sampling ewes 3 weeks before lambing allows us to determine whether we have the nutrition right in the feeding of our ewes and gives us enough time to adjust accordingly; reducing likelihood of twin lamb disease/calcium staggers and watery mouth/joint ill/unthrifty lambs.

The major parameters are:

- Beta hydroxybutyrate (BHB) - a by-product of negative energy balance; too high increases risk of twin lamb disease
- Urea - marker of protein intake; too low will result in poor growth in unborn lambs and poor colostrum quality and milk yield
- Albumin – protein produced by the liver; too low would mean the liver isn't working properly which could indicate an underlying problem such as chronic liver fluke or Johne's disease, it would also result in poor colostrum quality, milk yield and a less effective immune system which would reduce response to vaccination

Other helpful parameters are:

- Magnesium – indication of intake as it's not stored in the body. Although mag staggers is normally seen in ewes after lambing, magnesium is needed for calcium so checking this gives an indication of calcium needs required pre-lambing
- Copper – too low will cause 'Swayback' in the lamb but too high causes toxicity in the ewe .

To do a basic check of 10 animals for BHB and urea it would cost £60 with other parameters being able to be added for an extra charge. Alternatively, The University of Edinburgh does a deal on all 5 parameters for 20 bloods (6 singles, 7 twins, 7 triplets) with feedback in relation to your feeding and nutrition for £215.

To be forewarned is forearmed so please do get in touch to get your lambing season off to the best start.



Schmallenberg Virus Alert



There has been reports of cases of Schmallenberg virus across the country as far north as North Yorkshire. Affected flocks or herds have reported reduced conception rates, early embryonic deaths and abortions. Other clinical signs include high body temperature, milk drop and scour. There is a chance we may see deformed lambs and calves born due to the disease this spring. Usually the deformities are very distinctive with fused limbs, twisted necks and curved spines but there are cases of "dummy" newborns which are slow to suck due to the effects on the brain. The APHA are offering free testing of samples from lambs, calves and kids born with suspected disease. We would need to collect a fresh

brainstem sample for testing. If you suspect the disease then give us a call to discuss.

Hannah Tatham

Half Term Art Competition



After enjoying seeing so many pictures from our budding young farmer artists last year, we are bringing back our half term Art Competition!! The subject is **"Springtime on the farm"**. Use your imagination to draw or paint a picture of anything spring like (e.g. lambing, calving, birds, snowdrops, you can include your favourite vet or vets tech on their visits!). We have 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes for each age category.

Age 0– 7 years

Age 8-16 years

Closing Date Monday 26th Feb 2024

Please include the name and age of child.

Please e mail pictures to linda@farmgatevets.com or whatsapp to 07801 594571 or drop a paper copy off at the practice.



FlockCheck

Running from Feb 1st 2023 to the end of June, Flock Check is a

subsidised scheme from MSD where 6 empty or aborted ewes can be blood tested for **Toxoplasmosis and Enzootic Abortion**. Lab testing is covered by the scheme so you will only pay for a visit and sampling costs. Bringing sheep to the practice wouldn't incur a visit cost obviously.

Scabigard Update-

Having reassured you that all was well at the orf vaccine factory in the last newsletter, Zoetis have unexpectedly hit another supply problem leaving a stock shortage for the 2024 lambing season. At the moment we have stock and should be ok, but it's worth ordering in good time.

2024 Lambing List out now, please pick up a copy.



Dates For Your Diary



Lambing Courses 2024

Practical Lambing - Saturday 3rd February 2024—9.30am—12.30pm NOW FULLY BOOKED

- Saturday 24th February 2024—9.30am—12.30pm—last few spaces.

- Saturday 9th March 2024 - 9.30am—12.30pm (New date)

£45 including VAT. To book a course please call the office on the numbers below.



Badger Vaccinations: A Tool in TB Prevention—Monday 19th February 2024 7.30pm A joint meeting with our neighbouring Practices at **Kirkby Lonsdale Rugby Club**, Raygarth, Kirkby Lonsdale, LA6 2DS. Supper Included. As a follow from the meeting at junction 36 last month, guest speaker Nick Pile will share his experience and the practicalities of the Badger Vaccination Project which has taken place down south. Please book for food numbers by phoning the practice or e mail linda@farmgatevets.com

Lancaster Office

Tel: 01524 60006

Open 8:30am-5pm

Monday-Friday

9am—12noon Saturdays

CLOSED Sundays

J36 Kendal Office

Tel: 015395 67899

Open 8:30am-5pm

Monday-Friday

9am—12noon Saturdays

CLOSED Sundays

Sedbergh Office

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