



Dairy Fertility Meeting & Benchmarking Tuesday 1st March @ 7pm

Our annual fertility meeting will be held online on Tuesday 1st March @ 7pm, there will be 2 short presentations including the anonymously benchmarked review of last year's fertility data, please speak to one of our vets if you wish to have your data included.

To attend simply email admin@mbmvetgroup.co.uk or inform your routine vet and we will email you a link to click and join in on the night.

Certificates of attendance will be supplied, we look forward to seeing you there 😊

The Drugs Don't Work...

It is a nightmare scenario for every vet and livestock keeper: watching animals die from an untreatable disease while you look on, powerless to do anything.

Watery mouth is rapidly becoming one such disease, because widespread use of Spectam, Orojet and similar drugs has bred 'superbugs,' which just ignore our medicines and tie our hands behind our backs in the fight to convert the scanning percentage into lambs sold.

Three important factors on the horizon we all need to be aware of:

1. We are seeing cases of multi-drug-resistant watery mouths increase every year
2. There is a high chance that Spectam & co will be banned soon
3. Spectam supplies are not guaranteed at the moment

The good news is that there is an old-fashioned, home-made alternative that drug companies don't want you to know about: colostrum. Watery mouth cannot develop resistance to colostrum.

Now is the time for spring lambing flocks to check their nutrition plan with one of the vets and get ewes in the best possible condition to produce high-quality colostrum and strong healthy lambs which want to get up and suck.

For those who have already started lambing, it is a bit late to modify nutrition, so while planning ahead for next year, we can supply premium powdered ewe colostrum to supplement immune protection for this year's lamb crop. Do check whenever you are buying powdered colostrum, as they are not all created equally.

E-coli, the watery mouth bug, comes from dung, so anything stopping new lambs getting dung in their mouth is time well spent. Tactics vary by system but can include extra bedding in pens, making sure ewes' tails are tidy or lambing outside (snow cover permitting).

Neonatal lamb risk assessment - Before blanket use of antibiotics			
Lamb Factors	1	Single	
		Twin	
		Triplet	
		Size - Ideal (4-8kg)	
	2	Size - Not ideal but not extreme	
		Size - too small (<3kg)	
		Birth - Simple, unassisted	
	3	Birth - assisted but ok	
		Birth - difficult	
		Colostrum - filled self from ewe	
	Colostrum - unknown or artificial		
	Colostrum - insufficient		
Ewe Factors	5	BCS - OK/ideal	
		BCS - not ideal or too fat	
		BCS - too thin	
		Ration - checked & good	
	6	Ration - not checked	
		Ration - low energy/protein	
		Ewes - clean & sound	
	Ewes - dirty or several lame		
	Ewes - dirty & several lame		
Environmental Factors	8	Outside	
		Inside	
		Stocking rate - low	
	9	Stocking rate - high	
		Shelter - good	
	10	Shelter - poor	
		Weather - good	
	11	Weather - not good	
		Bedding - clean & dry	
	12	Bedding - dirty or wet	
		Bedding - dirty & wet	
		Early stages of lambing time	
	13	Mid-end of lambing time	
		Little or no disease so far this season	
14	Disease in other groups this season		
	Disease in this group this season		

In summary: keep your dead pile small and vet bill smaller this spring by focussing on clean pens and giving 200ml of colostrum to every 4kg of lamb within 4 hours of birth.

Answer each question with a tick in the box. **Multiple Red** = increased risk
Yellow = possible increased risk.
Green = low risk.
Antibiotics will only be beneficial in high risk cases.

Lambing For Survival Top Tips

Colostrum and lamb birth weights are two of the biggest factors in both early lamb survival and lamb daily weight gains going forward, both of these factors are dictated by ewe nutrition in late gestation, meaning good nutritional preparation can greatly affect the outcome of your lambing season. Ewes too thin (<2.5BCS) or low in protein e.g. from parasites/incorrect nutrition, will produce less colostrum and colostrum of poor quality, as well as potentially producing weak lambs and being at increased risk of lambing difficulties.

PRE-LAMBING PREP

- Analyse forage then **tailor energy and protein supplementation to forage quality and number of lambs expected**. Metabolic profiling (blood sampling group of ewes) 3weeks before lambing starts can identify energy/dietary balance issues with time to rectify
- Don't try to feed twin/triplet carrying ewes forage **under 10MJ ME/kg DM**
- Ensure MINIMUM 15cm feed barrier space per ewe for *ad lib* systems, feeding ewes twice daily and providing a clean water source reduces lamb mortality
- Check faecal samples for worm egg counts; fluke & haemonchus worm especially reduce protein and cause poor quality colostrum & poor milk production.
- Ensure other diseases eg lameness, silage eye and scab are under control

AROUND LAMBING

- Focus on yard and pen hygiene – **don't wait for bedding to be visibly soiled before refreshing, this is too late, if pen is dirty, teats are dirty = watery mouth/scour.**
- Feed weak/small/hungry lambs or those with difficult birth 50ml/kg of colostrum as soon as possible after birth (200ml for 4kg lamb). Fresh clean ewe colostrum from the first milking is best but not always available, cleanly collected frozen cow colostrum or quality powdered colostrum (e.g. Immucol lamb) are the next best alternatives – many powdered colostrums are poor replacements and will increase watery mouth and lamb mortality, if you're unsure what to use please speak to the vets.
- If you are not comfortable stomach tubing or giving intraperitoneal glucose to weak lambs ask the vets to teach you so you can do the best to save more lambs going forward.
- Dead or weak lambs? Call the vets to discuss, identify and deal with issues early

Calving For Survival – Top Tips

- Body condition score your cows: group thin cows/twins together (<2.5) and provide with supplementary feed
- Analyse forage then **tailor energy and protein supplementation to forage quality**
- Bed cows frequently – **don't wait for bedding to be visibly soiled before refreshing.**

AROUND CALVING

- Heifers/twins/thin/lame cows are SIGNIFICANTLY more likely to require help and should be monitored closely – cameras can help with this during busy periods
- DO NOT CHANGE COW SOCIAL GROUPS <7days PRE-CALVING; Suckler herds that move cows pre-calving report higher calf mortality in the first 3weeks of life.
- COLOSTRUM is liquid gold, if you've calved a cow you can strip safely, CLEANLY strip ALL colostrum, give 10% calf body weight to her calf via bottle/stomach tube (4ltr, this may be split over 2 feeds within the first 6hrs of life) and store the rest frozen in a sterilized container in case needed later.
- New-style stomach tubes are available to make tubing alone easier, if you are not comfortable with stomach tubing ask the vets to show you, feeding adequate quality colostrum as soon after birth as possible (max 6hrs) will save calves.



MBM Veterinary Group

MAUCHLINE
(01290) 550452



KILMARNOCK
(01563) 522701



BEITH
(01505) 502126



WWW.MBMVETGROUP.CO.UK