

WELCOME TO THE NEWSLETTER

A Quarterly roundup of practice news and information relevant to the season

GEARING UP FOR SPRING

Even though you may be reading this while still munching on a mince pie, it won't be long until Spring is upon us. Hopefully there won't be so much snow in March this year, but here are some helpful hints to get you through the lambing or calving season, whatever the weather.

COLOSTRUM FEEDING GUIDELINES

6% of Liveweight in the first 2hrs

3ℓ for a 50kg calf

200mls for a 4kg lamb

Topped up to 18% in the first 12 hrs of life

The most important things for safeguarding neonatal health in cattle and sheep in the first week of life are colostrum, and cleanliness of the calving or lambing environment.

Always try to make sure young animals are born into as clean an environment as possible. Disinfect individual pens between use, and if sheep or cattle are lambing in a large shed, remember that certain areas may be favored for birthing, and bed more or disinfect accordingly.

Unlike humans (who get immunity from their mother through the placenta) Ruminants receive all of the antibodies required to fight infection in the first days of life from Colostrum. Colostrum contains nutrients; vitamins and

minerals; chemicals that inhibit bacterial growth in the intestine **and** antibodies. These antibodies are absorbed through 'gaps' in the wall of the gut, which begin to close 2hrs after birth.

Antibody absorption is most effective in the first 2hrs of life, suboptimal for the next 10 hrs, and then stops almost completely. Antibodies absorbed into the blood stream form the basis of the immune system and are still detectable in the calf or lambs blood stream up to 7 months later. Colostrum ingested after this time still contains special antibacterial substances, and antibodies can 'stick' to the gut wall and help to prevent infections.

Many factors can inhibit a young animal from suckling properly in the first 2 hrs of life. Supplement where required, using volumes outlined in the box above.

The best colostrum to feed is colostrum milked from the animal's own dam. If this is not available, there are also several high-quality colostrum replacers, which can work well, but will not necessarily contain antibodies to all the pathogens on your individual farm. Colostrum from other cows on farm (or dairy cows) can be frozen and gently thawed to be fed to calves. Never microwave colostrum, as this will destroy antibodies. Remember that this should only be done from cows with a known negative Johnes disease status as young calves are very susceptible to contracting the disease and it can be carried in colostrum.

Further information can be found in our Calving/Lambing information and supplies pack, which will be available from mid-February. Ask reception for details.

We are pleased to announce the return of Katreen to our reception staff, after the birth of her baby girl, Alba, last spring. Katreen farms at home with her husband, Craig. She is an asset to our reception team and we are glad to have her back in the foray.

Please also be aware, that as with last year, we will have 2 vets on call throughout the spring to cope with the increased demand out of hours.

RESPONSIBLE ANTIBIOTIC USE

In keeping with recent changes in the Dairy sector, Beef and Sheep farm assurance schemes now require farmers and vets to stop using 3rd/4th generation cephalosporins and fluoroquinolone antibiotics on farm, unless their use can be justified by culture and sensitivity. This means that we will be moving away from using injectable drugs like Excenel, Naxcel, and Marbocyl, unless there is an ongoing disease outbreak on farm, caused by a bacterial infection that we know to only be sensitive to one of these antibiotics.

We are fortunate to have many options for antibiotic selection, and so this is unlikely to affect most of our clients or the way we generally prescribe medicines. If, however, you have concerns about the future use of these antibiotics, or antibiotic selection on your farm in general, please get in touch with one of our vets to discuss or arrange a health plan review.

NEW MASTITIS VACCINE

Drug company Hipra have released a new vaccine against Streptococcus uberis, an important mastitis pathogen. The vaccine reduces clinical cases of mastitis caused by Strep uberis; reduces SCC in Strep Uberis infected quarters and reduces loss of milk

production from cases of clinical mastitis caused by Strep Uberis. The vaccine schedule is similar to Startvac (Hipra's other mastitis vaccine against E. coli and Strep Aureus). Cows should receive 2 injections prior to and one post calving.

PRE-BREEDING CHECK FOR EWES

Many issues at lambing are preventable with good management in the weeks leading up to lambing time.

- Body condition score should be around 3.0. Remember that it can take 5 weeks on good grazing for a ewe to put on 0.5 body condition score.
- Foot health is very important. Sheep with poor foot health spend more time lying, feed intakes are poor, and lamb mortality is likely to be high.
- Supplement feeding from 6 weeks prior to lambing to help prevent ketosis. Segregating multiparous ewes from singles will help target feeding effectively and help prevent overfeeding of ewes with single lambs that could lead to issues at lambing.
- Vaccination against clostridial disease may be carried out in the 4-6 weeks prior to lambing.

To arrange a pre-lambing health check for your flock, please contact the surgery.

TO DISCUSS ANYTHING IN THE NEWSLETTER PLEASE CONTACT RECEPTION AND ASK TO SPEAK TO ONE OF THE VETS. IF THERE ARE ANY TOPICS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE COVERED IN FUTURE, PLEASE LET US KNOW BY PHONE OR SEND AN EMAIL TO INFO@CAMERONANDGREIGVETS.CO.UK

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