

Preparing for lambing

As lambing is nearly upon us here are few things that are worth taking note of if you are getting prepared/ just started:

- 1) Ewe nutrition in the last 6 weeks pre lambing is incredibly important so it's definitely worth scanning them to divide them up. More lambs take up more space = ewe eats less and therefore needs nutrient dense food (high energy & protein)
- 2) Body Condition scoring is a good way to determine if your sheep are getting enough nutrition. This should be done four times throughout the year – weaning, before tugging, mid-pregnancy and before lambing. Just before lambing you want 90% of ewes to be 2-3.5.
- 3) We can blood sample 6-8 ewes from your group of twins or triplets to determine if there is a risk of twin lamb occurring.
- 4) When your lambs are born, we would suggest recording all lamb deaths and have a spreadsheet that we can send to you to make it easy to note down how many died and the cause if known.
- 5) The most important factors that are going to affect your lamb mortality rate are: ewe BCS, the quantity and quality of colostrum (need 200ml/kg in first 24 hours with 50ml/kg in 2 hours) and a clean environment. The latter decreases the risk of watery mouth, lamb scours, navel ill, joint ill and mastitis and metritis.

Issues to keep a look out for in new-born lambs: -

- Watery Mouth – lambs will be drooling and have swollen abdomens.
- Scours
- Entropion – lower eyelid turned inwards.
- Navel ill – very important to treat navels with 10% iodine!!
- Joint Ill – swollen, hot, painful joints with possible muscle wastage.
- Physical deformities – can be born with no opening to the rectum on the outside, stomach becomes swollen and stops suckling. Call us if this occurs.
- Trace Element Deficiencies – copper, selenium, iodine, cobalt deficiencies in the ewes can all influence the new-born lamb.



Pre - lambing kit list

- *Colostrum!* Make sure you have some back-up colostrum. Newborn lambs should have (need 200ml/kg in first 24 hours with 50ml/kg in 2 hours). The colostrum can be fresh from the ewe, frozen or a powder to mix up. Good quality colostrum ASAP after birth is the most important thing in keeping lambs healthy as they get older. It is also useful to have a stomach tube to get colostrum and fluids into lambs that don't want to suck. We can show you how to do this if you are unsure.
- *Navel treatment* – lambs should have their navel dipped with 10% iodine to prevent navel and joint infections after birth.
- *Lambing ropes* – lambing ropes can be useful if it's a difficult lambing. Make sure they are clean and near the lambing pens so they can be grabbed quickly.
- *Full length gloves and plenty of lube* – Wearing gloves is a good way to reduce bacteria being transferred into the vagina and uterus and therefore prevent infection after lambing. Lube will also prevent tears and make it easier for your arm to go in and the lamb to come out!
- *Calcium* – Calcibel is always useful to hand as sometimes if a ewe hasn't fully dilated giving 60-80 ml under the skin can help. Can also be useful if you suspect a ewe has milk fever – give us a call if either happens as we can always give advice over the phone. Calciject No 6 no longer exists so instead you need Calcibel and a glucose drench that we can provide.
- *Disinfectant* – a lot of post lambing infections are due to unhygienic environments. Make sure you disinfect all equipment after using it and keep lambs in clean freshly strawed pens before turning them out. All pens that have had ewes/lambs in should be cleaned and disinfected before another ewe and lamb are allowed in there. This is incredibly important as we are now very limited on Spectam so good hygiene is the best thing to prevent watery mouth!
- *Glycerol drench* – useful to have on hand, especially for cases of twin lamb disease. Please ring if you suspect this in your ewes.
- *Antibiotics* – check with us about which one is best to use depending on the issue to treat.
- *Pain relief* – don't underestimate how painful lambing is for a ewe, sometimes all she needs is some pain relief administered to make her feel better. Call us if you need any advice.
- *Tagging equipment and tags*
- *Rings for tails and castration*
- *Heat lamp(s)*



FlockCheck 2022



MSD FlockCheck is back for 2022

This is subsidised blood sampling for up to 8 ewes (from a flock of 100 breeding ewes) if you suspect Enzo or Toxo abortions in your flock

Evening talks

- Thursday 17th Feb @ 6:30pm, The Spread Eagle Hotel, Thame

Evan is giving a talk titled "Where are the pitfalls between calving and slaughter?"

He will be discussing the challenges and where disasters can be avoided...



- Tuesday 22nd Feb @ 7pm, Waddesdon Village Hall, Waddesdon

Lambing talk: Matt Busby from Mole Valley Farmers is hosting an evening including talks from:

- Mark Atkins (MSD Animal Health) on Heptavac vaccines
- Rebecca Collins (NorCal Vets) discussing hygiene in the lambing shed and lamb colostrum



Please call or email the practice to register your interest

Follow us on Instagram @norcalvets



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Red Tractor medicine course

Thank you to everyone that has signed up,
the course is being held on 2nd March 6pm at:

Thame Barns Centre
Church Road
Thame
OX9 3AJ

Doggy Dating – Stud Dog Wanted

We have a client who is looking for a male intact White Alsatian for their bitch. Please give us a call if your dog is interested!