

Newsletter March 2018

Leptospirosis

Perhaps today turnout may seem a long time away - however, it will come and it is best to be prepared.

For breeding cows at grass (dairy or beef) Leptospirosis is a concern. Spring turnout is the period of highest transmission of this bug. This is because the Lepto is spread from the cows' urine. The urine lands on the grass, and unlike conditions indoors, the other cows indiscriminately graze grass which may have been contaminated with Lepto bugs.



Leptospirosis causes abortion in cows and also udder pathology called "flabby bag". Importantly, Lepto is zoonotic, meaning that humans can also be infected. This is usually caused by farmers coming into contact with infected cows' urine (e.g. in the milking pit).

Three years ago our vet Graeme contracted Lepto and became very ill - i/v drip and hospitalisation. We are all therefore obliged to reduce the risk to ourselves and our staff or families contracting Lepto.

There is a very good deal on the vaccine at the moment running through the Spring - give us a call.

Remember cows/heifers in their first year need two injections one month apart to complete their primary course - after that it is yearly boosters.

Twin Lamb Disease

Twin lamb disease, which is known as pregnancy toxaemia, results when ewes are unable to meet the nutritional demands in late pregnancy. This may occur when there is insufficient supply of feed, inclement weather, disease preventing adequate feed intake, or there is a sudden restriction of feed available. It occurs primarily in older ewes with multiples. Signs of pregnancy toxaemia include depression, with a reluctance to move, proceeding to blindness, twitching, teeth grinding, frothing and eventually death.



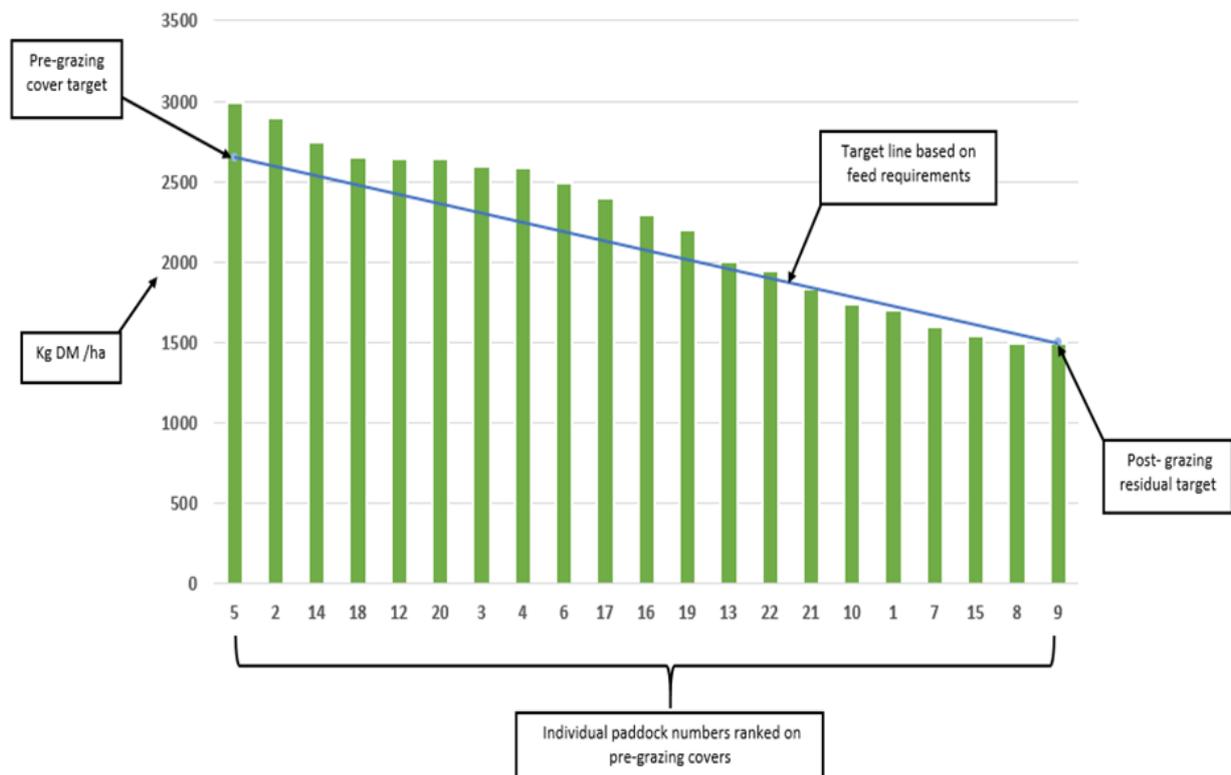
Early treatment is essential as evidence of severe symptoms such as twitching and frothing indicates a poor prognosis for survival, as damage to the kidneys may have already occurred. Treatment involves hydration, propylene glycol orally (Glycerol + or Ketosaid) and calcium under the skin (they usually have hypocalcaemia as well). This is preventable by ensuring that feed levels are allocated correctly based on scanning data and ensuring minimal stress in the final trimester. Good levels of high quality feed in the final trimester of pregnancy have also been shown to improve lamb survival so more ewes alive and more lambs!

Planning for Spring

Despite us currently being in the throws of a cold snap, Spring is nearly upon us, and thus planning your grazing through feed budgeting now, is crucial in maximising your milk/meat from forage, with grazed grass being the cheapest feed option available.

Measuring pasture covers will allow you to plan a sound rotation to optimise grass use. This will help in ensuring beef cattle are in good condition for breeding, ewes milk well and lambs grow. Sampling grass will also give a good idea as to the nutritive content of the grass in terms of energy, protein and trace elements.

Below is an example of a simple feed budget wedge. Spring grass also brings animal health challenges such as grass staggers, vitamin B12 deficiencies and managing worms, so good nutrition planning can help mitigate these issues. Animals that are well fed have better immunity and correct vitamin/mineral balances.



Easter Opening Hours



Our offices will be shut on Good Friday, Easter Sunday & Easter Monday
Drugs can be collected from our Sedgemoor Office **by appointment only**.



Your local farm veterinary service

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