

June has been unusually wet and warm for SE England. The resulting warm rain has been causing good growth of crops and grass even without the use of overpriced fertilisers, but on the flip side, it has also been encouraging the breeding of blowflies, ticks, midges and snails carrying liver fluke larvae, as well as the rapid hatching of worm eggs on pastures grazed by sheep and cattle. The South of England show enjoyed the great weather this June and congratulations are due to many of our prizewinning clients, not to mention a certain prizewinning vet!

Unfortunately, there were no birds allowed at the show this year because of ongoing national bird flu restrictions. Indeed, this June has seen the first confirmed cases of Avian Influenza in East Sussex in 2022. The housing of birds is no longer required (except in the 3 km surveillance zone around an Infected premises), **but all bird keepers (whether they have pet birds, a commercial or a backyard flock) must continue to take effective and precautionary biosecurity measures until further notice.**



And if you find 3 or more dead wild waterfowl (swans, geese or ducks), gulls or birds of prey, or 5 or more dead birds of any species you should report them to the Defra helpline (03459 33 55 77).

June sees us also appointing a new clinical director. Chris Burns will be taking over from Carmen. For those of you who don't know Chris, he is The bearded one also known as Geoff, Gordon or Alan amongst other misnomers.

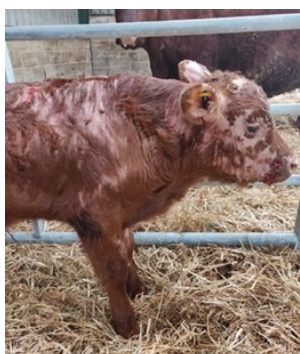
Chris has varied interests across the farm vet disciplines but is never happier than when he has a knife in one hand and a carcass in the other.

Unfortunately we will be losing our ATT Leanne who will be moving to Dorset with her partner to work on a big arable farm. We are working hard on employing another person to follow in her footsteps.

QUARTERLY DISEASE REPORT MARCH-JUNE 2022

Cattle-

Neospora caninum infection was detected in 8/27 replacement heifers prior to service (30% prevalence). The herd had experienced grumbling abortion issues over the previous calving seasons. Heifers are more likely to abort their pregnancy than cows and heifer screening can allow for targeted cow testing where dams of positive heifers are tested to determine their status. These animals are then either marked for culling or their offspring are tagged as non-breeders. Vertical transmission (mother-calf) is the most common route of infection and method of persistence within a herd. Horizontal transmission (introduction via contaminated dog faeces) is a minor route of transmission.



Bovine Erythropoietic Protoporphyrin (BEPP) was the cause of photosensitisation (sunlight allergy) in a 2 week old calf with widespread crusting and scaling of the skin which progressed to whole body alopecia. The condition is genetic and involves defects in the haemoglobin synthesis pathway. It is commonly found in Shorthorn and Limousin cattle and their crosses. In this case the calf had a Limousin sire. The long term prognosis is often poor.

Sheep-

Copper toxicity was the cause of death in 8 Suffolk X Mule ewes which were found dead after being turned out post-lambing. The group had been bolused pre-tupping and pre-lambing with a copper containing bolus. The duration of action of this particular bolus was 8 months and the double application likely caused a build-up of copper with



toxicity occurring due to the metabolic stress of lambing and turnout. Blood copper in a euthanised ewe was 74umol/L (reference range 9-19umol/L) and kidney copper in a recently dead ewe confirmed toxicity with a value of 5460umol/kg DM (reference range 0-787umol/kg DM) and the liver was large, swollen and had an orange discolouration with generalised jaundice throughout the whole carcass.



MEASURING AND MONITORING YOUR OUTPUT

Since altering the way we conduct our Red Tractor reviews in 2019 we have had great uptake and engagement across many sectors and the data we have been able to generate has allowed us to benchmark and monitor progress within and between farms.

One component of these health reviews which has been repeatedly missed is weight data. Suckler herd output is measured as the kilograms of weaned beef produced per year alongside weaning efficiency (weaning weight as a percentage of mature cow bodyweight). According to our review data most farms aren't measuring these- not even at weaning! During the winter housing period this information can provide important insights into calf performance post-weaning and allow you to target any areas of concern e.g. disease control strategies, worming protocol or even simple building/feeding/diet adjustments.

On Friday 17th June we received our brand-new Tru-Test weigh tray, load bars and weigh head which as of this autumn will be available to hire for weigh sessions. The weigh head can connect to your phone/tablet to allow Bluetooth recording sessions which can then be exported as an excel document and is compatible with several herd management apps. The prices will be on a per-head basis alongside a standard disinfection fee. If you would like a vet to generate a report for the weigh session this can be arranged on presentation of the sessions data. More information will follow in the coming months but if this is something of interest to you we are happy to take enquiries and bookings now, this can be done through the office on 01273 473232 or through farmenquiries@cliffevets.co.uk

TICKS AND THE DISEASES THEY CAUSE IN SHEEP:

The most common tick in the UK is *Ixodes Ricinus*, they are mainly found in areas of rough grazing, moorland and woodland and the South Downs is a hot spot for them. They attach and feed for 2-10 days and can cause intense irritation and sheep may become very itchy.

In lambs, as in the photos below, the sheer quantity of feeding ticks can cause the death of the lamb through severe anaemia (photo 3).



Generally, ticks are important due to their part in transmitting disease. In sheep they are responsible for transmitting:

Louping ill – a viral disease of the central nervous system causing variable neurologic signs, there is no specific treatment available

Tickborne Fever – (caused by infection with *Anaplasma phagocytophilum*) A Rickettsial disease causing sudden fever in sheep. Abortions affect susceptible ewes newly introduced onto tick-infested pastures during the last stages of gestation. There is also an increased susceptibility to secondary infections such as pneumonic pasteurellosis and tick pyaemia.

Tick pyaemia – a staphylococcal infection of lambs already infected with tickborne fever, causing crippling lameness and paralysis. Pyaemic abscesses are found in joints and other parts of the body.

All of the above can cause significant production losses.

TICK CONTROL:

Avoid turning out onto known tick-infested pastures where possible.

For the treatment and prevention of ticks, topical pour-on treatments are available.



HAEMONCHUS ALERT

In the last couple of weeks we have seen several cases of haemonchus in ewes. To the extent of several ewes found dead over a short period of time.

So if you have any ewes in your flock that are in a poor body condition do not just assume they are milking well and are therefore looking skinny. Get them in, get a worm egg count done and check their conjunctivae (as it is a blood sucking worm they will look pale). If you want a FAMACHA chart to establish what pale mucosae look like or have any questions please give us a call.

SHEEP BREEDING- HAVE YOU CONSIDERED ALL YOUR OPTIONS??

Are you tired of dragged-out lambing periods? Do you want to “front load” and compact your lambing? Do you want to make savings on feed and labour?

Artificial breeding techniques are not just for pedigree breeders!!

With feed costs sky rocketing, we need as many ewes to lamb in indoor systems as close to possible to the start the lambing period. It is important to consider a few things before you embark on this, for example, requiring extra ram power (or using AI) and availability of pen space for lambing.

If you decided that tightening your lambing period is for you, what are your options?

BREEDING OPTIONS

- ⇒ Natural mating in season
- ⇒ Regulin implants to advance the season
- ⇒ Using teaser rams and the “ram effect”
- ⇒ Using sponges to synchronise ewes and
- ⇒ Using sponges to synchronise ewes followed by artificial insemination
- ⇒ Artificial insemination and embryo transfer for

Teaser rams and the ram effect.

If ewes are away from sight sound and smell of rams for a month, and a vasectomised ram is introduced to them, they will often have a “silent heat” within the first 3-4 days. Approximately half will then have a fertile heat after a further 17 days. The other half will have a delay of 6-8 days before cycling. The result is that ewes will have two peaks of heat activity between 18 and 26 days after introduction of teaser rams. Fertile rams at 1 ram per 25-30 ewes, should be introduced after 14-15 days to coincide with your anticipated lambing date. Your lambing is likely to get off with a bang! The cost of turning a ram into a teaser is approximately £115 and you will need one teaser per 100 ewes. **We are running teaser clinics at Loughton in July and August with 20% off teaser surgery.**

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CIDRs and PMSG injection.

Oestrus manipulation using sponges or CIDRs is also very successful. Inserting intra-vaginal sponges for 12-14 days before removal and an injection of PMSG will give comparable conception rates to natural service and the most compact lambing period, with all ewes lambing within a 7-day period. Zoetis, the manufacturer of CIDRs have agreed to a **new user offer of buy 4 CIDRs and get the 5th one free.**

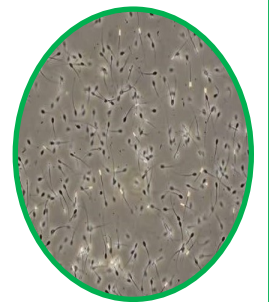
A free applicator will be available with a purchase of at least one bag (20 devices). Synchronising oestrus in this way requires much more ram power, needing one ram for every 10-12 ewes mated. If using a ram lamb, this drops to one ram lamb per 6-8 ewes. Synchronisation can cost as little as £6 per head.



Synchronisation and AI (fresh or frozen semen)

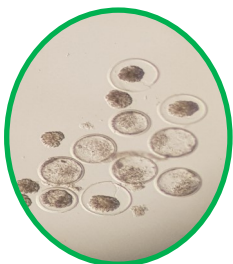
Due to the excessive “ram power” needed to mate ewes that have been “sponged”, artificial insemination becomes a viable alternative even in commercial flocks.

Rather than buying in extra rams that will sit around all year doing very little, you are able to invest in fewer but better rams, even sharing between flocks with no biosecurity issues. Rams will be still required to act as sweepers, as approximately 10% of ewes will return on day 17-18, but they will easily cope the demands of repeat breeders. The rams can have semen collected using an artificial vagina and one ram can be used to inseminate as many as 100 ewes on one day. We then perform laparoscopic AI on farm. It can cost as little as £10 per ewe in large flocks. Frozen semen from high genetic merit rams can also be purchased for pedigree flocks.



Laparoscopic AI and Embryo Transfer

For pedigree breeders wishing to amplify their female lines, superovulation followed by AI and flushing enables multiple embryos to be harvested and implanted into recipient ewes. We would expect to recover an average of 7-8 implantable embryos per flush but flushes of 15-20 are not uncommon. The conception rates of embryos in recipient ewes will be over 80% in most cases.



Should you wish to discuss any of the above please call the surgery on 01273 473232.



*****BANK ACCOUNT CHANGES*****

Please note that from the 1st of July 2022, Cliffe Veterinary Group will join the main IVC bank account. When you receive your statements, please update to the new bank details to ensure your payment is received.

As a reference please put
2320 + Your name + Account number



COLOSTRUM AND YOUNGSTOCK

A successful calving period doesn't start when the calf is born, the weeks leading up to calving are just as important as management following birth. Nailing the transition period to have cows in a good body condition, with access to plenty of water, good dry matter intake, and minimising the risks of negative energy balance will result in healthy cows with good quality colostrum and hopefully an uneventful birth.

Once the calf is born the first 6 weeks of life are critical, being born and raised in a good environment will allow certain genes to be turned on and increase their lifetime potential. This starts with colostrum and continues with environment, nutrition, immune status, and minimising stress. Managing these factors well will allow us to hit our weight gain targets and get heifers to service weight by 15 months.

As you've probably heard us say again and again, colostrum is key. Not only does it provide antibodies, but it's a source of energy and warmth that also contains key growth factors and compounds that are linked to ongoing gut health. At least 10% of their bodyweight must be fed within 6 hours of birth, but ideally within 2 hours of birth. Giving another feed of colostrum after 4-6 hours as well as continuing to feed transition milk for 3-5 days can really benefit gut health and immunity – although we appreciate that this can be difficult. Even if they have been seen to suckle from the dam it is important to still provide this 10% of bodyweight, as you can't know how much they suckled.

Measuring colostrum quality with a Brix refractometer is vital, feeding anything with a value below 22g/l has no benefit and should not be kept. Most issues surrounding poor quality colostrum can be attributed to a delay in harvesting from the cow. The colostrum will start to dilute within 3 hours of birth and should not be harvested after 12 hours. Other factors that can affect colostrum quality include age of cow, harvesting techniques, dry period length, udder health and vaccination status.

Quantifying the success of your colostrum protocol is easy, allowing you to quickly pick up on any problems to rectify. A visit from us to take a group of blood samples taken between ages 2-7 days to assess protein levels will allow us to see if there has been a failure of passive transfer or if colostrum management has been good.

On top of the good colostrum management ensuring access to clean, fresh water from day 0 is essential. Offering starter feed and straw from the start allows for good development of the rumen in time for weaning. Increasing concentrates 3-4 weeks pre-weaning and reducing milk solids 2-3 weeks pre-weaning will help the calves to transition nicely. At the point of weaning, we want our calves to be eating a minimum 1kg of solids a day.

Rearing youngstock successfully can be difficult and is vital to get right for the future of the farm. We are relaunching the **Youngstock Health Programme** to try and help you further improve your youngstock rearing. For £40(ex VAT) a month you will get a primary visit ahead of calving to set goals for the upcoming calving season, regular visits during calving to weigh calves (birth and weaning weights), blood samples to assess colostrum antibody transfer, individual farm reports, and yearly round up meeting with other members of the programme. Additionally, you can get two free post-mortems, one free worm egg count and discounted use of our electronic weigh scales, which are available for hire. If this is something you think you will be interested in, please give the office a call.



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