

FEBRUARY EWESLETTER!



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Scabivax is now available to order from us. There is a limited stock available so please order sooner rather than later.

Out of interest

Q. Do you know what breed of sheep are in the above photo?!

A. They are in fact the “Valais Blacknose” breed which originate from the Valais region of Switzerland. They are adapted to the mountainous terrain there. They are a rare breed, naturally horned, bred for both meat and wool.

Lambing Time

Whether you have finished, are stuck in the middle or are awaiting kick off, lambing can be a stressful time.....but can also be a joyous one!

Preparation is key to success!

Key equipment list

- Lambing ropes +/- snare
- Lubricant + arm length gloves
- Access to clean, warm water
- Antibiotics (+anti-inflammatories) (+ syringes/needles)
- Solution for dipping navels
- Bottle + teat
- Stomach tube
- Heat lamp + warming box

Look after your ewes

Be aware of handling ewes close to lambing. Try and avoid unnecessary stresses and radical management changes as they near term.

Ensure all ewes are getting adequate nutrition to provide energy to support their growing lambs during pregnancy and after lambing to provide the best colostrum and milk. Ewes should be grouped according to scanning (if done) and body condition score 8 weeks before lambing. eg. a thin ewe carrying a single could be fed with the group of ewes carrying twins. Extra feed need only be given to any of the sheep in the 8 weeks prior to lambing. The amount required depends on the quality of the diet, more specifically the energy and protein content.

J. What do you call a dancing sheep?!

A. A baa-llerina!

J. If 5 sheep are in a field and 3 escape.....how many are left?!

A. Zero.

J. What do you get if you cross a kangaroo with a sheep?!

A. A woolly jumper!



Checklist for every lambing:

- Ewe's udder
- Lamb's navel
- Ewe's food/water
- Treatments if appropriate

If there are any specific courses you would find useful please let me know. If there is enough demand I would be happy to run some.

It may be useful to have your silage analysed in order to select an appropriate supplementary concentrate for this period to avoid excessive or deficient energy intakes resulting in metabolic problems in the ewes. As an example, a 75kg twin-bearing ewe requires 11-12MJ ME per day 8 weeks off lambing which increases to 19 MJ at term. If your average hay is providing 6MJ per day (based on 2.5% of bodyweight appetite) then you would have to feed 1kg of 13 MJ/kg DM concentrate to fulfill an energy requirement of 19MJ by the time the ewe lambs.

The concentrate supplied should be a minimum of 12 MJ/kg DM energy and 18% CP. Ensure a fresh supply of clean water at all times and ensure there is enough trough space for feed access.

There are tests that can be done if you are having a lot of cases of twin lamb disease and you need to investigate energy deficiencies in the ewes. Please ask if you require further or more detailed information.

Assisting lambings

If you assist a lambing it is worth giving antibiotics to the ewe afterwards. Examples of appropriate antibiotics for normal lambings would be a single shot of "Alamycin LA" or "Betamox LA" or a 3 day course of "Penstrep", "Betamox" or "Synulox". If you think the ewe has had a particularly hard time it would also be worth considering a dose of anti-inflammatory such as "Metacam" under the skin or "Finadyne".

Colostrum management

This is of great importance in prevention of neonatal diseases in the lambs. Spare colostrum (eg. from ewes which give birth to dead lambs) can be frozen in 100-200ml portions. Any lambs which have not sucked within a maximum of 4 hours should be fed with defrosted ewe colostrum. Ensure this is defrosted in a water bath NOT a microwave. This is a better choice than artificial colostrum or cows' milk. A small lamb would require 50mls, an average lamb 100mls and a large lamb would require 150mls colostrum as soon as possible after birth. This should be followed by 200ml/kg bodyweight over the next 24 hours (split into smaller feeds every 4-6 hours). If the lamb won't suck a bottle it needs stomach tubing. If you would like guidance on how to pass a stomach tube please ask one of the vets.

Watery mouth

This is a common neonatal disease caused by *E.coli*. Symptoms of this include a bloated tummy, inappetance and drooling saliva ("watery mouth"). Prevention is achieved (on most sheep farms) with an antibiotic called "Spectam" (spectinomycin). Give each lamb 1 pump orally as soon as they are born.

Abortion

The most common causes of abortion in sheep are *Chlamydophila Abortus* (enzootic abortion), toxoplasma, salmonella and campylobacter. Free testing of the ewes for some of these diseases is available via MSD in the form of "FlockCheck"/"Barren Ewe Check". The best chance of diagnosis is examination and testing of the aborted foetus + placenta. If you think you have an abortion problem please get in contact about the best investigation/treatment procedure for preventing further losses next year.

On a final note... ..

Enjoy it and look after yourselves! Flasks, sweet treats and woollies at the ready! *Amy*