

## Newsletter January 2018

### Rearing Orphan Lambs

Early lambing flocks will soon be awash with the sound of bleating lambs. Many of these lambs may end up being orphans for a number of reasons. The first 24 hours are crucial in a lamb's life. A lamb that doesn't get a first suck from its dam needs colostrum as soon as possible. This can be milked from the dam if possible or colostrum supplement products should be used. A lamb needs approximately 200ml/kg within the first few hours of life. The navel should be immersed in iodine ideally within the first half an hour of life. Hypothermic lambs that appear weak should be warmed and weak lambs may need an injection of glucose into the abdomen (intra-peritoneal injection). Lambs after the first 24 hours may be fed commercially available lamb milk replacer.



It is important to remember that little and often feeding regimes are better for lambs than large, infrequent feeds. A common issue with bottle-fed lambs is abomasal bloat which is a result of sarcina bacteria increasing the production of lactic acid and leading to an increase in gas-producing bacteria in the gut. A yoghurt recipe formulated in Norway has been shown to be beneficial in preventing the development of abomasal bloat in lambs. This yoghurt milk can be fed from day 5 of a lamb's life with milk replacer fed on days 2-5.

The yoghurt recipe is detailed below:

- Put three litres of warm water (40°C) in a nine litre bucket.
- Add 1 kg of calf milk powder and mix
- Add 200 ml of acidophilus yoghurt. Mix. Cover with a lid or sheets of newspaper. Keep mixture warm for the next few hours. If the air temperature is too cold the milk will take a long time to ferment
- The yoghurt should set within 8-12 hours and may have a soft crust on top with some liquid at the bottom; or it may resemble thick commercial yoghurt.
- Top up with cold water to the 8 litre mark on the bucket and mix to feed directly to lambs.
- Depending on the number of lambs add the yoghurt mix to the daily ration at a rate of 1:7 (i.e. one part yoghurt to seven parts milk).
- This yoghurt mix will keep in the fridge for up to seven days if sterile containers are used. Remove 200 ml of the liquid yoghurt as the starter for the next batch.

Always remember to offer forage and creep feed to aid in the development of the lamb's rumen and ensure free access to water at all times. Orphan lambs should also be kept warm with a heat lamp benefitting in particularly cold weather.

**FarmVets SouthWest wish all our clients a happy and prosperous 2018**

## IBR - A Latent Threat

With nearly all cattle in now it is important to keep an eye out for disease spreading through sheds. Infectious Bovine Rhino-tracheitis is still a recurring threat to both the dairy and beef industries in the UK, and will soon be of major importance in terms of export of live animals and trade with the rest of the EU, due to the success of many countries in eradicating the disease. The Scandinavian countries, Austria and Switzerland have all successfully eradicated IBR and Germany, France, the Netherlands and Belgium all have national eradication programmes in place.



IBR is highly contagious and is associated with prolonged drop in milk yield, abortion and fertility issues with the main clinical signs involving a high temperature, nasal discharge, red eyes, loss of appetite and milk drop. Severely affected animals may develop a secondary bacterial infection which can lead to death in some cases. Latently infected carrier cattle are the main source of infection coming on farm with no apparent signs of infection. Strict biosecurity will help reduce problems arriving on farm, as well as knowing the status of the herd you are buying from.

There are a number of vaccines on the market which can protect your cattle against IBR some of which can be used in the face of an IBR outbreak. Speak to your vet to assess the vaccine that may be most

## Herd Health Plan Reviews

As most of you will already have noticed, this year has seen changes to the requirements of all Herd Health Plans including Red Tractor assurance plans. You now need to demonstrate a responsible approach towards medicine use and specifically, antibiotic use.



**Red Tractor Assurance**

In some instances, we will have to summate the amounts of antibiotic used on a farm in the last year and formulate a plan to minimise their use. To this end we will use the Kingshay Antimicrobial monitoring service (see attached flyer).

During your Herd Health planning meeting we will also be discussing BVD Free and the National Johne's Management Plan. Certain aligned dairy contracts have even more specific requirements. As you can see, we will clearly need more time to be able to complete your herd health plan than in the past. This will be best approached by a separate herd health plan meeting. When arranging your Herd health review please give us as much notice as possible so we can organise a meeting with a vet to complete all the new requirements.

**N.B. It is not possible to complete a herd health plan "on the day". It is your responsibility to ensure we arrange a herd health review meeting in time for any inspections due. In most instances we will need more than one week's notice.**



**Your local farm veterinary service**

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