

Stock update

We are now back to daily deliveries so we should be able to get hold of whatever you need for the next day if we don't already have it on the shelf. Unfortunately, not all antibiotic milking cow tubes are available again, so please consult one of the vets about the most appropriate tubes for your farm.



A quick reminder for all sheep clients to get in touch with their Cevac Chlamydia and Toxovax orders. Demand goes up through the summer and can put strain on the supply chain, so its worth getting yours done early if possible.



Milk fever and Grass Stagers

After recent warm and wet weather, being aware of calcium and magnesium deficiency is important as the grass grows quickly.

Milk fever incidence sits at about 7-8% nationally in dairy herds, but some farms have much higher rates especially when calving at grass. It can also be seen in sucklers, particularly the older generations. The body has systems to divert calcium from elsewhere in the body when required, but this can take 2-3 days to get up to speed. Milk fever occurs when the cows calcium requirement suddenly increases (such as calving and starting lactating), and the body is not ready to react. Forage high in calcium or potassium fed in the dry period is often the primary cause of milk fever. Green lush grass would be an example of a problem forage. Long stemmy grass is lower in calcium and potassium and primes the cow to low calcium intake, stimulating the body to boost its calcium uptake from bone and other sources. It's also important to endure adequate magnesium intake in the 3-4 weeks pre-calving as this can influence calcium uptake and use.

Grass staggers, or Hypomagnesemia, is much less common, somewhere around 1% annually. Most cases occur in freshly calved suckler cows, but also dairy cattle which aren't supplemented during the dry period. Affected animals are at real danger of dying, and this constitutes a real emergency where time is critical. Magnesium grass levels can vary greatly, but lush grass is a risk as it increases the speed at which material passes through the cow. This essentially means she has less time to absorb the magnesium she needs. The best approach is prevention as the condition is so rapidly fatal. Magnesium can be administered in a compound feed or in water, or the cows can be bolused. Providing some roughage (like straw) can also help as it slows the guts down due to its high fibre content.



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Win an
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Galaxy Tablet
or
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Hamper!

Are you a UK Sheep Farmer?

Do you have 15 minutes spare for the
chance to win a luxury prize?

We're looking for UK sheep farmers to participate in the

UK's largest survey of 'joint ill' in lambs

funded by the University of Liverpool, AHDB Beef and Lamb,
and in collaboration with The Moredun Research Institute.

To participate, follow the link:

<https://liverpool.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/joint-ill-risk-factors-survey>

Commercial Flock Health Club

Flock health clubs have taken off nationwide and are building great groups of forward-thinking vets and farmers striving to make their sheep business future-proof and as productive as it can be.

The Wright & Morten Commercial Flock Club aims to provide a friendly environment to discuss and develop best practice on farm, and to help your business thrive. We meet 4 times a year covering various topics chosen by the group, with discussion and knowledge-sharing encouraged. No topics are off limits, from animal health and flock management to performance both in animal and financial terms.

Other benefits include 3 worm egg counts (including advice and interpretation) and a health plan review each year to keep things on track. When times get back to 'normal', we hope to get away to events like NSA Sheep Event or North Sheep, and we are open to other suggestions too! You will also have contact with the rest of the group, and Matt, via Whatsapp or email for quick advice as needed.

All this costs just £15 per month, which offers a great value pro-active investment to improve your flock performance.

If you would like to join what is a very friendly group of farmers for some forward-thinking discussion, please give Matt a shout on 07816 440306 for a chat.

WHEN DO YOU VACCINATE AGAINST ENZOOTIC ABORTION OF EWES (EAE)?

DID YOU KNOW THAT IT CAN BE DONE WHEN IT'S MOST CONVENIENT FOR YOU?



- Cevac Chlamydia can be given from 4 months to 4 weeks before the rams go in.
- It can be given from 5 months of age to allow ewe lambs to be vaccinated and protected.
- DO NOT use in pregnant sheep.

The disease:

- Enzootic abortion of ewes remains one of the most common causes of abortion diagnosed in sheep, despite the availability of cost-effective vaccines.
- The bacterium (*Chlamydia abortus*) is spread from sheep to sheep, predominantly at lambing, when affected ewes will shed large numbers of bacteria in their foetal fluids and placenta.
- Infection in a flock can result in the birth of dead and/or weak lambs from about 3 weeks before lambing is due to start.
- If sheep are infected after about 100 days of pregnancy they will not abort at this lambing, the bacteria become latent but then reactivate causing abortion at the subsequent lambing.
- The highly infectious nature of Chlamydia, as well as this latent infection means that levels of abortion can be relatively low one year, before resulting in a storm and significant losses in the next year.
- Some ewes may not abort but can still shed the bacteria, meaning neonatal ewe lambs could be infected.
- In a previously uninfected flock the infection is generally bought in.



Diagnosis:

- **If you see an abortion rate over 2% of your ewes lambs then an infectious cause is likely.**
- **Don't leave it until after lambing – the best diagnostic results are with fresh samples.**
- **Take advice from your vet about the best method.**

Control:

- Biosecurity and hygiene are important.
- Ensure ewes that abort are isolated and the placenta and bedding is disposed of, so as to minimise transmission to other sheep.
- Consider the history of where you are buying sheep from and ideally, keep bought-in separate from home-bred replacements until they have lambed for the first time.
- The best way to prevent disease is through robust biosecurity and a robust vaccination policy.
- Live vaccines require just a single shot that provides long-lasting protection (3-4 lambings, depending on the disease risk).



Red Tractor Compliant Medicine Courses



Red Tractor now requires Dairy farmers to have taken a medicines course, and it is strongly advised for beef and sheep producers, so Bridget will be running a course over Zoom in the near future. If you still need to attend one, please let Vicky know either by phone or email vettech@wmvets.co.uk, and she can talk you through the details and add you to the waiting list.

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