

NorCal News...

Our fabulous boss Evan is now TBAS accredited!!

This means he can now be booked to come out to farm and work with you to identify your biggest risk factors for new or ongoing TB break downs, and suggest recommendations to help reduce these risks. Best of all this service is completely **free** for farms in the High Risk or Edge Areas, with funding provided by the TB Advisory Service. For more information about this service please see tbas.org.uk or get in touch with the practice.

CASE OF THE MONTH

One of our clients had a new arrival this month! Unfortunately, the poor little guy was quite weak when he was born and was unable to suckle from mum. Therefore, he didn't get the all-important colostrum in the first 24 hours from mum, thus no transfer of maternal antibodies to help his immune system get the kickstart it needs!

We performed a blood test to check this and following the results we arranged to perform an alpaca plasma transfusion on this cria. Vets Hannah and Rebecca performed the procedure which took a little over 2 hours due to how slowly the plasma had to be transfused as well as making sure that there was no reaction to the plasma as sometimes the body can reject it.

Fortunately, the cria came through the procedure very well and was instantly bouncing around afterwards. Also, in the last 24 hours prior to doing this he had learnt to suckle from mum and was less reliant on being bottle-fed so straight away got up and ran over to mum for some lunch! The last thing to mention about this guy was that he had a hip dislocation which occurred 24 hours or so after he was born, after several attempts to put back into place he managed to do it all by himself by somersaulting over his mums back after which his hip was popped back into place all on its own!

In other words, this cria now named 'Inca Warrior' is a survivor – we visited him a week later and he was running around and feeding well off mum!



GETTING YOUR EWES READY FOR THE RAM!

A few weeks before tupping you can help to improve flock production rates by flushing your ewes. Flushing is the practice of giving ewes concentrates and forage to increase their dietary protein and energy, at least one cycle (2-3 weeks) before tupping.

This is done to improve conception rates by increasing the number of eggs released. The target body condition score (BCS) for ewes at tupping should be 3.5 for lowland flocks (2.5 hill). A BCS of 2-4 is the range in which flushing ewes gives the biggest improvement to conception. It can take 6-8 weeks to go up a single condition score if your ewe is below target. Once the ewe is pregnant it is difficult to change their body condition score without affecting foetal development.

Ewes that are too thin (BCS <2) release fewer eggs and have lower conception rates. On the other hand, ewes that are too fat (BCS >4) release more eggs but are more likely to have early embryonic deaths.

Separating the ewes in accordance with their body conditions can aid management. Thin ewes should be considered for culling or put onto good pasture and given a rising plane of nutrition 10 days before and after the introduction of the ram. Fat ewes should be grazed tightly for at least 10 days prior to tupping to control body condition.

As well as flushing be thinking about vaccinating – consider abortion vaccines for toxoplasma and enzootic abortion. Also vaccinating against clostridial diseases is important. Replacement ewes will require two doses – four to six weeks apart and then a booster pre-lambing to aid in reducing disease in your lambs. If previously vaccinated they will just need a booster 4-6 weeks prior to lambing.

Check if your ewes need worming as well – bring a faecal sample and we will be able to advise you!

Booking in your TB test

We are coming into another busy season of TB testing, particularly some of you who have bigger tests that are due and need doing in two parts.

Please could you book your TB tests in **well in advance**, especially if you have a specific date in mind.

If any extras need doing please book these in for when we read off the TB test. This can be PD's, vaccinations, worming etc.

As we have to do so many tests, please ensure the handling system is ready and safe to use for when we arrive!!!

Special offer!!

Winter housing improvement visit!!

For this Autumn we are offering this at a **special price** of only £150! This will include a visit, assessment of the housing, ventilation test using our smoke machine, calculation of ventilation inlet and outlet and suggestions for improvements. We will also write you a report to summarise our findings. Improving cattle housing can make a huge difference to your business through improved growth rates and reduced levels of diseases such as pneumonia and scours. **To take advantage of this offer please give the practice a call to arrange your visit.**

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