

PRACTICE NEWS

Upcoming Farmers' Meetings:

- 3 February, 6.30pm - "Lambing Success" at H&C Pearce. Hog roast supper.
- 2 March at Chinner Rugby Club - further details coming soon.

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INJECTING LAMBS WITH GLUCOSE

Many newborn lambs die, not from disease, but from hypothermia, which is confirmed by a rectal temperature below 39°C.

When you find a cold lamb, the temptation to warm it up as soon as possible is understandable, and reasonable, but you may actually be hastening the lamb's death. If the lamb is any older than a couple of hours, then it is likely that it will already have metabolised the brown fat it is born with, and so it won't have the energy to get its body going even if it is warmed up.

It is therefore important to give these lambs some energy before you warm them. If they are up and suckling, then feeding colostrum, either orally or by test or tube will probably be sufficient. However, if they are not suckling, they are unlikely to digest and absorb the milk even if you can get some into them; these guys are the ones to consider injecting with glucose.

The technique is simple, when you are used to doing it:

1. Firstly, you need some warm (not hot) glucose - mix 25ml 40% glucose with 25ml warm water.
2. Hold the lamb with its back legs dangling.
3. Using a pink 1" needle, measure out from the lambs navel 1 needle, and down 1/2 a needle and insert the needle, pointing it towards the opposite hip.
4. Inject slowly.



Now, it is much safer to begin warming the lamb.

If necessary, the injection can be repeated every two hours until the lamb is strong enough to feed or be tubed.

STARCH AND ACIDOSIS

The latest warning from KW senior nutritionist, Mark Scott, suggests that failing to correctly match starch feeds to the low dry matter, acidic silages in many winter rations risks triggering SARA (sub-acute ruminal acidosis).

Starch is vital for maintaining milk yields and protein levels, but it can also disrupt fermentation efficiency by lowering the pH in the rumen. Farmers are therefore advised to choose starch feeds better suited to improving rumen fermentation rather than basing their decision on feed costs.



ALL THINGS FEET IN SHEEP

The estimated losses from footrot alone equate to around £6 a year for every ewe in Great Britain. If all the other causes of lameness were taken into account, the total cost to the industry would be staggering (BRP Manual 7, 2014).

The FAWC states that we should be aiming on UK farms to have lameness levels of <2% to maximise productivity and profitability and that the best shepherds are achieving this now. It should also be noted that levels over 5% could affect single farm payments due to cross compliance failures.

So what diseases are we looking at and what if anything can you do to reduce these unsustainable costs? The chart below shows that scald was still the largest cause of lameness in 2014 (BRP manual 7) but can you differentiate one disease from another?

Condition	% of lameness	Foot trim
Scald	45	x
Foot rot	20	x
CODD	17	x
Toe granuloma	6	x
Toe abscess	6	x
Shelly foot	6	✓

Treatment and management for each is different and for only one of these diseases is foot trimming recommended; shelly hoof.; the others can actually be caused by foot trimming!

Prevention is definitely better than cure for most diseases and a long-

term plan is required to build a flock with healthy feet.

The introduction of a 5 point action plan; quarantine, vaccinate, cull, avoid and treat leads to increased natural resilience to the disease, reduced disease challenge on the farm and improved immunity via vaccination.

Talk to your vet about where to start and help you differentiate exactly what the conditions are in your flock and which treatments or management techniques will be most effective in both the short term and the long term.



TO SPRAY OR TO DIP?

Many people will swear that teat sprayers are great for applying post-milking solutions to teats.

However, in our experience, it is impossible to get the complete coverage that you need for protection - regardless of how well you spray there is a shadow formed behind the teat; this compromises the product you are using.

It is also hard to calculate how much product you need, as you have to include the fraction that is lost up the side of the cow.

Experts agree that a simple, cheap cup with a non-return valve, will give better results for the same dip usage.

An appropriate and consistent routine to application is one of several critical points in the milking process, but it can be shown that improved application can reduce the incidence of mastitis, help reduce cell counts and improve teat health.

If you are seeing high cell counts and mastitis rates above 1/12 cows in the first 30 days of lactation, it may indicate that your dry period performance needs assessment. It may be that you have cows whose immunity is suppressed.

Please talk with us about how we can help with this.

WHICH VACCINE IS BEST FOR PNEUMONIA?

There are a plethora of vaccines for pneumonia in calves on the market, but they aren't all the same. So how do you know which will work best on your unit? The choice will be based on the following;

- Are the calves bought-in or home produced?
- If bought-in - straight off farm or from markets/collection centres?
- Do you know the pathogens on your farm? (less relevant if you buy in)
- How soon after arrival or at what age do symptoms occur?
- Which symptoms do you get? Do you get deaths or just illness?
- What is the calf housing environment like? Good air flow?

The answers to all these questions will have an important impact on whether the vaccine used will be effective and will determine whether an intra-nasal or intra-muscular vaccine will be advised, the timing of it and the active ingredients to produce healthy happy calves.