

- weeks or colostrum mixed in with normal milk to ensure an ongoing supply of antibody to protect the calves against particularly viral infection.
- Biosecurity - Maintaining biosecurity involves avoiding introduction of infected animals into the herd and/or implementing strict isolation / quarantine of introductions until proven negative, and restricting access of calves to external sources of infection e.g. bringing calves to the mart and mixing them back in with home reared calves if unsold.
- Vaccination - The use of vaccine in cows must be considered if problems associated with *E. coli*, rotavirus or coronavirus are identified. This will increase the number of specific antibodies in the colostrum but will not transfer antibodies to the calf through other means so needs to be used in combination with appropriate feeding of colostrum.

Rebecca Howard



Westmorland Veterinary Group
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With January firmly behind us, it's a chance to enjoy a bit more daylight as we go through February- it doesn't take much to keep us happy!



There seem to be a lot fewer folk with early lambing sheep this year, a change on last year. There have been relatively few around with liver fluke problems too. A bit of investment in finding out the liver fluke infection status of different groups of sheep on your farm, and more importantly some post-drench efficacy testing, while coming up with an ongoing plan, will be time and money well invested. All too often the only investment made in liver fluke management is the money spent on purchasing treatments and the time to administer them. It's a good idea to try to see where things are going rather than to stumble into problems with untreated animals and drug resistance issues. Try to manage flukicide (and other anthelmintic) use like you would the use of antibiotics. Think about how you decide to use them and how you monitor whether a treatment is successful or not.



The risk of pneumonia in calves is still high, and with variable weather and air temperatures folk still need to be on their guard for issues as they arise. A keen eye and a thermometer are still the best weapons for detection, with a veterinary examination of the lungs still indicated for many cases. The normal temperature of a calf is still 38.6°C (101.5°F), with treatment indicated if the temperature is 39.4°C (103°F) or above, or if the animal is visibly ill. Don't sit and wait at the first sign of pneumonia as sometimes initial symptoms can fade after a few days even with no treatment, only to come back with a vengeance days or even a week or two later. Act straight away to get on top of the problem- give one of the farm vets a call if you are unsure of how to progress.

The twisted stomach (left displace abomasum- LDA) front has been quiet this year. Usually there is a history of some diet change coupled with individual cow risk factors such as illness around calving. Most of the time these cases occur within the first few weeks after calving and can be linked with slow fever in some way. However, as always the cow is her own boss and we have been known to see these at any stage of lactation and occasionally even in the dry period!

Richard Knight



LAMBING SEASON

We're definitely into lambing season, with our first lambing call having come pre Christmas! For those of you who are still ongoing or are due to start in the next weeks to months it's always great to refresh yourself on the basics and main issues to watch out for to improve lamb survival.

Colostrum reminder

Colostrum is absolutely vital to a lamb's survival and its subsequent ability to thrive.

Even if lamb is up and the ewe is known to be motherly always check her milk for quantity and quality on both sides.

A lamb needs...

50ml/kg in the first few hours
(ideally as soon as possible)
200ml/kg in the first 24 hours

If you give the lambs a set amount, make sure you know for what weight, so you can give more if it's a bigger lamb.

You can store colostrum from ewes that have lost lambs or those with singles to store and use for new lambs/ewes not allowing their lambs to suckle. It can be kept in the freezer for a year, or fridge for around a week. Store in 50 – 100ml amounts so it defrosts easily.

When heating any colostrum (natural vs powder) make sure to heat gently to not destroy the protein the lamb needs.

Hypothermia guide

Use the following as a guide for treating lambs with hypothermia, if you're unsure always give us a call.

MILD HYPOTHERMIA 37 TO 39°

Dry the lamb and put it in a warming box, feed with bottle or tube if no suckle reflex. Assess to check temp is coming up and put with ewe once temperature is up and drinking well.

SEVERE HYPOTHERMIA UNDER 37°

UNDER 5 HOURS OLD

dry, put in warming box and reassess regularly

OVER 5 HOURS

ABLE TO MOVE BUT NOT SUCKLE
stomach tube milk, reassess in 30 minutes
CANNOT HOLD HEAD UP
give intra-peritoneal glucose injection

Neonatal disease

NAVEL ILL

Caused by bacteria entering the umbilicus due to wet navels in a dirty environment. Navels need dressing with iodine or other products to disinfect and dry out the navel – ewes may lick this area so watch out for this. Please do not use any antibiotic sprays as these will not dry the navel in the same way. Penicillin is the drug of choice but give us a ring if you want advice on what antibiotic to use.

WATERY MOUTH

Caused by bacteria multiplication in the gut due to dirty environment and poor colostrum intake. E.coli causes profuse salivation, bloating and retained meconium.

Prevention is better than cure with this so get their colostrum in.

Even though they are bloated treatment involves rehydration – they need 50mls per kg to prevent dehydration. If you're having a problem, please message us to discuss further.



POST MORTEM?

It's worth mentioning that neonatal lamb submissions to APHA have a high diagnostic success rate meaning you are likely to get at least one diagnosis on what the lamb was suffering from. If you are losing a few lambs it is worth considering this option to investigate the cause.

CALF SCOURS

Calf scour is, frustratingly, a common disease experienced on the majority of cattle farms, however with some diagnostic tests and attention to detail; this disease can be successfully reduced and well controlled. Investigations need to start at the beginning i.e. calving, and look at calf rearing as a whole. It is then important to look at colostrum intake (every calf needs 3 litres of good quality colostrum in the first six hours); calf shed hygiene and feeding protocols. Samples of scour can be analysed to work out at the vets to help determine the main cause of disease.

The treatment of scours in calves has two principle aims. Firstly, to cure the calf, but also to make sure the disease doesn't spread to the other animals in the shed.

A very poorly calf in week one, with runny, lumpy dung and a fever/chill, often signifies E.Coli. The best thing to do with this calf is speak to the vet as it is likely to require intravenous fluids and intensive care.

During the second week of life, Rotavirus can be a problem. Typically this is characterised by a yellow paste-like scour. Feeding milk more frequently (up to 6 times a day) in combination with electrolytes can help, and if you have any, feeding colostrum through this period will help to line the gut with antibodies. Antibiotics are not usually indicated as this scour is not caused by bacteria.

In the calf's third weeks, a watery scour coloured white, yellow or green (often containing blood) can highlight a problem with Cryptosporidiosis. If this is a constant problem, check calf hygiene and colostrum protocols. Cryptosporidiosis may be controlled by the use of a product containing halofuginone administered orally daily for up to one week after birth. If crypto is detected then the pens should be disinfected with a product designed to kill crypto, such as kenocox.

Once a calf is over four weeks old, it will be at risk of Coccidiosis. The muck will be a brownish-green colour, quite runny and often bloody too. The calf will most likely be dehydrated, losing weight and may be straining. Coccidiosis can be prevented by avoiding feed getting contaminated with dung, good hygiene and the availability of fresh, clean water. Coccidiosis may be controlled by use of products that contain diclazuril or toltrazuril.

A calf with a yellowish, custardy scour that is slightly lethargic, but has no fever has most likely got a nutritional scour. Reducing the amount of milk fed for two feeds, then steadily increasing will help; as will working more carefully and hygienically. Check the mixing of any milk powder and that it is given to calves at the same times each day.

Control

Control of neonatal calf diarrhoea is based on four equally important aspects:

- Hygiene - the calving box and early calf rearing accommodation must be cleaned and disinfected between calves. An infected box can spread pathogens to the next calf using it even if it does not look visibly contaminated. Avoid mixing young calves with older animals.
- Colostrum management - Ensure all calves receive at least 10% of bodyweight as colostrum within the first 12 hours after birth. This equates to 3 litres in 6 hours, followed by another 2 litres. Subsequently calves should receive either post-colostral milk for up to 3