



Belle Vue Vets

Farm Newsletter March 2024



www.wigtonvets.co.uk



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Lambing Time

Many of you will already have lambs on the ground whilst some of you will still be awaiting those sleepless nights in the sheep shed.

As lambing begins, have hygiene and biosecurity at the front of your mind to limit outbreaks of disease and subsequent losses. Diseases on this list include watery mouth, agents causing abortion (chlamydia, toxoplasma, salmonella, campylobacter), scour, respiratory problems and lameness/joint ill.

Last year Spectam was in short supply, with everyone overall doing reasonably well to limit use and improve the hygiene of their lambing pens. This year Spectam is no longer available, so you must ensure hygiene/cleanliness and colostrum management is kept to a high standard. If problems should arise contact us immediately. This would include weakly lambs, premature births, abortions etc. The sooner we can isolate a case and gain samples for the lab the sooner we get you an answer and potentially save the lives of lambs to come.



DO NOT foster lambs onto a ewe that has aborted and **DO** wear gloves when handling her and any aborted material. Aborted Lamb plus cleansing is the gold standard we need to investigate any abortion case. Remove cleansing and dirty straw from pens after use and disinfect. A list of DEFRA approved disinfectants can be found online.

Remember all the small simple tasks such as dipping navels, ensuring colostrum intakes, sterilizing equipment used to feed lambs etc. all contribute towards a successful lambing season. Good luck to everyone!



As always, we are always available for lambing's and caesar's at the surgery. Please remember to call ahead to ensure we have a vet available for when you arrive. We do offer visits also.

It is also useful to provide your own container to transport lambs home in—clean, straw filled old lick buckets are perfect for this.



Due to changes in prescription rules, an up-to-date herd or flock plan will now need to be in place before medications can be dispensed. Funding through the Animal Health and Welfare pathway is available to help towards the cost of these plans.

Please pre-order all medicines over the phone to ensure we can authorize these medications.

We are now able to process Direct Debits.

Please contact the Practice to set up this method of payment.



FARM DISCOUNT SCHEME

Excellent discounts on selected drugs / vaccines when accounts are paid before the month's end.

POLITE REMINDER:

When writing a cheque please remember to address it to Belle Vue Vets Ltd.

Please pre-order all medications by calling 016973 42174, this will help speed up collection at the desk and get authorisation from one of our vets.



Staff Updates

Everyone at Belle Vue Vets would like to wish Aimee, our previous head nurse, all the best for her future up in the highlands, she will be a huge miss!

We are pleased to introduce you to four new members of staff.

- We would like to introduce Jemima, she will be working alongside Lynda and Leigh in the farm vet tech team!
- We have two new veterinary nurses starting in March, our new nurse team lead Rachel and our new part-time nurse, Rachel.
- We would like to introduce our new receptionist, Caroline, she will be working with us on a full time basis!

Storing Vaccines

Protect your investment—Vaccines can represent a significant investment in your animals health. Many of them are sensitive to storage temperatures and can lose their effectiveness if they are stored outside this temperature range.



Most vaccines should be stored between 2 and 8 degrees—Many farm medicine fridges struggle to reliably maintain this temperature range. A cheap maximum/minimum fridge thermometer can help you keep and eye on what is going on. Keep the temperature sensor in a small bottle of water or glycerine to even out fluctuations with opening and closing the door.

Vaccines die in hot cars— The inside of your vehicle can reach well over 30 degrees in the summer. Don't leave vaccines lying on the seat in the auction car park! Collect them on your way home and transfer them to the fridge immediately.

Huskvac

Huskvac is the only vaccine available against lungworm in cattle, and as such is an important tool in the prevention of this economically important disease. 1st season grazing cattle should receive 2 doses 4 weeks apart, with the second dose around 2 weeks prior to turn out.

Do not use any wormers during the primary course or until at least 2 weeks after the second dose. Control is dependent on vaccinated calves being exposed to lungworm larvae on the pasture. Please speak to one of the vets to help construct an appropriate grazing and worming strategy.

This year Huskvac will only be available in packs of 12. If you could please get your orders in early, with how many doses you require and when you need them, then we will be better able to match ordering to demand and split packs appropriately so that you do not need to purchase more doses than you require.

Johnes Diseases in Sheep

Johnes is caused by a bacteria called *Mycobacterium avium paratuberculosis* and is thought to be underdiagnosed in flocks as it is often considered as a disease affecting cattle only. It can have a significant impact on the performance of a flock as it causes chronic weight loss, a poor fleece and dampens the immune system making infected ewes more susceptible to secondary conditions. One key difference between Johnes in cattle and sheep is the lack of diarrhoea although this can be seen as many will also have high worm burdens.



Infection typically occurs when they are lambs, via the faecal/oral route as well as in the uterus. It is therefore recommended to have high hygiene standards when lambing and replacements from infected ewes should not be kept. Clinical signs often appear when ewes are typically 3-4 years old however infected animals will intermittently shed contaminants throughout their life which can survive on pasture for up to 12 months.

Diagnosis of this disease relies on various factors including post-mortems, blood sampling a group of 'cull ewes' or faecal sampling. Unfortunately, there is no treatment for Johnes disease therefore prevention is key – this relies on having a strict culling policy (which will also help reduce many other conditions) of all ewes in poor body condition. There is also a licensed vaccine for flocks with high levels of infection which can help to reduce the spread and clinical signs seen but will not eliminate the disease.

If you are concerned about your flock and want further investigation into wasting/ill-thrift please contact us for more information. We can carry out various investigations including faecal worm egg counts, post-mortem examinations and screening blood tests.