



# ARDENE HOUSE

VET PRACTICE LTD

Farm Newsletter Special  
January 2020

Tel: 01224 740700



# Happy New Year 2020

We hope all of our farm clients and patients had a very Merry Christmas.

Everyone at Ardene House is looking forward to entering into the new year with you all!



## In this issue:

- Lambing course:  
14th February 2020
- Preparing for lambing
- Importance of ewe nutrition

Check out news on our website and let us know what you think.

[www.ardenehouse.co.uk](http://www.ardenehouse.co.uk)

If you would like to receive our quarterly newsletters by email please send us a message via the contacts page on our website.

**24 Hour  
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# ARDENE HOUSE

VET PRACTICE LTD

Ardene House with Jim Marr invite you to the

## Management at Lambing Course

on the 14th February 2020.

This will be held from 9:30am to 3pm

at Ardene House Vet Practice Ltd, Kingswells, Aberdeen AB15 8PJ.

The meeting will cost £75. It will include a talk in the morning, and a practical session in the afternoon. Lunch and refreshments are included. When booking, please inform us of any dietary requirements.

Topics covered include:

- How to prepare for lambing time
- The importance of good nutritional management prior to lambing
- How to prevent and treat common peri-natal problems
- Ovine abortion: common causes, how to investigate it, and how to reduce the risk
- Clostridial vaccinations
- Normal parturition and when to either intervene or seek veterinary advice



If you are interested in attending, please contact the reception of Ardene House Vet Practice Ltd on 01224 740700 or ask one of our Farm Vets.



## Preparing for lambing: Lambing boxes



All items are available individually. We also have pre-made lambing boxes available with all the essentials packed in a carrying caddy.

Two box options are available: Standard box, and refill box

### Standard box

- ◆ Lambing ropes: Leg ropes + head snare
- ◆ Lube
- ◆ Arm-length gloves
- ◆ Iodine with dipping pot
- ◆ Bottle with teat
- ◆ Feeding tube with syringe
- ◆ Castration kit: elastrator rings + pliers
- ◆ Thermometer
- ◆ Lamb coats

### Refill box

- ◆ Lambing ropes: Leg ropes
- ◆ Lube
- ◆ Arm-length gloves
- ◆ Iodine with dipping pot
- ◆ Bottle with teat
- ◆ Feeding tube with syringe
- ◆ Castration kit: elastrator rings

Also available:

**-Ceto-phyton:** energy supplement for ewes

**-Veterinary Lamb Drench:** nutritional supplement for lambs



If you have any questions or would like to place an order, contact the Ardene House farm office at 01224 740 700



# Importance of Ewe Nutrition

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**As spring lambing season draws closer,** optimizing the nutrition of the ewes becomes more and more important. This is because the lambs develop the most in the last trimester, or the final

60 days, of the pregnancy - this is when 75% of foetal growth occurs. While a balanced diet is necessary for all stages of pregnancy, it is during this third trimester that energy requirements are at their greatest in order to support the rapid growth of the lambs.



Appropriate nutrition at this time is essential not just for the growth of the lambs, but also the health of the ewe.

## **If ewes don't receive adequate nutrition**

Ewes receiving inadequate nutrition are at a much higher risk of illness both in the ewe herself and in her lambs.

A significant concern with under-fed ewes is ovine pregnancy toxemia, also known as twin lamb disease. This occurs when the ewe is not getting enough energy to support both her own health and the growth of the lambs. When this energy imbalance becomes severe, then the ewe can become weak and disoriented, potentially progressing to death. Prevention of twin lamb disease with adequate nutrition is very important.

Ewes are also at risk of hypocalcaemia, which in sheep is more common prior to lambing as compared to cows where it occurs mostly after parturition. Similar to twin lamb disease, low blood calcium can cause weakness and also can progress to death. Differentiating between hypocalcaemia and twin lamb disease can be difficult, and often requires blood testing.

Even if an under-conditioned ewe lambs without developing diseases such as twin lamb disease or hypocalcaemia, the lambs are likely to be smaller and weaker. This is because there are insufficient nutrients to allow the lambs to grow during the pregnancy, and so the lambs are born with less brown fat energy stores and they lose heat more quickly. Small lambs are at a greater risk of dying from hypothermia and starvation, being sat on by the ewe, and developing infections such as navel ill and watery mouth.

## **If ewes are over-fed and over-conditioned**

The main concern with over-conditioned ewes is dystocia, or a difficult lambing. The risks of overweight ewes is two-fold: Too much energy during foetal development can result in the lambs growing too big before birth, and the additional fat in the ewe may create less space in the birth canal for the lambs to pass through. When a ewe has a difficult lambing, even if it didn't require a cesarean, there is a greater risk of lambs being weak, not suckling well, and developing diseases such as navel ill and watery mouth.



# Importance of Ewe Nutrition

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## How to monitor the condition of the ewes

### Body Condition Score (BCS):

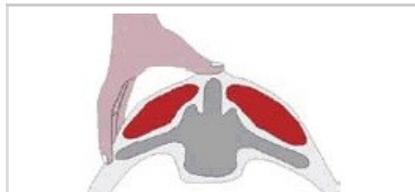
The first line method of monitoring ewes is by checking their body condition scores, or their BCS. This can give you an important baseline measurement of the ewes' condition, particularly to track any changes in body condition of the flock.

Due to the wool, it is near impossible to accurately assess body condition just by looking at the ewes. Instead, BCS measurement is done by feeling the ewes – more specifically by feeling how much fat and muscle is covering the vertebrae in the loin region.

BCS measurements can be taken while the ewes are already being handled, such as for vaccinations.

Ideal BCS depends on the breed. At mid-pregnancy and at lambing:

- Lowland ewes should have a BCS of 3
- Upland ewes a BCS of 2.5
- Hill ewes a BCS of 2



### **Body Condition Scoring**

The animal should be standing in a relaxed position. It should not be tense, crushed by other animals or held in a crush. If the animal is tense it is not possible to feel the short ribs and get an accurate condition score



**Condition Score 1**



**Condition Score 2**



**Condition Score 3**



**Condition Score 4**



**Condition Score 5**

### Blood sampling:

The nutrition status of the ewes can be assessed using blood sampling. With blood samples, we can test for metabolites such as beta hydroxybutyrate (B-OHB) to assess energy levels, urea-nitrogen and albumin to assess protein metabolism, and minerals such as magnesium, calcium, and phosphate.

The ideal time to do this would be at 3-4 weeks prior to the start of lambing – this will allow enough time for any changes to make an impact before the risk period. For example, if ewes carrying triplets are showing to be getting not quite enough energy, then blood testing at this stage will show this and allow for supplemental feeding to be given before the ewes begin to show signs of twin lamb disease.

If the ewes are scanned, then at least 5 ewes in each lambing group should be sampled, as this will ensure that an assessment of each group can be made. If the ewes are not scanned, then at least 10 random ewes should be sampled.

<https://www.nadis.org.uk/disease-a-z/sheep/pre-lambing-bulletin-ewe-nutrition-and-metabolic-diseases/>