

# Farm Animal Practice News

Langford Vets 

 University of  
BRISTOL

Smallholder  
Spring 2024



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Free client meeting - 24 April 2024

## Sustainability in Farming: Beetles/Soil & Ivermectins

What is the wider impact of this  
class of drugs on ecology?

Spaces are limited, book early on:  
**01934 852650**

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**Opening Hours:** Mon - Fri 8.30am - 5pm

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## Welcome to the Farm Animal Practice

The new year has been a busy one for the farm animal practice with a practical lambing day hosted by Scarlett, an evening meeting looking at measuring passive transfer in calves hosted by Andrea and a chicken webinar hosted by Sarah.

All this as well as a number of referral cases coming into our inpatient facility, a CPD event for other farm vets and the fact that lambing is well underway! And with all that already behind us I'm sure getting various jobs done before turnout comes around will be keeping us all busy going forward!

In this newsletter, as well as some reflections on the meetings we have hosted, we are thinking ahead to trouble-shooting at turnout, including preventing bloat and hypomagnesaemia, read on to find out more!

## Lambing Kits

Are you ready for your easter lambs? Pick up all the essentials including lube, lambing ropes, gloves, colostrum powder and tube feeders.



If you have any queries or concerns about using any of this kit or lambing in general feel free to call or drop into the practice for some advice ahead of your lambs arriving.

## Spring Jobs

**Huskvac** for any first or second season grazers (or bought in animals) due to be turned out onto lungworm infected pastures.



**Clostridial disease vaccines** only need to save one death to be value for money, vaccinate youngstock cattle in particular before turnout.

**Growing lambs** can be prone to Pasteurella pneumonia and susceptible when maternal immunity wains, vaccinating with a clostridial vaccine containing pasteurilla cover can prevent these losses.

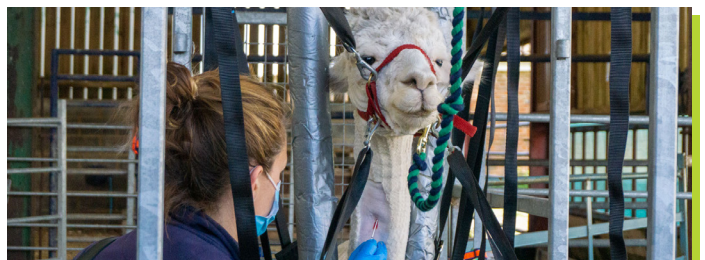
**Overwintered fluke** (or those that have survived on the pastures in the mild weather) can cause disease in sheep / camelids in late winter, testing or treating those on known high risk pastures should be done at this time of year.

**Trace element bolusing** of cattle and sheep should be done before turnout to prevent deficiencies while out grazing (testing can be done first to check animal trace element status).

## Plasma Drive - Camelids

Are you breeding camelids and concerned about failure of passive transfer in your crias? For plasma transfusions we advise to always use plasma from your holding to reduce disease spread.

On 17th April we are excited to be holding a plasma drive. Enquire today about suitability of donors, process and time slot availability. Spaces are limited. Contact us today for more information.



## Best Start for Calves

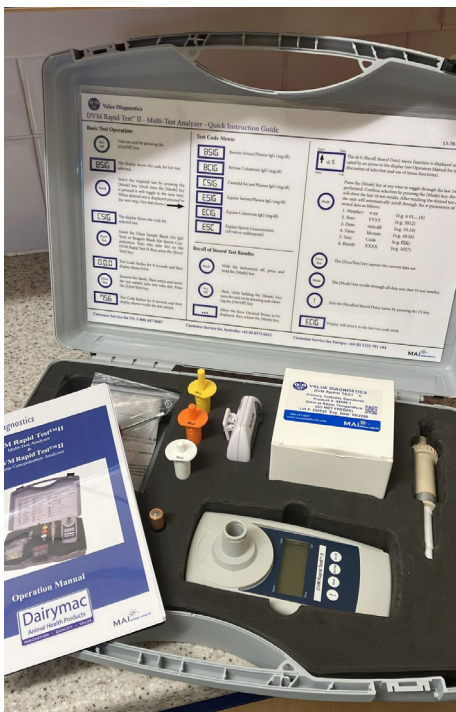
Thanks to all who came along to our 'best start for calves' meeting, hosted by Andrea alongside BIMEDA on the 8th Feb. At this meeting we discussed the fact that up to 1 in 4 dairy and 1 in 3 beef calves could benefit from more / better colostrum and that farms that monitor colostrum intakes were more likely to have lower rates of failure of passive transfer in their calves (and all associated health and production benefits).



During the evening, new on-farm IgG testing equipment available from BIMEDA was discussed as well as our new in-house IgG testing machine that we now have here at the farm animal practice (more information below). It was a good evening of discussion and hopefully learning. Thanks to all that came along.

## IgG Testing Machine - Calves and Crias

This year as a practice we have invested in a new and exciting piece of kit, an in-house IgG testing machine. This allows us to run same-day IgG testing for calves and Cria (both of which we have test kits for). These competitively priced tests allow us to offer new solutions to old problems with accurate testing and quick turnaround times to help you make the best decisions for your animals.



## Egg peritonitis - Webinar Summary

Our vet Sarah Wood delivered a webinar in March on egg peritonitis, a serious condition seen in chickens, particularly in ex-commercial laying hens. The webinar covered how we can diagnose egg peritonitis and differentiate it from similar-looking conditions.

A chicken with egg peritonitis can appear similar to an egg-bound chicken - both will be dull, off food, off lay, and may show a 'penguin-like' stance (standing almost upright on her feet due to pain in the lower abdomen). However, the two conditions have different causes and usually different outcomes. Egg-binding occurs when a fully-formed, shelled egg become stuck in the oviduct, and, provided this can be quickly and safely extracted without causing damage, hens often recover well.



In the case of egg peritonitis, however, a yolk is formed in the ovary and then falls into abdomen, where it risks becoming infected. In normal circumstances, the yolk is caught by the funnel-shaped infundibulum, where it then travels through the oviduct to continue developing. If the chicken is stressed as she ovulates, or if the oviduct is inflamed (for example, due to an infection), it is therefore more likely that the yolk misses the infundibulum, and predisposes her to egg peritonitis.

Once the yolk(s) become infected, this leads to peritonitis, and the hen quickly becomes depressed and lethargic. Unfortunately, even when the condition is diagnosed and treatment is started, many birds do not survive once the peritonitis has set in. In some cases, however, if the infection can be kept at bay using antibiotics, a hormone implant can then be used to prevent the hen from ovulating, and so prevent the problem from recurring.

If you want to learn more about the condition, a recording of the webinar is available on our website at:

[www.langfordvets.co.uk/farm/webinar-videos](http://www.langfordvets.co.uk/farm/webinar-videos)

## Nematodirus Warning

While Nematodirus is typically problematic in late spring, APHA have confirmed a positive case in the south west in February this year, so it's important to be aware of the risk factors and be prepared for outbreaks sooner rather than later.



Nematodirus battus worms can be devastating for growing lambs – not only does it cause fatalities through severe scour and dehydration, but outbreaks can strike quickly and with little warning when the overwintered eggs all hatch in a short space of time, known as a 'mass hatching'. NADIS estimates up to 5% mortality in affected flocks, and that growth rates in surviving lambs can be delayed by as much as 3 months, so the economic losses are seen long after the initial infestation.

The clinical signs (rapid onset of profuse watery diarrhoea, and loss of condition) are primarily caused by the larval stage of the parasite, not the adult worm as is the case for many other nematodes. As it's the adult worms that produce eggs, Nematodirus burdens often result in low, or even negative, results on a Faecal Worm Egg Count. Because of this, if losses are seen in growing lambs, Nematodirus cannot be ruled out just because no eggs were found in a faecal sample. The most accurate method of diagnosing a Nematodirus infestation is the presence of larvae in the guts on post mortem examination.



The good news is that anthelmintic resistance in Nematodirus is not as widespread as other worms like Haemonchus, so a 1-BZ "white wormer" is still the treatment of choice. However, wormers should be used alongside good management to mitigate the risks where possible, such as not turning out young lambs onto high risk pasture.

Pasture will be higher risk for if:

- Young lambs grazed there in the previous year (Nematodirus eggs produced last year can survive through the winter)
- It is south facing
- It is low altitude
- There have been issues with Nematodirus there in previous years

The most dangerous point occurs when lambs reach 6-12 weeks old, when they start to graze large quantities of grass – if this time coincides with the 'mass hatching', then the lambs will ingest huge numbers of larvae and rapidly develop clinical signs. In adulthood, sheep develop good resistance to Nematodirus, so the adult ewes without lambs at foot are low risk.



There are useful resources like the SCOPS Nematodirus forecast to help you assess if, and when, your lambs might benefit from a 1-BZ wormer before Nematodirus strikes. This uses weather patterns to try to predict when the mass hatching might be.

[www.scops.org.uk/forecasts/nematodirus-forecast](http://www.scops.org.uk/forecasts/nematodirus-forecast)