

White Lodge Farm Clinic

01643 703649 farm@whitelodgevetclinic.co.uk

Welcome to our Winter Newsletter!

2022 saw some extreme and unusual weather patterns rarely associated with the UK, giving farmers a constant battle with how best to manage land and livestock. We have seen many animals with worm burdens 'off the scale' this autumn, as a result of hatching patterns caused by the weather, leaving pastures so heavily contaminated with worm eggs and larvae.

With the weather having suddenly turned now, aside from working out how to hitch up sledges to quad-bikes, we're also now faced with extra challenges keeping our livestock fed and protected from the worst weather.

However, on a more positive note, parasites will hopefully have felt the cold more than most, killing off most larvae left on pasture, and giving us a respite from the severe problems many farmers have faced over the past few months.

Wishing you all a successful 2023!



COLOSTRUM

Calves and lambs are born "immunologically naive" - ie they have no immunity until they have colostrum which provides them with antibodies that will match the mother's.

Colostrum also provides energy, as calves and lambs are born with very little energy reserves. 'Brown fat' which is the energy stores they are born with, will only last about 5 hours.

Taking care of pregnant ewes and ensuring adequate nutrition is critical to avoid twin lamb, hypocalcaemia and poor colostrum quality. Talk to us about some simple blood tests we can do on 6 ewes - to assess whether their nutrition is adequate 6 weeks before lambing.

We stock colostrum substitutes for both lambs and calves, and it's always sensible to keep some in stock!



HEARD OF HERD HEALTH PLANNING?

As times are getting tighter, and businesses are having to become increasingly more efficient, vets bills may well be somewhere all farmers are looking to cut costs. However, a properly discussed and thought through herd health plan (HHP) can be a really valuable tool to increase animal welfare and efficiency, increasing profits and reducing unexpected vet bills. Unfortunately, in the past, this has been seen as a box ticking exercise with a large number of farmers (and vets!) seeing it as a useless document.

A proper HHP will be undertaken by a vet that understands (and has been to) your farm, and includes:

- A thorough look at all numbers involved in the production (calving %, calving interval, mortality, growth rates etc) and identifying any area that could be improved and how best to do so
- Diseases/parasites present, or potential risks and how best to manage them
- Nutrition/housing/management of animals

There is funding on the way with the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway, encouraging at least one vet visit a year as part of a HHP



THE COLD LAMB

IT'S NOT QUITE AS SIMPLE AS JUST STICKING IT IN THE WARMER



Hypothermia is a common cause of lamb losses, and correct warming procedure is vital to ensuring the survival of these lambs. Simply warming up a lamb without a source of available energy will cause low blood sugar (hypoglycaemia) followed by seizures and likely death.

A lamb's temperature should be between 39-40°C, and anything less than this is classed as hypothermia. Lambs will often be tucked up and lethargic or can be recumbent and unresponsive.

Lambs are born with a small amount of 'brown fat' - a very efficient source of energy but this is generally used up by 5 hours of age.

The stomach of a very cold lamb will not be functioning well enough to absorb any of the energy from colostrum, therefore it is important that lambs below 37°C are given glucose/dextrose by injection **before** warming. Milk or colostrum must not be given to cold lambs, and also be regurgitated leading to pneumonia or asphyxia in very cold animals.

If 37-39°C

- Give 50ml/kg colostrum by stomach tube (approx 250ml)
- Then dry and warm

If under 37°C

- Give 10ml/kg 20% glucose intraperitoneal
- Dry and warm
- Then stomach tube colostrum

Intraperitoneal injections of dextrose

- Use 20% solution (a 40% solution can be mixed 1:1 fresh boiled cooled water) - 10ml per kg (approx 40-50ml), warmed!
- 19G 1" needle best (light yellow hub normally!)
- 2cm to side and 2cm below navel
- Hold lamb by front legs and inject straight into abdomen.

Key equipment needed

- Stomach tube
- Colostrum/colostrum substitute
- Thermometer
- Warming box or equivalent and towels
- Sterile glucose for injection
- 30/50ml syringes
- 19G 1" needle



TUBERCULOSIS IN THE NON-BOVINE SPECIES

Although we often only associate Tuberculosis (TB) with cattle, badgers and deer, many species of animals we keep other than cattle can be susceptible to the microbe (*Mycobacterium bovis*) causing TB. This includes camelids (including alpacas and llamas), goats, sheep and pigs. These species are generally 'spill-over hosts' - meaning that they are unlikely to pass the disease between their own species and sustain the infection within their own population.

However, although unlikely, the disease may be passed on to either their own species, other susceptible animals such as cattle, or humans in close contact.

TB poses a real welfare risk to the animals affected, the animals in contact, and the humans around them, as well as the economic consequences of outbreaks.

If you have any concerns about the potential of TB in any animals, or how to reduce risk, then please contact us!

