

Farm Animal Practice News

Winter
2019



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Welcome

Langford Vets Farm Animal Practice welcomes you to the January newsletter

Pricing Update

As we look ahead to what 2019 may bring, you might be pleased to learn that in the run up to lambing we have reduced the price of sheep caesarians to **£60.00 + VAT** and have changed lambing, which was previously charged on time, to a set fee of **£30.00 + VAT**. Any drugs used for either procedure will be charged in addition.

We have also made the decision to stop stocking Pen & Strep as we have alternative, more specific products available with longer shelf lives. Should you require Pen & Strep for anything please call the practice to speak to a vet who will be happy to advise on a suitable alternative.

Calf Jackets

As we head deeper into winter the temperatures are getting colder and those cold-related jobs like de-icing the trucks and breaking the ice on the water troughs are becoming more frequent. But it is not just us that have to work that bit harder in the winter. Did you know that below 10°C calves have to use more energy to keep warm and what they are using for that they are not using for growing? Of course, the winter months are also prime-time for calf pneumonia and so the trade-off between good ventilation and keeping calves warm must be struck.

One simple way to enable calves to stay warm is to use extra deep bedding throughout the winter for them to nest down in. Another is to use calf jackets on all calves through the colder months – not just sick or premature ones. It has been shown that calves that wear calf jackets through the winter can gain an extra 5kg in weight by the time they are weaned, meaning the jackets quickly pay for themselves as disease incidence is reduced and heifers are able to be served at a younger age due to increased growth rates. The alternative is to feed calves more to minimise these losses, but jackets are a more cost-effective option.

You can order calf jackets through the Langford Vets Agri Range for £29.59 + VAT per jacket.



Pre-calving Prep

Preparation for calving needs to start weeks before due date with several key jobs taking place during the dry period. Monitoring body condition score and managing the diet prior to calving is important in avoiding overly fat cows. These cows are more prone to metabolic disease such as fatty liver and milk fever, as well as calving difficulties.

Vaccinating your dry cows with Rotavec Corona vaccine will help protect their calves against the most common causes of infectious scour; E. Coli, Rotavirus, and Coronavirus. A single injection given to the dam between 12 and 3 weeks before calving results in protective antibodies in the dam's colostrum which will then be passed onto the calf. Colostrum management is therefore key in the success of this vaccine.

Cow comfort also plays an important role around calving. Prepare your pens ensuring they are clean, well bedded, with plenty of food and water available and if possible, do this between each calving. Sterilise your calving ropes and stock your shelves with disinfectant, gloves, lube, and pain relief ready for any difficult calving's you might have.

Please ensure that dogs are not free to eat any placenta or dead calves as this can precipitate the spread of *Neospora caninum*. Waste needs to be disposed of appropriately.

Colostrum

There are **4 Qs** of colostrum management to ensure the calf/lamb gets off to the best possible start:

- **Quality** – Ensure the dam is on a good plane of nutrition and is in good body condition. You can test the colostrum using either a colostrometer or a Brix refractometer to ensure the quality. The colostrum must also be obtained hygienically as the presence of bacteria will reduce the number of immunoglobulins that can be absorbed. If there is spare, good quality colostrum, this can be frozen. If it is poor quality, you can either use frozen or ensure you give a higher volume as absorption of immunoglobins is vital to the animal's health.

- **Quantity** – 10% body weight: often given in 2 feeds so not to overload the animal. Roughly 2-3 litres in the first 2 hours of life at 38°C, then a second feed of 2-3L within 12 hours of birth. Remember, a calf requires approximately 20 minutes of continuous sucking to have consumed 3L of colostrum from the cow.

- **Quickly** – Ideally within 2 hours of birth to optimise immunity. The animal's ability to absorb immunoglobulins halves within 6 hours and is unable to absorb them after 24 hours.

- **Quietly** – If animals are stressed while being fed, then they won't absorb the immunoglobulins as efficiently as those that are calm.

Ideally a frozen store is kept on farm for times of need. Colostrum can be stored for up to 12 months in the freezer. However, if there is no frozen colostrum available, Immucol is the next best substitute. It is a natural bovine colostrum replacer. It has the same level of immunoglobulins as good quality cow colostrum and 20% colostrum fat to provide plenty of energy. Immucol is guaranteed free from Johnes, EBL and IBR.

Langford vets can test to ensure your calves/lambs/kids have had enough colostrum by taking blood samples in the first week of life. This is a cheap and accurate way to monitor the success of colostrum management on the farm. Please give us a call if you have any questions or would like some prices.

Preparing for Lambing

We have everything you need to get you through the lambing period.

Lambing/Sheep Equipment	Price excl. VAT	Price incl. VAT
4mm Lambing rope	£5.07	£6.08
Elastrator	£5.54	£6.65
Elastrator rings 100 pack	£1.85	£2.22
Hoof shears	£17.50	£21.00
Lamb feeding tubes	£4.30	£5.16
Lambing snare	£4.74	£5.69
Marker spray	£4.95	£5.94
Prolapse support/uterine support	£1.05	£1.26
Prolapse harness	£10.98	£13.18
Arm length gloves	£7.90	£9.48
Digital thermometer	£5.65	£6.78
Large blue paper towel	£1.08	£1.30
Gloves - small, medium, large	£5.58	£6.69
Iodine solution 10% 500ml	£7.45	£8.94
Vet Lubigel 500ml	£2.90	£3.48
Provimi Shepherdess Milk Powder 5kg	£12.99	£15.59

If you would like something which is not listed here, please call the practice as we may be able to order it in for you.

Vimco Mastitis Vaccine

In October we held a meeting to discuss Vimco, a new vaccine from HIPRA that can reduce the incidence of both clinical and sub-clinical mastitis in both sheep and goats. Dams that suffer from mastitis are unable to rear their progeny and often have to be culled as a consequence of the udder function not returning. The lambs cost more to rear and are later to finish. Dams that are used for milking have a reduced output, and all disease can result in reduced fertility.

The vaccine developed by HIPRA prevents against the common forms of mastitis. It requires each animal to have 2 injections; the first injection 5 weeks before parturition, and the second injection 3 weeks later. The total cost per animal is around £5.00 but please phone and ask Rosie for precise costings depending on deals on offer.



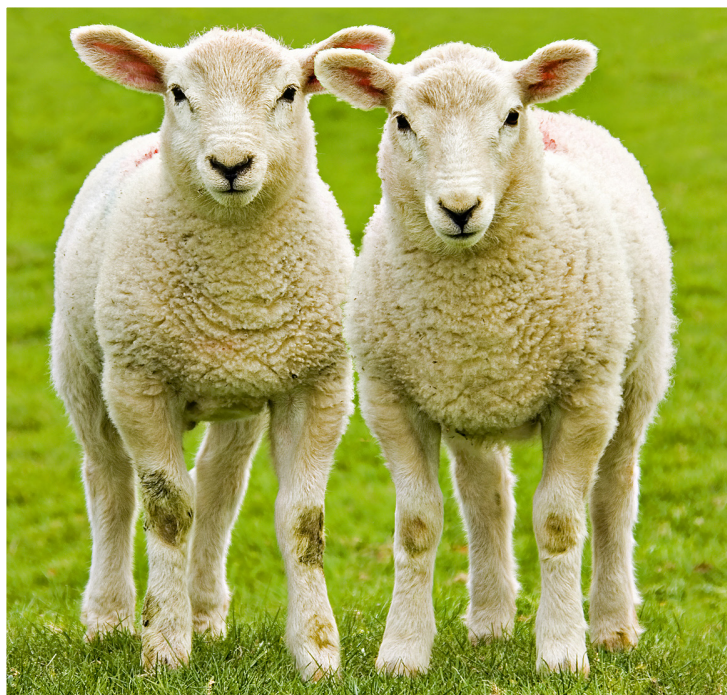
Twin Lamb Disease

Twin Lamb Disease (also known as Pregnancy Toxaemia) is a disease of both undernourished and occasionally, overfat ewes, carrying twins or triplets. As the unborn lambs' growth rate accelerates during the last few weeks of pregnancy the ewe's own fat reserves are broken down in her liver to supply energy to the lamb, this process also produces units called ketones which are toxic to the ewe and cause the clinical signs of twin lamb disease.

Appropriate feeding, scanning pregnant ewes, body condition scoring and appropriate grouping can help to prevent the disease. Should you find any of your ewes suffering with twin lamb disease during the lambing period then we recommend supplementing their energy intake with Ceto Phytton.

Ceto Phytton is a dietetic supplement to reduce the risk of ketosis in cattle and sheep. No other supplement contains the four constituents of sodium propionate, niacin, sylibum marianum, (the active ingredient in milk thistle) and mono-propylene glycol, making it more effective than propylene glycol only products. Niacin and sylibum marianum help break the energy deficiency cycle and speed recovery.

Ceto Phytton is available in 1ltr bottles (50 doses) and costs £16.89 per bottle + VAT.



Red Tractor Meeting Round Up

Thanks to everyone that joined us in November for our meeting which updated clients on the responsible use of medicines, including an update from vet Andrea about what is new in the world of antimicrobial resistance and what this means to farmers.

We had a great attendance, perhaps due to the pizza and beer on offer! Clients who attended were given a certificate of competence, a new requirement from the Red Tractor scheme.

We hope that everyone learnt something about antibiotic use in the agriculture sector. We had a great time seeing everyone and particularly the competitive enthusiasm during the quiz!

Pre-turnout Vaccines

Turn out may seem like a long way away but preparations for disease protection need to start soon. It is important vaccinations are given in the run up to turn out

Lungworm can be a problem for any grazed cattle, but especially autumn born calves which are effectively grazing for the first time at turnout in spring. Natural protection against lungworm requires continuous low-level worm challenge which is not the case for first time grazers. Any cattle that have received repeated wormers or have extensively grazed clean pastures are also at risk. Huskvac provides this protection. First time grazers need two doses 4 weeks apart with the second vaccine completed 2 weeks before turnout. Repeat grazers typically only need a single booster 2 weeks before turnout, but occasionally repeat injections are advised throughout the grazing season depending on your pasture situation.

Out on our rounds this autumn we did notice a lot of coughing calves out to grass, and several cases of lungworm were diagnosed. The vaccine can reduce incidence of disease and ensure there are no set-backs to the productivity of your animals. Please feel free to discuss this with us if you feel the vaccine may be of benefit to your herd.

Clostridial disease is a risk to all grazing animals. The exact disease depends on the particular strain of the bacteria involved but a common presentation is sudden death in otherwise healthy-looking animals, such as with pulpy kidney. The saying goes that 'clostridia always affects your best animals' as gorging on good quality feed often precipitates the disease. Blackleg is a more common presentation in cattle as this is pre-disposed by muscle bruising which occurs when animals are housed.

We recommend vaccinating your cattle with Bravoxin 10 and your sheep with Heptavac-P Plus. Animals receiving these injections for the first time require a primary course of 2 injections 4-6 weeks apart, followed by annual boosters. In pregnant animals, aim to give boosters 4 to 6 weeks prior to birth in order to give protection to the offspring through the colostrum.

Access to natural waterways during grazing increases the risk of leptospirosis in your cattle which can cause sub-clinical fertility problems, including abortion and significant milk drop. Being zoonotic, owners are also at risk of this disease, and therefore protecting your cattle also helps protect you. Leptavoid-H vaccination is recommended, with annual boosters being given before turnout in spring.



No Visible Lesion = No TB?

We all know it is not uncommon for animals who are classed as a reactor to the skin test to be reported as having 'no visible lesions' at post mortem inspection. Some people find this a confusing and frustrating result, assuming this means that the animal was not actually infected with TB. However, the purpose of post mortem inspection is not primarily to assess the presence of TB in that animal, but rather the chronicity, and likely route of infection. The result of 'no visible lesions' can therefore be good news from a farmers point of view.

The TB skin test has a reputation for being a 'bad test', but how 'good' it is depends on what question you want it to answer. It is true that the TB skin test is only 70% 'sensitive'. This means that although it will only pick up approximately 70% of animals that are infected with TB as positive it is over 99% 'specific' which means that when an animal does test positive on the test that animal is actually infected with TB over 99% of the time.

So, what does it mean when these animals then come back as having 'no visible lesions'? When a TB reactor is culled the carcass undergoes specific inspection by abattoir vets to assess common sites of infection (lymph nodes in the head and chest, the lungs etc.). To do this the inspectors make cuts into these tissues to look for M.Bovis abscesses with the naked eye. This relies on the inspectors making enough cuts in the tissues (or having good enough eyesight!) to see the abscesses. Of course, the smaller the abscesses the less likely they are to be seen and since TB is a chronic disease the abscesses will gradually get bigger with time. It is likely that early in the disease process any abscesses present will be too small to be seen. In-fact only 40% of reactors have visible lesions at post mortem, even though over 99% are infected with TB.

If an animal is a reactor at the skin test but reported as 'no visible lesions' at post mortem it indicates that the animal is likely to be in the early stages of the disease. Therefore the risk that it has been carrying TB for a long time is lower, as is the likelihood of transmission of TB to other animals in your herd. If there are visible lesions, although a chronic infection is not good news, the location of these lesions can be helpful to assess how the animal acquired TB, e.g. a cow with TB in her udder is more likely to transmit TB in the milk to calves being fed her milk than if the lesions are found in the lungs.

If you have reactors found on your farm there is advice available through the 'TBAS' (TB advisory service) who can provide tailored farm-specific biosecurity advice for your farm, as well as at the TB hub, found at:

<http://www.tbhub.co.uk>

Farm Animal Practice Opening Hours

Mon-Fri 8.30am - 5pm

Telephone:

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24 hour emergency cover

Email us: farmpractice@langfordvets.co.uk

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