

Cattle Meeting

On Tuesday 24th March, alongside Elanco, we will be hosting a meeting discussing the ins and outs of cattle turnout at StowAg. If you are interested in attending, please give the office a call to get signed up.

Tuesday 24th March 6pm



Grass Staggers

As lambing and calving gets underway and animals begin to be turned out the risk of grass staggers increases. Grass staggers is caused by low blood magnesium during peak lactation 4-8 weeks post calving/lambing when animals are grazing lush pasture. Signs include staggering gait, twitching, S-bend in the neck in cattle and seizure like activity. Animals are often found dead with signs of struggle. Those affected should be administered subcutaneous Magniject, 400ml in cattle and 60-80ml in sheep, alongside subcutaneous calcium and Emdocam.

Prevention methods for grass staggers include the use of magnesium licks and boluses or introducing magnesium flakes into the water supply. Offering animals hay will increase fibre and slow down gut transit time to increase the absorption time for magnesium. Both potassium and nitrogen fertilizers can reduce the magnesium absorption in the rumen therefore if it is known these products have been used on the grazing supplementation is essential.

Nematodirus

Nematodirus causes a sudden onset of profuse watery diarrhoea in lambs and can result in considerable loss of condition and death due to dehydration. It is difficult to definitively diagnose nematodirus as the acute disease is caused by the developing larvae and adults before they begin to lay eggs. Therefore faecal egg counts are ineffective in diagnosing this disease. To definitively diagnose nematodirus post mortems must be performed to assess small intestinal contents.

Lambs are at the highest risk from late spring to early summer. The larvae are able to survive within the eggs over the winter on pasture during the cold temperatures. As temperatures reach over 10°C the larvae begin to hatch on mass if this hatching coincides with the grazing of young lambs clinical signs are observed. Animals over 3 months old have started to develop immunity to nematodirus and adult sheep have complete immunity and are not affected by it.

Highest risk lambs are:

6-12 weeks of age

From ewes who are not milking well causing them to graze earlier

Infected with coccidiosis which predisposes to nematodirus

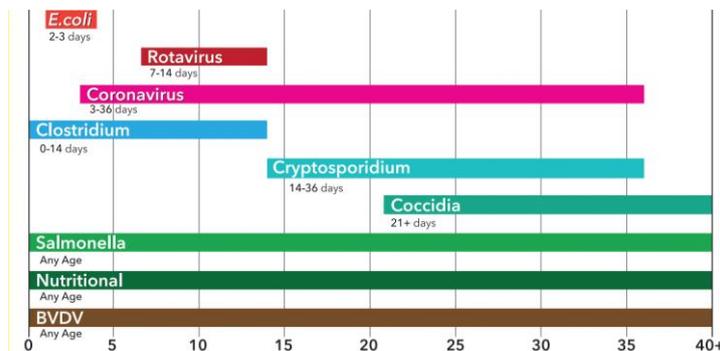
Groups of mixed aged lambs

To reduce the risk of nematodirus in the lambs, avoid placing any high risk lambs on pasture grazed by lambs the previous year. If this is not possible a white drench should be given, re-administration may be required at 3 week intervals depending on weather conditions and age of lambs in the group. The SCOPS Nematodirus forecast can be used to estimate the time of hatching to ensure your anthelmintic treatment is given at the right time.

Please give us a call if you need any advice on how to best prevent nematodirus on your farm this spring.

Calf Scours

Calf scours can be caused by several different pathogens, all these pathogens affect calves of different ages. If your calves develop scours the first thing to do is to give us a call and pop in a faecal sample to determine the cause. Several causative agents do not require antibiotics and can be resolved through re-hydration and the use of anti-inflammatories.



If your calves are bright and alert and still have a suckle reflex the use of hydrafast containing electrolytes and energy should be tube fed or given via bottle to them several times a day to restore hydration status. Calves should also be administered emdocam subcutaneously. If your calves have no longer got a suckle reflex and are lethargic and sunken eyed this is an emergency and we should be called immediately to administer intravenous fluids.

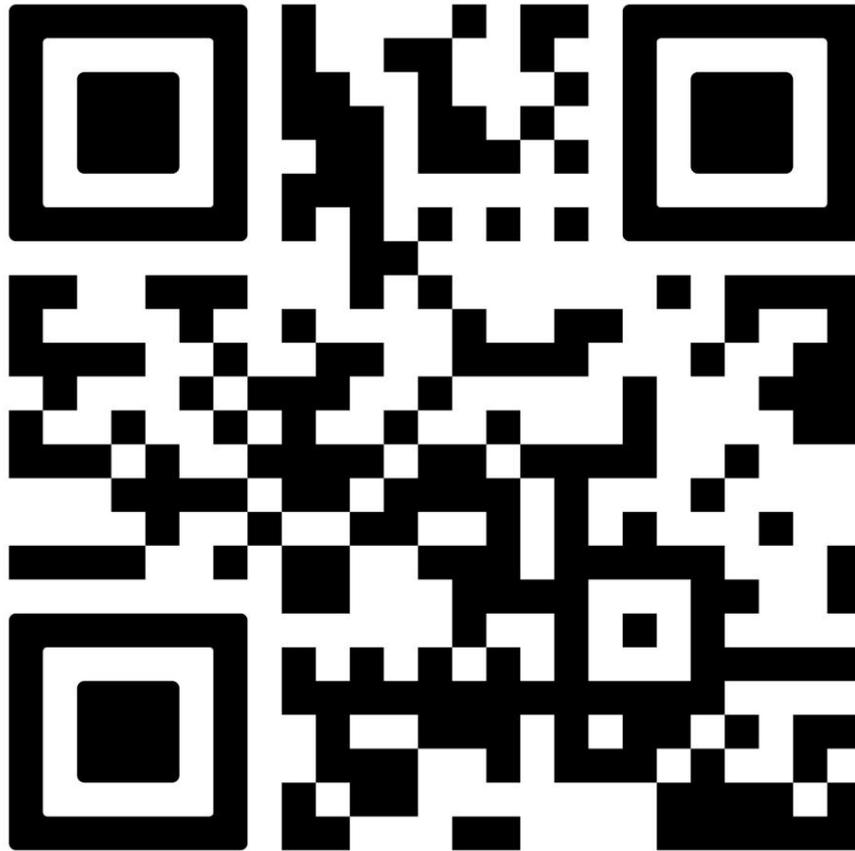
HYDRATION is the most important thing when it comes to calf scours !

Hygiene is extremely important if an outbreak occurs, affected calves should be isolated from the rest. Good colostrum management will reduce the incidence of calf scours, by ensuring you have adequate quantity and good quality colostrum you are ensuring that calves receive the necessary antibodies from their mums to fight off infection. If you are unsure about your colostrum quality please give us a call to discuss testing.

Animal Welfare

Last week NFU south held a meeting to discuss DEFRA's consultation on castration and tail docking methods for lambs. NFU would like farmers' feedback and opinion on the consultation. Please scan the following QR code to give your opinion on the matter.

<https://www.nfuonline.com/news/lamb-castration-and-tail-docking-consultation>



NorCal Vets

Follow us on Instagram @norcalvets.



Unit 2 Rycote Lane Farm, Rycote Lane
Milton Common, Thame
Oxfordshire OX9 2NZ
01844 260 616
thame@norcalvets.co.uk