

Farm news



Chantal Bryant
BVM&S BSc MRCVS

Vaccinate ewes now to help prevent unnecessary lamb losses this spring

Pasteurella and clostridial infections can strike any flock without warning. The majority of cases are fatal and can lead to major economic losses.

A recent post mortem study at a Fallen Stock Collection Centre (FSCC) has shown that sheep producers are still losing too many lambs to pasteurellosis and clostridial diseases such as pulpy kidney. The project also recorded a large early spring peak of pulpy kidney disease in lambs. In almost all cases, these were young lambs (two to eight weeks old) and neither the dams nor the lambs had been vaccinated. Remember that pasteurellosis and clostridial disease vaccines in sheep such as Heptavac P work very well and are also cost-effective, which means that most of these losses could have been prevented. Indeed, protecting your next crop of lambs starts well before they are born by ensuring boosters are given 4-6 weeks pre-lambing.

Vaccinating the ewe 4-6 weeks before lambing not only boosts her own immunity, it also increases the concentration of protective antibodies in the ewe's colostrum and these pass to the newborn lamb when it suckles. This helps give young lambs the protection they need against clostridial diseases and pasteurellosis until they can be vaccinated themselves (from 3 weeks of age).

Poisonous plant of the month: Deadly Nightshade (Belladonna)

Rose Jackson

BVSc DBR CertVBM MRCVS

Deadly Nightshade is also known as Belladonna which means 'beautiful lady'. This name comes from one of its active ingredients, Atropine, which causes dilation of the pupil but also sometimes death if the lady wasn't careful with the dosing! All parts of the plant, but especially the berries, are toxic to many mammals including dogs and horses. Cattle are thought to be less susceptible to toxicity than some animals but if they eat enough, signs include bloat, dilated pupils, laboured breathing and a weak pulse progressing to paralysis and death. If a cow were to survive a bout of poisoning, her milk would be contaminated and therefore unfit for human consumption.



It's never too early to book your test!

Sue Ivings
TB Administrator



We are now fully into six monthly TB testing and, as expected, we are seeing a big increase in the amount of bookings being taken each day.

Every test booked involves careful planning and often some juggling, as there are many things that need to be taken in to account e.g. location, how long the test takes, facilities and staffing etc. This is why it is more important than ever to get your TB test booked in early as this will give you a better opportunity to select a date of your choosing.

Wednesday/Saturday testing is currently offered and is now readily being taken up - this also gives us extra time to help manage the workload.

Your test can be booked for any time within your testing window and there is no need to wait until your window opens to be able to do this. Please give us a call as soon as that letter arrives from APHA as it's never too early to book your TB test.

For more information call our practice on **01332 294929** or email farmandequine@scarsdalevets.com

Carcass trait EBVs will help commercial beef farmers boost profits



AHDB Beef & Lamb and Hybu Cig Cymru – Meat Promotion Wales have funded a project to develop new Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs) that are linked to the traits commercial farmers get paid for, such as carcass quality and speed of finishing.

The new carcass trait EBVs are:

- Carcass conformation
- Carcass weight
- Fat class
- Days to slaughter
- Average daily carcass gain

A bull's EBVs give you a good idea of the genetic potential he will pass on to his calves, and should always be taken into consideration when purchasing stock bulls or choosing AI sires. Although terminal traits such as growth rate and muscle depth are a step in the right direction to producing profitable carcasses, they are an indirect and therefore imperfect measure of carcass performance.

The new EBVs are calculated using data from BCMS, abattoirs and breed societies, giving high accuracy figures for bulls that have had progeny slaughtered. For young bulls, EBVs can still be calculated using data from their relatives, such as their parents and grandparents. These figures will get more accurate when their own progeny reach slaughter age.

Registering sire details on passports

The abattoir data currently covers 40% of the national kill and more than 2 million carcass records for both purebred and crossbred animals have been used to develop these EBVs. However, there were a further 2 million abattoir records that could not be used to generate EBVs. This was because the sire details of the finished animal were not recorded on their passports. In order for a bull to have these EBVs available, their sire details must be registered with BCMS on the passports of their calves. Without this information, any data relating to that bull is useless.

You can help to drive the industry forward by making sure you register the sire whenever it is known. Keeping a list of ear tag numbers by the side of your computer will make it easier and quicker when registering calves. If using artificial insemination (AI), a simple way to keep track is to make sure all semen delivery cards are kept safe as these will have the sire ear tag number on them.

Top-tip – AHDB Beef & Lamb has produced a Suckler Breeding Plan to help farmers record sires used on groups of animals if you don't have computer software. This can be found at <http://beefandlamb.ahdb.org.uk/returns/>

The new carcass trait EBVs for bulls that have them can be found at <http://egenes.co.uk/carcassdata/> and you can search by pedigree name or ear tag number.

Welcome to Eleanor and Olga!

We have recently had to wish a fond farewell to Vicki Rhodes who has headed back over the water to do a Residency at Dublin Vet School. Eleanor Tyler joins us to take Vicki's place. We also have a new face on the TB team; Olga who has previously been TB testing in the South West and is a friend of Pablo.



"Hi, my name is Eleanor, I graduated from Bristol a few years ago and have been working in Ashbourne ever since. Originally from up in the hills of the peak district I haven't moved far from home. We are currently in the process of doing a barn conversion near Hartington so I will be moving back up there in the near future (hopefully!). Out of work I will normally be playing some sport, mostly hockey or netball. I try and explore the area's walks with my whippet Bella, who I am sure will enjoy meeting you all and getting to know the area. I have started a flock of Jacobs with 2 lambs, Alice and Albert, who I hand reared. Dairy herd health is my particular interest but I enjoy getting my teeth stuck in the calf and heifer rearing side of the job. I do enjoy lambing season but I may not agree with this when it gets to the end of a run of sleepless nights!"



"Hi, I'm Olga and I'm originally from Valencia in Spain; I graduated from the university there in 2017. I then moved to the UK in November 2017 to experience life in a different country. My first job was TB testing in Hereford, Somerset and Wales before moving up to Derbyshire in October of this year. At Scarsdale Vets I am doing a mix of TB testing and equine practice. Internal and reproductive medicine are where my main interest lies. Outside work I enjoy horse riding, hiking, climbing and all kind of outdoor activities, so I am looking forward to exploring the Peak District. Back in Spain I have two pets: a Schnauzer called Urko, and a python called Peter!"

Farm and Equine Centre
Markeaton Lane, Markeaton, Derby DE22 4NH
01332 294929

Allstree
01332 554422

Pride Veterinary Centre
01332 678333

Duffield
01332 841700

Shelton Lock
01332 700321

Hilton
01283 732999

Stapenhill
01283 568162

Mickleover
01332 518585

Stretton
01283 565333

Oakwood
01332 666500