

# Farm news



**Emily Sycamore** BVetMed MRCVS

## Lead Poisoning

Lead poisoning is thankfully something that we see infrequently in practice these days, although the historical lead mining industry in Derbyshire does sometimes still cause problems. When we do see lead poisoning, the prognosis for the affected animal is usually quite poor. The cause of lead poisoning is ingestion of high levels of lead by animals, and a common source of this can be damaged car batteries in fields (either intentionally in the field to power an electric fence, or dumped in the field by fly-tippers). Ensuring that any batteries being used to power electric fences are covered and that animals cannot access them is a good way of preventing such incidents.

The clinical signs of lead poisoning begin with sudden-onset blindness with no obvious damage to the eye, hypersensitivity to touch and to noise and often the animals will be hanging away from the rest of the group. This can progress to staggering and seizure like activity (similar to what you may see in an animal with grass staggers, which would be among the differential diagnoses in an animal presenting like this).

Treatment is usually un-rewarding in all but recently unwell animals, as the damage to the brain is often severe in more chronic cases. In acute cases we can try to treat via administering specific drugs IV and orally, but again the prognosis would always be guarded. Preventing access to potential lead sources (batteries, old woodwork/gates painted with lead paint etc.) is the best option in terms of minimising the risk of disease. This would include regularly checking fields and ditches for fly-tipped material, which may be a source of contamination.



## Making your TB test work for you

**Sue Ivings** TB Administrator

Have you ever thought about taking advantage of having a vet on farm whilst your routine TB test is being carried out? Why not make full use of this time to carry out some routine work, for example:

**Day 1** – Bloods can be taken to test for infectious diseases e.g. BVD, IBR, Lepto and Johnes.

**Day 2** – Worming, fly control, bolus administration and vaccinating can be done.

With advance notice our vets may also be able to carry out PDs, body condition scoring and also mobility scoring, which is carried out by one of our Vet Techs.

TB testing is a necessary job but hopefully, by giving you these options, we could help save valuable time and labour.

For more information call our practice on **01332 294929** or email [farmandequine@scarsdalevets.com](mailto:farmandequine@scarsdalevets.com)



**Chantal Bryant** BVM&S BSc MRCVS

# Early-bird Sheep Abortion Protection

Lambing may seem a long way away now, but June/July is the ideal time to start protecting against abortions and weak lambs. Enzootic abortion (Chlamydia) and toxoplasma are among the most common causes of infectious abortion in ewes. Vaccines are available for both, and it is a good idea to vaccinate now, particularly for early lambers.

## CEVAC Chlamydia

Given to ewe-lambs from 5 months of age, or to shearlings and older ewes 4 months – 4 weeks prior to tugging. The vaccine is not safe to use in pregnant sheep. The following year after vaccination, you will only need to vaccinate your ewe-lambs plus any bought in sheep. Vaccination protects against abortion and also reduces the number of Chlamydia shed at lambing. Vaccinating ewes infected the previous lambing season (i.e. latent carriers) reduces the abortion rate in these ewes by about 50%.

## Toxovax

Toxoplasma gondii is now the world's most common parasite and it's been estimated that over 90% of sheep flocks in Great Britain are exposed to it. The complex Toxoplasma gondii parasite lifecycle presents significant disease management challenges because the sheer volume of infectious oocysts produced by the parasite and their resistance to destruction leads to widespread environmental contamination. If you are not already vaccinating against toxoplasmosis it's probably only a matter of time before new ewes succumb to an infection, so you should plan ahead accordingly. Certainly, if you had more than 2% of your flock aborting during this season, your primary focus should be on preventing infection in pregnant ewes in the first place, and the best way to do that is to vaccinate replacement ewes well before they go to the ram.

Toxovax is given to ewe-lambs from 5 months of age and ewes 4 months – 3 weeks before tugging so again, vaccinating now is recommended. As with CEVAC Chlamydia, many farmers choose to only vaccinate new stock the following year, although the vaccine manufacturers do recommend a booster every 2 years.

## Come and see us on the show circuit!

We will be at the following events this summer:

**Open Farm Sunday;**  
**Longlands Farm, Linton**  
Sunday 9 June

**Derbyshire County Show**  
Sunday 23 June

**Ashby Show**  
Sunday 14 July

**Ashover Show**  
Wednesday 14 August

## Selekt Stomach Pump Amnesty

### Wednesday 26 June

Did you know that Selekt will repair your stomach tube **free of charge** and also provide a range of replacement spare parts if required?

Emily Wilton from Selekt will be at the practice from **10am-2pm** on **Wednesday 26 June**.



You can bring in your pumps either on the day or in advance but please make sure that they are labelled with your name and farm so we can get them back to you!

Emily will be also happy to take any questions about their range of products.

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

Alfreton  
01773 304900

Pride Veterinary Centre  
01332 678333

Allestree  
01332 554422

Shelton Lock  
01332 700321

Hilton  
01283 732999

Stapenhill  
01283 568162

Langley Mill  
01773 304914

Stretton  
01283 565333

Mickleover  
01332 518585

Wollaton  
0115 697 6586

Oakwood  
01332 666500