

## Happy New Year

Happy New Year from all at Team Farm! We can't believe another year has come around and we are excited to embark on another year working with you all. We would like to wish you all the best for the year ahead!

# 2025

## Lameness meeting – Take home messages

Thanks to the Lea Family for allowing us to host a very successful lameness meeting at the end of November. We hope everyone learnt something useful but for those who couldn't make it here are the key take home messages from the day.

### Prevention of lameness is the key to success.

#### To achieve this you will need to know two things:

- The prevalence of lameness on your farm which is determined by regular mobility scoring (ideally every two weeks)
- The main foot lesions seen on your farm which are broadly split into claw horn lesions and digital dermatitis.

### The main lesions seen on your farm

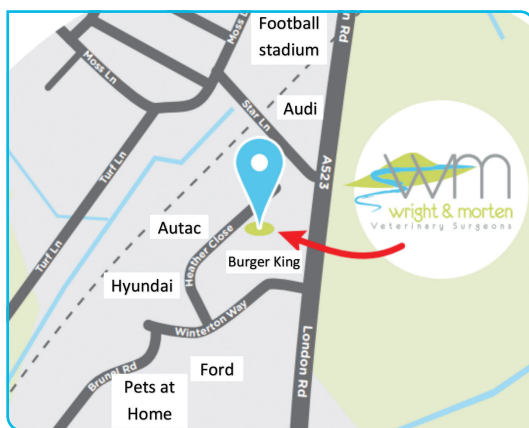
Claw horn lesions can be prevented by reducing standing times (think about space, hierarchy and milking times) and ensuring comfort (think about cubicles, cow tracks and cow flow).

Digital dermatitis lesions can be prevented by regular foot bathing and foot hygiene within the cow environment.

If problems do occur early detection and prompt effective treatment is the key to success.

- Claw horn lesion cure rate reduces from 85.4% 2 weeks after lameness detection to 16% 6 weeks after lameness detection
- A 5-step trim, block on the sound claw and a dose of Ketofen are the most evidence based treatments for ensuring successful recovery from claw horn lesions.
- For digital dermatitis Hoofit gel or antibiotic spray and a dose of Ketofen will yield the best results.

To discuss lameness on your farm in any more detail please contact your routine vet.



## Macclesfield Small Animal branch move

Just a quick reminder that the small animal branch in Macclesfield has moved locations. You can now find them at Unit 107, Heather Close, SK11 0LR on the Lyme Green Business Park. The emergency out-of-hours provider VetsNow has also moved to this new location. For medicines

collections we have placed a grit bit next to the building to allow collections at any time. This is located to the far left of the front of the building (next to the staff entrance). It has a padlock with a code on it and this will be provided when drugs are ordered. We have included a map above to help explain where to find the new building – after turning onto the business park turn right in front of the Hyundai dealership and follow the road round until you see the vets.

## Colostrum is Gold

As we rapidly approach the start of lambing and spring calving we wanted to remind everyone of the importance of colostrum. Newborn calves and lambs have no immunity and so require antibodies to be provided by colostrum in order to fight off diseases encountered early in life. Remember colostrum should be given Quickly, the Quality should be measured and the Quantity should be sufficient.

Calves should receive 10% of the bodyweight within 2 hours of birth and this should be followed up by a second feed within 12 hours. This equates to around 4 litres for most newborn calves!

Lambs require 200ml within two hours of birth and should get 200ml/kg bodyweight within 24 hours. This equates to 1L for most lambs within the first 24 hours.

Brix refractometers can be used to measure the quality of the colostrum and can be bought relatively cheaply online. Calf colostrum should read at least 22% and lamb colostrum should read slightly higher at 26.5%.

If you are struggling with volume or quality it may be worthwhile storing colostrum from good dams for future use. Clean collection is very important when harvesting colostrum for storage. This can then be frozen flat in freezer bags which allows for quick and easy defrosting in warm water baths.

If you are interested in whether your colostrum management is working we are able to take quick blood samples to identify how much immunity is passing to your calves and lambs.

#ColostrumIsGold

## Making it pay - what is your herd really costing you?

Join us for a meeting to launch our new Dairy Productivity Planning Service. The meeting will cover what the new service will offer and will provide an insight into calculating the impact of disease within your herd, maximising sustainability and longevity. On the night, Clinical Director Hollie Edwards will be joined by Professor Chris Hudson & Clin. Ast. Professor Jess Reynolds from the University of Nottingham.

**The meeting will be held on Thursday February 6th at 7pm, at the new small animal site in Macclesfield – Wright & Morten Small Animal Vets, Unit 107, Heather Close, SK11 0LR.** Look out for more formal invites via your routine vets soon.

## Flock Winter Preparations

As the days grow very short it's a sign the months of lambing are drawing nearer! Some will have already taken their tups out down in Cheshire whilst others may be preparing their tups to join the ewes shortly up in the hills of Derbyshire. Here are some of our flock health recommendations to consider over the winter months.

### Tup scab testing

Your tups will have been in contact with most of your ewes on farm and can act as a useful sentinel for scab infection in the flock. Tups can have an antibody blood sample 2 weeks after coming out from the ewes, which can show if they have been exposed to sheep scab, and guide if any flock treatment may be needed or biosecurity measures addressed. This works best in flocks currently assumed to be clear of scab. Individual antibody tests are available with discounts applied if more than two tups are tested. The costs are eligible to be covered by Pathway funding.

### Managing ewe lambs in pregnancy

Putting lowland ewe lambs to the tup can increase their lifetime productivity and even help reduce your farm's carbon footprint, a little extra planning can help ensure lambing them is a success.



- Higher tup ratio – ewe lambs will have slightly lower fertility than mature ewes. Consider a higher tup ratio of 1:25 – 35.
- Ewe lambs need to be at least 60% of their mature bodyweight at tupping time.
- For best chances of lamb rearing success, ewe lambs should only rear 1 lamb to achieve a satisfactory weight gain; have a plan ready for fostering lambs to older ewes or artificial milk rearing system. Scanning can give a good indication of what to expect in terms of lamb litter size.
- During early and mid-pregnancy and lactation, ewe lambs require 20% more feed than mature ewes to sustain continuing body growth to achieve 80% of mature liveweight when tupped as shearlings. However ewe lambs do not require additional feeding in the last six weeks of pregnancy – this can lead to large lambs. Ewe lambs should be managed separate to ewes.
- Consider lambing shed practicalities – generally their lambing period will last longer, with more supervision required, spaced separately from ewes.
- The lambs of ewe lambs should be creep-fed and weaned at 9–12 weeks of age.

### Abortion watch

Lambing time can be stressful enough without the fear of ewes aborting, but abortions do happen in many flocks. The question is, what should we do if we have ewes that are aborting? Firstly, we need to investigate when abortion levels reach >2% of the flock, so if we are lambing 100 ewes and we have 2 abort, that's when we need to get in touch with the vet to find out what is going on. Keep hold of any aborted material (the lamb and placenta) and contact the practice ASAP as tests yield better results with fresh material, we can also blood sample affected ewes.

#### Handling Abortions

1. Wear gloves.
2. **Do NOT let women of child-bearing age have contact with aborting ewes or potentially infected areas.**
3. Remove and bag foetus(es) and cleansing.
4. Remove and dispose of bedding from infected area.
5. Disinfect area (including grass if outdoors).
6. Identify and isolate ewe(s).
7. Do NOT foster ewe lambs for breeding onto aborted ewes.
8. Contact the vet for investigation and diagnosis if levels are exceeding 2% of the flock.

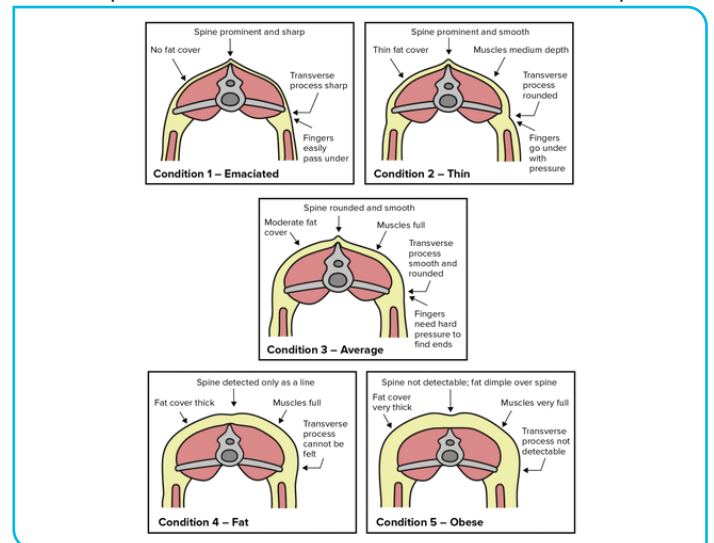
The vet will also ask different questions to narrow down the possible cause(s) as there are so many things that can lead to abortions in sheep. We can then put an appropriate management or treatment plan in place following this. The important thing to remember is that some of the infectious causes of abortion **can affect humans too, especially pregnant women - so handling aborting ewes and abortive material should be done so in a hygienic manner, and pregnant women should NOT be anywhere near lambing ewes. All of the above also applies to goats and camelids.**

### Mid-pregnancy in ewes (months 2 – 3)

Our husbandry checklist for maintaining pregnant ewes in mid-pregnancy:

- Ewes need to maintain or gain their body condition score (BCS) during this period. If not already done at tupping, body condition scoring at scanning can help ewes be grouped according to BCS and litter size for targeted feeding later in pregnancy. At mid pregnancy, lowland ewes should be 3.5 / 5, upland ewes should be 3.0 / 5. If ewes are thinner than expected at this stage, consider providing additional forage or carefully supplementing concentrates (no more than 0.5kg/ewe). Over-fit ewes: maintain or allow them to lose no more than half a unit of BCS gradually during mid-pregnancy.
- Analyse scanning results. Investigate with your vet if empty ewes is above 2%.
- Consider forage analysis for your preserved forages. This can help guide if any additional protein or energy is needed to be added to the diet.

Body condition scoring is an essential management tool for all sheep farmers. It can be used to assess ewe body reserves at each stage of production and should drive decisions on ewe management and feeding. It is also a predictor of ewe and lamb performance. Body condition scoring is a manual assessment of the muscle and fat cover over the spine, behind the last rib in the loin area of the sheep.



It is easy to learn and highly repeatable, especially when the same person assesses the flock regularly. It is commonplace to use half scores, e.g. 2.5 or 3.5, within the five-point scale. One condition score is equivalent to 10 to 13% of bodyweight, for example for a 70 kg ewe this equates to about 7 to 9 kg. Ideally all ewes should be scored so that they can be managed to remain in the target range for each stage of the production cycle.

Ensuring ewes have target muscle mass and fat cover for the system and the time of year leads to improved fertility, increased lamb performance and reduced incidence of metabolic diseases. Body condition score targets vary by sheep system, e.g. hill or lowland, breed of ewe, time of year and ewe prolificacy.