

\*\*\* FARMERS MEETING - 'PREPARE FOR TUPPING' \*\*\*

The MBM Farm Team would like to invite you to attend our sheep farmer's lunch at the Fenwick Hotel on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022. We will cover a variety of topics to help maximise your scanning results this year. We will also be joined by Colin Penny from Zoetis who will give a presentation on CIDR OVIS.

Please arrive at 12:15 for a 12:30 start - a buffet lunch will be provided.

RSVP by calling the practice on 01563 522701 or by emailing [admin@mbmvetgroup.co.uk](mailto:admin@mbmvetgroup.co.uk) by 28<sup>th</sup> June.

We hope to see you there!



### Trace Element Deficiencies

Ill thrift in growing lambs caused by trace element deficiencies (TED) is costly due to increased feeding, medicine and veterinary costs and higher mortality rates. Therefore monitoring growing lambs over the next few weeks and months is key to reducing the potential impact of such deficiencies. The main trace elements of concern are copper, cobalt, selenium and iodine.

The signs of TEDs are often gradual in onset, and therefore problems can be overlooked until groups of poorly grown lambs are identified in late summer. The nutritional stress of weaning can initiate these deficiencies, and levels can diminish to low, and therefore performance limiting, levels within weeks. The symptoms of TED are non-specific but include anaemia, poor wool growth, scour and ill thrift. High worm burdens can also be a compounding factor so further investigation is always warranted when lambs are not growing as well as expected.



Regular weighing of lambs and recording of growth rates if possible is an excellent tool in identifying poor doing lambs. Early detection of problems allows losses to be minimised. Investigation into ill thrift may include examination of the animals, worm egg counts, blood samples and post mortem examinations. It is worth confirming a deficiency before initiating supplementation as toxicity can also be seen, especially with copper, and trace element requirements can vary from year to year.

It is important to note that TEDs can also cause production losses in adult animals and if issues are highlighted in lambs then investigation of other groups may be warranted.

## Clostridial Disease Don't Leave It to Chance

With lambing now behind us, it is an important time to consider means of increasing lamb survival rates. This is important not only from a health and welfare point of view but also for increasing profit. One key method of safeguarding the health of your livestock is by protection against preventable diseases, such as clostridial diseases.

Clostridial diseases, such as pulpy kidney and lamb dysentery, are a serious threat to unvaccinated animals. The vast majority are fatal, and in most cases the first sign is sudden death. Often it is the strongest lambs that are affected. Clostridial spores which cause disease are widespread in the environment; outbreaks in unvaccinated animals can therefore lead to large losses. Thankfully, there are a variety of vaccines on the market which cover different strains of clostridial diseases, meaning that vaccination can be tailored to requirements on your farm. Some clostridial vaccines also contain *Pasteurella* strains to give protection against septicaemia and pneumonia. Initially 2 vaccinations are given 4-6 weeks apart followed by annual boosters for animals kept for breeding - vaccines can be given from 2-3 weeks of age. It is worthwhile to investigate any unexplained losses with post mortem examinations as there are many potential causes of sudden death in growing lambs. Results can be used to target treatments to reduce losses in both this year's lamb crop and in years to come. Post mortems are an easy and cost effective way of collecting a lot of information at one time. Get in touch with one of the farm vets if you would like to discuss a vaccination policy as part of your health plan or to arrange post mortem examinations if there are sudden deaths in your lambs.

### Flockcheck 2022

#### Don't let preventable losses go unchecked

Ewe reproductive failure is one of the top three factors limiting better flock productivity<sup>1</sup>, and APHA analysis shows that over recent years (2002 to 2019), Enzootic

Abortion of Ewes (EAE) and toxoplasmosis have continued to be the most common diagnoses of sheep abortion<sup>2</sup>. Further to the obvious loss of lamb potential, ewes aborting in later pregnancy often may fail to raise

any lamb, suffer sickness and in some cases die as a result. The *Toxoplasma gondii* parasite, transmitted in cat faeces, does not just cause abortion, it is also the main infectious cause of early embryo loss in sheep resulting in barren ewes or weak, sickly live lambs.

If more than 2% of your flock were barren/aborted this lambing season we would encourage clients to take advantage of the subsidised diagnostic scheme "FlockCheck". The scheme subsidizes the laboratory fees for testing up to 6-8 barren/aborted ewes via blood sample for EAE and toxoplasmosis. The results of this can then indicate whether or not vaccination would be of benefit to prevent losses next season as well as guide vets to advise on other relevant protective measures e.g. which cats are likely shedders.

This year's FlockCheck scheme runs until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022, vaccinations for EAE and toxoplasmosis must be given a minimum of 4 weeks pre-tupping and can take up to 1 week to arrive after ordering so please contact the vets in good time to have your flock checked in time for any plans.

1. Poll of farmer delegates attending the on-line November 2020 Sheep Health & Welfare Advisory (SHAWG) Conference.
2. Veterinary Record. 30th January 2020. Surveillance Focus: investigating abortions in small ruminants.



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