



# Newsletter

## January 2023

### Welcome

Happy New year to you all. I hope you have all had a bit of time off over Christmas and you are now ready for the new year. Hopefully we have seen the back of the cold weather and its problems. Cold weather is great as long as you do not have to work in it. Milk yields dropped and young calves took a hit in the cold but on the whole it was not too bad. Catriona and I have written a couple of articles to help with looking after calves in the winter. Lambing time has started for some and our ever popular lambing courses are running again so get booked on if you need a refresher.

**Jim McKinstry**

### Liver Fluke : Risk Still Low??



We are still not seeing much liver fluke. Post-mortems, blood and faeces samples are still largely clear and slaughter house and laboratory feedback is the same. We are benefiting from a few consecutive years when May and June

have been dry. This is when the fluke lifecycle begins so if they don't get a start, they are not there later in the season.

The recent cold snap will also help to kill fluke and snails on pasture. However, by the time you read this it will be New Year, ewes will be nearing lambing time and I am finding it harder to say there is no need to treat. The consequences of getting it wrong can be serious. However, this is the year when a proper discussion with us for specific advice on your farm may be warranted and testing could be helpful so we can get it right.

**Sarah Harker**

### Included this month

- **Liver Fluke Risk** - Sarah Harker
- **Feeling the Cold** - Catriona Hoy
- **Calf Milk Replacer** - Jim McKinstry
- **Pasteurellosis** - Charlotte Chapman
- **Calving Gates** - Rebekah Carling
- **RABI fund raising**
- **Diary Dates**



**Huskvac Information** - Fingers crossed there will be no bumps in supply this year with lungworm vaccine, the first batch will be available from approx. the 20th of January 2023.



## Feeling the Cold

Most of us have reached for our woolly hats in the last couple of weeks. Remember if we're feeling the drop in temperature then our calves are too. When calves are cold they're burning energy to keep warm and their growth rates drop.

Lots of people already have their calves' jackets on to keep them warm but there are other things we can do.



### For calves less than three weeks old

- For every 5 degrees below 15°C, feed an additional 50g of milk replacer or extra third of a litre
- Dry newborn calves as quickly as possible, their brown fat reserves only last a few hours in the cold!

### For calves older than three weeks

- For every 5 degrees below 10°C, feed an extra 50g of milk replacer
- And for all calves
- Always provide access to concentrates
- Bed pens deeply enough so that calves can nest
- Check your airflow at the level of the calf! Air should be fresh but there should be no draughts.



Catriona Hoy

## Calf Milk Replacers

To follow on from what Catriona said above about calves feeling the cold, here are some thoughts on calf milk replacers. As well as getting the calf jackets on, we also need to look at the calf milk replacer (CMR) that is being used. As the temperature drops, calves need to use more energy to stay warm. If calves are not getting enough milk or the energy content of the CMR is lower then the calves will start to suffer and this will open them up to scours and pneumonia.

First thing to look at is how much powder the calves are getting. We want them to be getting 900g of powder per day (150g per litre of water and 3 litres per feed twice a day).

Calves on a machine will probably be getting more than this which will keep them growing well. Make sure that machines are calibrated properly and that measuring jugs are not caked up.



Next is look at the type of CMR powder. All CMRs are not the same. They can change and you do not know until the calves start to have problems. There are 2 types of powder, skimmed milk or whey based. Skim based are much better for young calves and are more easily digested. Whey based are better for calves over 3 weeks of age. Look at the oil content and what type of oil is in the powder. The oil is the energy and the protein is the building blocks for a growing calf. Oils must be vegetable based and some oils digest differently so affecting the amount of energy the calf can get from the powder.

Calf powders can be a minefield and sales reps are always selling you the 'best' one. If you need any more information please have a word with one of us.

Jim McKinstry

## The Silent Killer

Yes, the dreaded *Pasteurella* which is commonly known to cause pneumonia in farm animals can and does cause widespread mortality in sheep particularly during the winter months. This is through its ability to migrate into the bloodstream from the lungs causing what is known as 'systemic pastuerellosis'. The fast-acting nature of the disease means that stock affected by this are most often found dead, die during handling or shortly thereafter, despite best efforts to treat. But what important facts do we need to know about this silent killer and is there anything that can be done to prevent it?

### ***How do animals catch Pasteurella?***

The bugs themselves commonly live without causing harm in the mouth, back of throat and guts of healthy animals. When an animal is put under stress, these normal levels of bacteria can overgrow, migrate away from their 'base' and cause disease.

### ***What puts and animal under stress?***

Stressors is a term for something which puts an animal under stress and pressure. Stressors can be anything from movement, handling, parasites, poor nutrition (deficiencies) or diet change to poor shelter, harsh weather and concurrent disease (e.g. lameness).

### ***What symptoms will I see with systemic Pasteurella?***

Most commonly sudden death but if seen early, signs of poor appetite, being alone, heads/ears lowered and being easy to catch are reported. Affected sheep will have fevers initially followed by lower-than-normal temperatures as the disease takes its course.

### ***What can be done to prevent deaths?***

Although it is impossible to control the weather, other tools can be used to prevent stressors which predispose to disease, importantly, correct, and effective worming, access to shelter and adequate nutrition. *Pasteurella* vaccines on the market are a useful adjunct in protecting against the systemic form of disease however the suspected short-acting protection of the vaccine means booster doses are often require some 2-3 weeks before expected risk periods.

Although systemic pastuerella is a difficult and challenging disease to treat, changing management practices to put less stress on your stock will no doubt minimise losses seen with the disease.



Charlotte Chapman

## Calving Gates

'For suckling calves it's been literally life-saving'. A recent comment from a beef farmer with a calving gate installed. That's once you even have the calf but the benefits start well before by being able to have the cow safely restrained for the actual calving or if necessary a caesarean. And it's not just beef farmers who see the benefit. 'Fantastic', was the response to my asking a dairy farmer how he found his newly installed calving gate purely from a safety aspect with not having the jack swinging about. Not to mention placing it the opposite way round makes a brilliant DA option.

From a vet's viewpoint having a cow safely restrained whilst doing a caesarean means: quicker surgery time, increases chance of getting calf out alive, reduces risk of contamination, improves survival odds for cow, increases chance of getting back in calf again, better tissue handling, quicker healing time and a happier vet!

You might wonder why not just use a crush? Unfortunately a lot of crushes are all or nothing with their inability to open up the sides to gain access to where we need. Too much space allows the cow to swing about or more concerning, if they don't open up at all it could be a death sentence for cow and calf if the cow was to go down. Hopefully I've convinced you of the benefits of a piece of kit that costs about £500 for a decent one and will last for years, but if not all you need to do is speak to a farmer with one already installed.



Rebekah Carling

## £500 raised for RABI at our Christmas Quiz

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our Charity Christmas Quiz night last month, we managed to raise £500 for RABI which was a great result. Well done to vet Charlotte and Mark clearly loved his role as quiz master!



## Out Now

Please pick up a copy of our lambing list which is out now. This contains all the essentials needed for lambing. Advanced orders will be appreciated and as usual you take away a complimentary packet of biscuits and then get entered into a prize draw to win a pair of wellies!



## Dates For Your Diary



### Healthy Heifer Lunch, Wed 4th January 2023, 12.30pm—2.30pm, Crooklands Hotel

A discussion over lunch for dairy clients who are involved in measuring calf growth rates to ensure calves are reaching full potential via our Healthy Heifer Scheme. Lunch kindly sponsored by Boehringer, please confirm by January 2nd.



**Ticks and their increasing presence in the Northwest. Thursday 12th January 2023, 7pm at the J36 practice meeting room.** Bimeda, makers of Gold Fleece Sheep dip will be joining us and kindly sponsoring supper. Members please confirm your attendance, for clients interested in joining Sheep Club please come along for a no obligation night out! Please phone the practice or e mail- [linda@farmgatevets.com](mailto:linda@farmgatevets.com)



**Practical Lambing courses—** £45 per head including VAT. To be held at our junction 36 practice, these courses provide a good mix of theory and hands on lambing techniques, sheep husbandry and disease prevention. Light refreshments provided.

**Saturday 21st January 2023 9.30pm - 12.30pm**

**Saturday 11th February 2023, 9.30pm- 12.30pm**

To book please call Kendal or Lancaster on the numbers below, 12 spaces per course.

**NEW - ZOOM Lambing Course - Tuesday 21st February 2023, 7-8pm.** This course proved popular in lockdown, a good mix of presentation, video demonstrations and discussion. Please see our website to book—

<http://www.farmgatevets.com/practice-info/events.aspx>

Online Course cost £15 including VAT

### 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

Tel: 015396 20335

Open 8:30--5pm

Monday-Friday

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