

October 2022 Newsletter

SAME OLD, SAME OLD ??

With Autumn upon us and the still humid days of Winter ahead have you started thinking about pneumonia prevention?

Are you disappointed with levels of pneumonia in the last years? But nonetheless will make no changes.....and then expect a different outcome?

What changes are available? Vaccination, housing, ventilation, grouping etc.

If you want to reduce pneumonia levels this winter speak to us now to make a bespoke farm plan.

Hoping to help, Art

Avoiding scours in dairy calves. Eoghan McAlonan

Remove calf within 2 hours to decrease exposure to scour bugs shed by the cow.

Harvest colostrum hygienically (disinfect teats/clean bucket) within 2 hours to reduce dilution of colostrum with milk. Test colostrum using a Brix refractometer and only use if >22%.

Feed colostrum at 10% bodyweight within 6 hours and repeat 12 hours later (3-4 litres)

Avoiding scour is dependant on local antibody levels in the gut. Increase levels of antibody by continuing to feed colostrum or transition milk (milk from subsequent milking's) for 5-10 days.

Supplement milk replacer with 0.5-1lt transition milk. If this is not from the calf's own mother, then pasteurize transition milk first. This point is especially important if you have invested in Rotavec Corona vaccine.

Store colostrum in a fridge or freeze it. Bacteria levels rise quickly at room temperature and these bacteria inhibit colostrum absorption.

Provide adequate nutrition. Ad-lib fed calves suffer less scours than those on restricted feeding. This is particularly true with cryptosporidium.



We should aim for 900g milk replacer (MR) per day, which can be achieved by feeding 3 litres of 15% MR twice daily.

When temperatures drop below 10°C increase MR by a further 25%. Calves use energy to grow, fight disease and keep warm. If they use more energy to keep warm, there is less available to grow and fight disease. Use calf coats in the first 5 weeks and bed adequately; a calf's legs should not be visible if there is enough bedding.

Mineral Supplements for Livestock

Most people supplement minerals for livestock in one form or another, for some it is because of a diagnosed deficiency and for others it is a matter of “peace of mind”. However, like all costs, this area should be looked at more closely. Ask yourself a few questions about the mineral supplements you give, if any, to your stock.

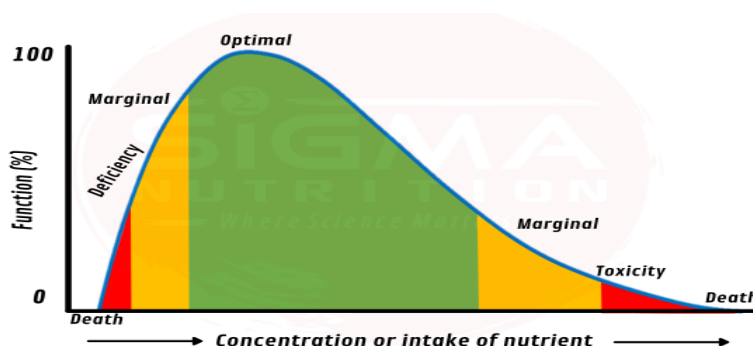
Do they definitely need it?

Can you be confident it is giving you the right balance of minerals?

Can all animals access it equally and/or will all animals access it equally?

Am I confident that my stock have the optimum supply of minerals?

To the right is a graph of mineral supply against health/production. A severe deficiency might be obvious, e.g. swayback in sheep, but losses—through over or under supply of a particular mineral - may be difficult to spot. Knowing whether you are at “Optimal” can be difficult.



Minerals are present in all feed and water as well as in supplements e.g. powder, buckets, licks and boluses etc. Ideally, all sources should be taken in to account when checking minerals, water especially often gets forgotten which is particularly important with bore-holes.

Multiple studies have shown that we often over feed minerals, more so in dairy herds. We can help get your mineral nutrition checked and optimised. A good place to start is getting your fresh and conserved forages analysed, it costs about £30 per sample. Once you have that info, consider concentrate feeds which usually have minerals added. This should give us a good idea of the supply of minerals to the animal before we add in supplements IF THEY ARE NECESSARY! Blood samples are great for identifying a deficiency and monitoring the effect of any changes made but a “bottom up” assessment of all minerals in the diet is the best way to reduce over feeding of minerals and, therefore, unnecessary spending. In previous mineral checks we have been able to halve the inclusion of bagged minerals in one herd and also identify that haphazard tipping of mineral bags into the mixer wagon— instead of properly weighing them out— was costing another dairy farm £6,000 per year.

Commercial Sheep Discussion Group

Do you want to progress your sheep business?

The next meeting **“Cost of Production: Understanding and addressing input costs to improve farm profit”** will take place **on Monday 17th October at 2pm at Ivy Cottage, Weekmoor, Milverton, Somerset, TA4 1QE.**

THIS EVENT IS FREE TO Members of the Sheep Discussion Group and £15 to Non-members

Food and Refreshments will be provided

Please contact any of our branches today to book your place today OR to become a member of the Sheep Discussion Group.