

Manipulating Breeding in Sheep

Although the 2023 lambing season seems rather a long way off yet, it is not too early to start thinking about preparing for it. Whether you want to bring lambing forward for early marketing of pedigree animals; to chase the peak lamb prices for new season lamb, or simply just wanting to tighten up ewes for a shorter lambing period.

Ewes are seasonal breeders and only breed when days are short. Different breeds have differing levels of seasonality and therefore may begin cycling at different times of the year; lowland breeds tend to be start cycling earlier in the autumn than hill breeds. Furthermore, altitude and temperature can have an effect so onset of cyclicity can vary slightly from farm to farm. There are a number of methods that can get ewes tugged earlier.



Melatonin Implants

- Can advance breeding season to as early as mid July whilst maintaining good lambing percentages, but must be done 35 days prior to ram introduction
- Mainly used in pedigree lowland flocks but can be used successfully in Mule and half bred flocks.

Sponges

- Can be used in non-cycling sheep along with PMSG injections to bring breeding forward or to synchronize ewes that are already cycling
- Can advance the breeding season by around 6 weeks ahead of normal mating time and will help to achieve a compact lambing, with ewes that hold to the first service lambing within a 4-5 day period.
- Need more tups – maximum of 1:10 Ram:ewe ratio is recommended.

Ram effect/use of teaser tups

- Advance breeding by approximately 2 weeks
- Ewes need to be out of sight, sound and smell of rams for 4-6 weeks for the technique to work properly.
- Need more ram power! A 1:32 Ram:ewe is recommended because of increased demand on tups.

Beth Collins



Kendal Surgery

Monday to Friday 8.30am—7.00pm
Saturday 8.30am-12noon
Tel:01539 722692

Kirkby Lonsdale Surgery

Monday & Thursday 8.30am-7.00pm
Tuesday 8.30am-6.00pm
Wednesday & Friday 8.30am-5.00pm
Saturday 8.30am-12 noon
Tel:015242 71221

www.westmorland-vets.co.uk

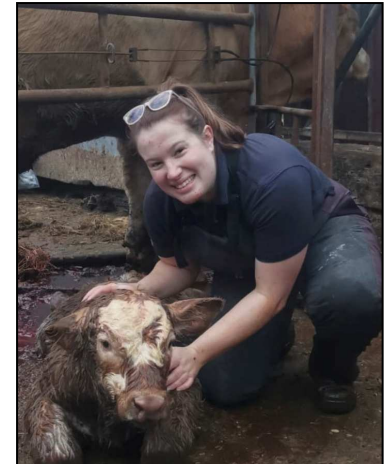
With the rest of the UK experiencing a drought we can be thankful for our rain here for once. Everyone seemed to cope well with the two extremely hot days as we were not over run with heat stroke cases. It should be noted however that we shouldn't count ourselves out of the woods as the knock on effects of the heat can be more subtle and present further down the line. These effects may include reduced fertility due to delayed egg development, increased early pregnancy loss and increased cystic disease. So bear this in mind when you have a scanning session and plan accordingly for a potential reduction in pregnancy rate. Fertility isn't the only area where you may take a hit, increased temperature results in increased standing time which impacts foot health. If cows aren't quite the condition they should be then you'll see increased sole ulcers from prolonged standing. It might be worth booking in the foot trimmer in the next weeks to get ahead of this.

We are only in August and we will likely see more heat yet before the summer is out. If you found that your animals struggled a lot or you see issues as mentioned above in the coming weeks then this is chance to discuss with us how we can keep your animals happy in the heat.

July has seen plenty of calvings. Most commonly they have been large calves requiring a caesarean or twisted calf beds. Although the twisted calf beds can be a workout they are often rewarding as the calves tend to not experience much stress even whilst being twisted round.

Also, as a final note, we have a new vet joining us in August. This takes the team of 6 (Ben, Beth, Becky, Cara, Richard, Judith) to 7. Charlotte Havercroft joins us as a full time farm vet from her previous job in Cheshire, working with diary, beef, sheep and a variety of other species and smallholders. You may have met her before as she has been with us for work experience, and she knows the area quite well. She's looking forward to getting out and meeting clients and we are looking forward to working with her. Hopefully you'll all get to meet her at the Hog Roast on the 26th August. See page 3 for more details.

Ben Harvey



Calf Hernias - What can be done?

Umbilical hernias are common in calves, especially Holstein-Friesians and many hernias are considered hereditary, meaning they are passed on genetically from the parents to their offspring. Female calves also have a higher incidence than male calves.

What is a hernia?

The umbilicus (navel) is a structure that contained the urachus (connecting the foetal bladder to the placental sac) and vessels that supplied blood to the calf whilst in-utero from the dam. After birth, these structures shrink until there are only small remnants left in the abdomen. If the hole in the body wall remains open, once these structures have shrunk, abdominal contents can protrude through the hole, resulting in an abdominal hernia. The failure of complete closure is thought to be genetic, however other causes include:

- Excessive traction applied when delivering a large calf
- Cutting the umbilical cord close the abdominal wall
- Secondary infection of the umbilicus (navel ill)

Congenital hernias are usually seen after birth, whereas hernias that develop due to other causes are often seen in the first 5 weeks of life. The size of umbilical hernias will vary depending on the structures involved and they will often start small and get bigger as the calf ages. The hernia usually consists of abdominal fat but can contain other abdominal structures such as intestines. If intestines are present, they may become strangled within the hernia, which is considered an emergency and requires surgery intervention, however prognosis for recovery in these cases is often poor.



Diagnosis and Differentials

When an umbilical hernia is present, it can be seen when the calf is standing, protruding down from the centre of the abdomen, where the umbilicus was. A clinical exam will reveal whether this is 'reducible', meaning the contents can easily be pushed back into the abdomen, confirming an umbilical hernia. These hernias can vary from 1cm-10cms.

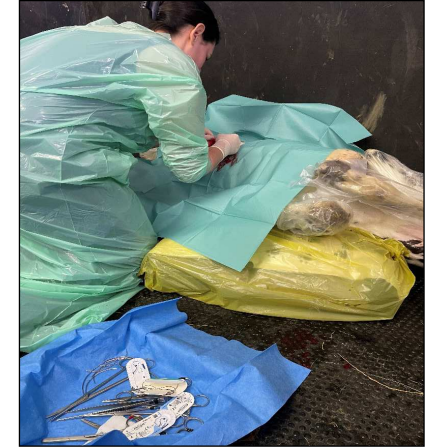
Another condition that can present similarly to a hernia is an umbilical abscess, ultrasound examination and identification of the presence of infection can help tell the two conditions apart, however they can also occur simultaneously.

Calves that have infected umbilical hernias often have:

- Inappetence
- Frequent urination- particularly if there is infection of the urachus.
- High temperatures
- Poor growth rates

Treatment

Uncomplicated umbilical hernias under 4cm's often close unaided by 3-4 months of age. These small hernias can also be taped, which involves applying an elastic adhesive tape around the mid abdomen and leaving it in place for at least two weeks. In fast growing young calves, the tape may need changing more frequently to prevent it becoming too tight. Larger hernias require surgical correction, and those that are over 10cms require a mesh to be fit to fill the defect in the body wall. Prognosis post-surgery is good for uncomplicated cases.



Complicated hernias with extensive infection are

difficult surgical procedures and may require surgical referral, these cases have a greater risk of peritonitis and wound breakdown post-surgery.

As the condition can be inherited, calves with hernias should not be bred from, and bulls who produce offspring with umbilical hernias should also not be used for breeding.

Cara Hatfield



Summer Social Hog Roast!!

We are holding an evening of food and fun, everyone welcome.

When: Friday 26th August

Where: Tithe Barn, Kirkby Lonsdale

Time: 6.30pm, food from 7.30pm

Welly Throwing
Drinks Egg Catching
Puddings Tug of War

Parking on site

Please RSVP by 19th August to:
Molly - 015242 71221 & Bridget - 01539 722692