

PRACTICE NEWS

Thank you

My Family and I would like to thank you all for your support over the past few months following the death of our daughter Teal.

As you can imagine this has left a big hole in our life and will do for the rest of our days. However, in true farming spirit, we are moving forward together.

It was very nice and well appreciated to see so many of you at the celebration of her life giving us support.

After this turbulent summer I am looking forward to being back at work full time and getting stuck in!

Let's hope the bad weather of August does not continue into September.

Many Thanks

Your Vet and Friend Evan

Date for your diary

Countrywide will be holding a farmers' meeting on Thursday the 15th of October.

We will be giving a talk on the success that we have seen this spring and summer with synchronising cows and heifers.

We hope to see you there.

ENVIRONMENTAL MASTITIS CURE RATES

A number of causes of environmental mastitis may cause profound disease. *E.Coli* is the most obvious environmental bug that can cause rapidly fatal disease. Others, such as *Strep. Uberis*, may result in a chronic condition that responds very badly to conventional treatments.

However, there are other pathogens which will self cure. By a happy coincidence, this often happens over the same period that you are treating with a milking cow tube. The fact that the milking cow tube contains some complex and highly effective antibiotic, and maybe some anti-inflammatory drug as well, may actually make no distinguishable difference to the rate of cure of the mastitis case.

This presents farmer and vet alike with a difficult predicament - you can't be sure of the bug's identity in time to know whether or not treatment is really necessary, as the risk of leaving a persistent or damaging bug untreated is too great; therefore, you must treat based on clinical signs. But why not collect a sample at the time of first treatment?

You can do one of two things with this sample:

- Either pass it straight to the vet for culture to try and identify in a couple of days whether there is a need to persist with treatment – for example, in the case of *S.Uberis* where a prolonged course of therapy may be appropriate.
- Or, mark it with the cow ID and the date and put it into a tray of 10 in the freezer. When you collect 11, throw the oldest one away such that you always maintain 10 samples in the freezer. This way, if your low number of cases becomes a flurry of mastitis, we at least have some samples to work from.



Armed with this information, we can provide guidance on sensible tube usage.

RAM MOT

It is time for our annual reminder that you should consider MOT testing your rams before the breeding season ahead. The same can be said for bulls. We see a number each year who are only proven to not be working when the females (ewes or cows) break after a cycle, or often 2.

The cost of the fertility test will be more than absorbed by the losses felt by this shift in your lambing or calving patterns.

Why not call us and book your MOT now?



SUMMER SHEEP MANAGEMENT PART 2

With summer well under way, we are looking to maximise growth rates in lambs still on farm and ensure that ewes are in top condition for tugging.

Parasitic Gastrointestinal Worms

Unfortunately, parasitic gastrointestinal worms are traditionally at their peak in mid-summer, although exact levels are dependent on the weather. A good way to stay abreast of the likely timing of the peak in worm burden is to register for NADIS parasite forecast updates at www.nadis.org.uk.

Worm egg counts should be measured by taking faecal samples from multiple animals in the same cohort and dropping them in to the practice; repeating this monthly can be useful for monitoring worm burdens during the summer. However, it is essential to take these results into context with the BCS (body condition score) of the stock and also any scouring seen.



Remember that simply picking worming products at random, or even rotating wormers, may be fruitless and expensive as the stock to be treated may be left partially, if not completely, unprotected.

Please discuss treatment options with the practice to ensure that you give your flock the best possible level of protection and do not create problems for the future by building up a resistant population of worms.

Pre-mating Management

Pre-mating management is a crucial step for next year's lamb crop. One of the main objectives in this period is to score the body condition of the ewes.



For best results, the target is body condition 3.0-3.5 at the start of the tugging season. The key is to score the flock's body condition in plenty of time in order to adjust feed accordingly.

Please contact the practice for further information, including nutritional advice.

TB TESTING

Please do not ignore any messages regarding TB testing until it is too late.

There have been cases around the country of farmers pleading that 'my vet was too busy to test' in mitigation for their late testing. This has not been accepted by DEFRA and has resulted in the loss of a percentage of the single farm payment on these farms.

We are still very happy to carry out your TB testing, even though the notification letter may state that the test will be carried out by XLFarmcare.

Please therefore continue to contact us to ensure that we can organise your test, at your convenience and within the testing window.



HEAT DETECTION

Of all the cows that we see for infertility issues, the overwhelming majority are still cases of missed heat.

We can usually judge from a single examination whether a cow is cycling, but by recording the activity on her ovary we can judge definitively on a second visit whether she has been missed, or is not cycling.

Given this, and known factors such as reduced success in conception following prostaglandin treatment (which is often administered for 'not seen bulling cows'), it is easy for us to make the following recommendation:

"If you are finding reduced submission rates during the summer months, you should find a way to devote more time to watching your cows."

This should be carried out:

- Away from the parlour
- At times distinct from other interference, such as moving or dosing
- Ideally by somebody who recognises the cows well enough to easily identify each one, without needing to get amongst them too much.

A target observation period of twenty minutes, three times a day, may feel like a lot. However, this must be considered against the cost of losing the equivalent of up to 25l of milk for every day that she isn't served.