

Newsletter February 2020

Watery mouth in new born lambs

Spectam in Newborn Lambs

Lambing is now well underway and with that we are having discussions with clients requesting Spectam for their lambs. Spectam is an antibiotic and as an industry we are endeavouring to reduce our antibiotic usage on farm. **The key to preventing watery mouth lies in colostrum (quality, quantity, quickly) and the hygiene of the environment into which the lamb is born.** If this is addressed, then there should be **no need for routine Spectam use** which means less money spent on drugs; always a good thing!



What is good colostrum?

Colostrum quality can be measured using a *BRIX Refractometer* (>22 good <22 poor). These are cheap and easily purchased online or in agricultural supply stores.

How Much Colostrum does a lamb need?

50ml/kg in the first 6 hours (That is **250ml for a 5Kg lamb in the first 6 hours**) and 200ml/kg in the first 24 hours in total (**1litre for a 5Kg lamb in the first 24 hours of life**). Triplet lambs never drink enough colostrum by simply sucking and should always be supplemented.

Colostrum Supplements and Storage

- Ewe's Colostrum is the best replacement. Artificial replacements are extremely poor in comparison and they cost money.
- Fresh colostrum can be stored in the fridge for 2 days and frozen for up to a year.
- Colostrum can be collected through the use of machines like the Udderly EZ sheep milker where hand milking is considered too laborious.

A graduated approach to decreasing Spectam use can be used through only treating lambs that are at high risk of developing watery mouth such as triplets and those born later in the lambing period when pen hygiene has slipped for whatever reason.

Remember:

- 250ml/5kg lamb in the first 6 hours
- Clean, dry, disinfected pens
- Colostrum quality and quickly

My first 6 months as a vet: Eliot Hedley

My first few months can be summarised as a trial by fire. I had to rapidly develop my surgery skills to keep up with the never ending list of LDA's, and acquire the fastest hands in the South West in order to complete the most treacherous TB tests from the depths of the Moorlands to the peaks of the Quantocks. Much less commendation can be given to my driving skills, however, as I somehow wrote off the oldest (and therefore slowest) van in the fleet, although it seems that Christmas truly came early for me this year as Mr Claus delivered me a lovely new van, fully "pimped" out, adorning the Farm Vets' prestigious logo... at least people will know to tuck in their wing mirrors when they see me approaching them down the country roads.



Pre-lambing Nutrition Blood testing (Funded by Norbrook)

The last trimester of pregnancy is when 70% of lamb growth occurs in the womb and so this puts massive demands on the ewe. It is also when she starts making colostrum which will be fed to the lamb in the first 24 hours of life. Adequate protein and energy supply are crucial to ensure this and thus reduce the risk of diseases such as twin lamb, watery mouth, pneumonia, lamb dysentery, navel ill, joint ill etc etc (this list could go on a while).

Feeding ewes in the 6 week run up to lambing is also one of the largest costs associated with sheep farming and thus should be managed appropriately to ensure a profitable business.

Blood samples taken from ewes approximately 3 weeks pre-lambing can give an indication to the energy and protein supply they are receiving and whether it is adequate.

We currently have funding from Norbrook for the lab testing assessing protein and energy supply in the last 6 weeks pre-lambing. If you would like to avail of this funding then you can call to book in a visit with the practice today.



Bulk tank failures

We offer extensive bespoke antimicrobial reduction plans based on your current usage which complement our existing regular "**Milksure**" course. The best way to avoid the headache of a bulk tank failure is to reduce our antibiotic usage. Another ploy would be to incorporate a **nil-milk withhold antibiotic** whenever antibiotic treatment is necessary. We now have a nil with-hold antibiotic available again which may be of use after consultation with a Vet.

MilkSure ✓



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