

Coccidiosis

This time of year young lambs over 3 weeks of age are at high risk of coccidiosis, those at higher risk include twins/triplets, those that did not receive adequate colostrum or those who are grazing early. Lambs will eventually build up immunity to oocysts however older lambs can shed large numbers of oocysts into the environment even after they develop immunity and can be a significant source of contamination for younger lambs in the flock.

Coccidiosis results in profuse diarrhoea that can be dark in colour and sometimes be blood stained. Coccidiosis can cause severe gut damage and can be fatal if left untreated. Blood stained diarrhoea is very indicative of coccidiosis however the best way to gain a definitive diagnosis is to run a faecal egg count.

Preventative treatment can be given using in feed treatment or more commonly by drenching with products containing either diclazuril (Vecoxan) or toltrazuril (Baycox/Tolracol). The timing of treatment is important, and lambs should be treated 1-2 weeks before expected disease. Lambs treated with diclazuril may require repeat treatment approximately 3 weeks after the first treatment as this drug has no residual activity.

Campylobacter abortions

Campylobacter abortions have been a common finding in lamb samples sent off recently.

Campylobacter can be spread via the faecal/oral route or from abortion material/fluid. People and wildlife can also spread fomites and the affected ewes themselves can excrete the bacteria in discharge for up to 7 weeks after abortion. Once ewes become infected they can continue to carry it in their gallbladder and intestines meaning these carrier sheep can introduce it into a naive flock.

Prevention measures such as:

- Reducing stock densities
- Improving hygiene practices when lambing indoors
- Keeping feed troughs clean and turned over when not being used
 - Isolating aborting ewes
 - Removing abortion products
- Reducing bird numbers in sheds.

Lambing outdoors will result in less infection pressure but consider using extra fields, moving feed troughs regularly and avoid strip grazing in an outbreak. These measures will help limit the amount of bacteria ingested.

Sampling aborted lambs can help guide vaccination/targeting measures to prevent further problems whether this year or next. Please also remember to collect placenta if available!

Navel ill / Joint ill

As calving is getting underway it is highly important to continue good hygiene in the calving pens to reduce the risk of navel ill that can progress to joint ill. If suspected calves should be treated with 5-7 days of penicillin.

Prevention of these infections is key to reduce calf losses. These are some of the important prevention measures:

- Ensuring good colostrum management and remembering your three Q's of colostrum.
- Quickly: Colostrum concentration decreases by 3.7% each subsequent hour post calving and the calves ability to efficiently absorb colostrum also reduces rapidly.
- Quantity: Calves should be fed at least 4L (or 10% of bodyweight) of good quality colostrum within 4hrs of birth. A further 2L should be given within 12hrs of birth.
- Quality: Measure colostrum quality using a colostrometer or a Brix refractometer. Only good quality colostrum (>50g/L of IgG) should be given to calves or stored. You cannot tell the quality just by looking at
 - Reducing bacterial challenge in the calving pens by cleaning out regularly.
- Ensuring the calves' navels have been fully covered in your chosen iodine dip within the first 15minutes of life this should then be reapplied 2-4 hours later where possible.

Turnout Preparation

Many of you are starting to think of turning out with the long awaited nice weather! As always please have a think of any jobs that need doing e.g. dehorning, worming, missed castrations and foot trimming before they become an issue at grazing!

We will also be hosting a meeting to discuss all things cattle turnout alongside Elanco at StowAg on

Tuesday 21st April at 6 pm

If you would like to attend, please let Jess know in the office.

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