

Sheep Abortion Prevention



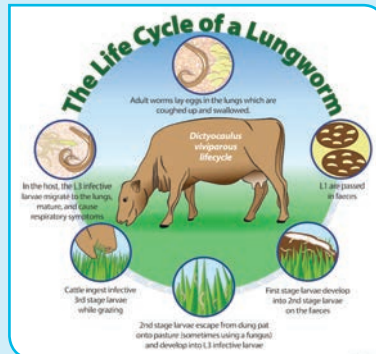
It was great to see so many of you at our sheep meeting at Macclesfield Rugby club last month. If you have any questions or would like to investigate high barren rates or abortions in your flock then please contact Matt Raine at the office or on **07816 440306**.

Both Toxovax and Cevac Chlamydia are now available to order through the office. Remember that the latest you can vaccinate ewes is four weeks prior to tugging, however they can be vaccinated up to four months prior to tugging. Ewe lambs must be at least five months of age when they are

vaccinated. We are currently offering a 5% discount on all Toxovax ordered by 31st August. For more information please ring the office and speak to Rachael.

Diseases to Look Out for this Month...

We have had our first diagnosis of lungworm in the practice this month. Lungworm most commonly affects youngstock in their first season at grass, however it can also be seen in older animals particularly where they have not had the chance to develop any immunity or their immunity has waned- examples of this include freshly calved heifers moving to a new farm, or older animals being grazed on pasture that has been used for youngstock. The first sign of disease is a dry cough, particularly noticeable when animals are being moved. Disease can progress rapidly so seek advice promptly if you are concerned.



Fly season is well and truly upon us and we have seen several cases of fly strike this month. Ensuring that you are using fly prevention products correctly is key to good control- for example Ectofly is only licensed to prevent fly strike on areas covered by spray and must be repeated after 6-8 weeks. Spotinor can be repeated from four weeks following administration. Remember that the risk of fly strike is also increased in open wounds or if animals have skin damage for any other reason such as scour. We stock both Ectofly and Spotinor at competitive prices; please speak to Rachael for a quote.

Contacting Us

Are you using the best number to get in touch with us? Just a reminder that you can now contact us at Holly Tree on **01477 571000**, you may find this a cheaper option if calling from a mobile.

Staff News

This month we are delighted to welcome Jenny Marmion back from maternity leave. Jenny will be returning to work three days a week from the 1st of July.

We are also delighted to announce that Hollie Edwards and her husband Richard are expecting their first baby in October.

Introducing Nichol Fisher, locum vet

Who is going to be helping us out for a few days (and nights) in July and August. Nichol is an enthusiastic, experienced farm vet who has worked in practice and at the University of Liverpool.



Are You Making the Most of Your Clinical Waste Bin?

Correct disposal of medicines is an area where we often find farmers aren't fully aware of the legal requirements. This can mean you are paying more than you need to be for disposal of waste products.

Uncontaminated outer packaging including cardboard boxes, syringe wrappers and bolus wrappers can be disposed of via normal waste and doesn't need to go into your yellow clinical waste bin.

The large yellow bin should be used for all empty medicines bottles and syringes.



Full clinical waste and sharps bins should be returned to us at Holly Tree Farm. These are collected for incineration and we can supply new bins, the cost of which includes disposal charges.

Our Next Course is...

Mastering Medicines Workshop: Beef and Sheep. Thursday 18th July, 10.30am - 2.30pm.

Attendance at a medicines workshop is now strongly recommended by Red Tractor assessors and will be of benefit to any members of your farm team who are involved in handling and administering medicines. Please call Vicky on **01477 571000** to book a place.

TB Update

Don't forget that once a TB test is underway no cattle can leave your holding until after the test has been read.

This includes cattle going direct to slaughter. The only exemption is for cattle who have suffered an accident or injury and are eligible for casualty on farm slaughter.





GETTING THE MOST FROM A.I. - DAIRY AND BEEF CATTLE

Artificial insemination is widely used in the dairy industry and increasingly in beef cattle. We often run DIY AI courses at the practice, which cover the theory and provide plenty of hands-on practical teaching; please phone us to register your interest.

Advantages of A.I.

- A.I. provides access to a wide selection of quality sires with data on estimated breeding values (EBVs), allowing for selection of bulls with desirable traits and faster improvement of herd genetics and productivity.
- Hiring or buying bulls risks unintentionally bringing unwanted diseases on to the farm at the same time. A.I. bulls and semen are thoroughly screened for common diseases.
- A.I. bulls and semen are thoroughly fertility tested, whereas it is easy for a sub-fertile stock bull to be masked by multiple sire mating groups or extended breeding periods. A sub-fertile or infertile bull used alone can be disastrous for calving pattern and calving index.
- A.I. can be used with a synchronisation programme in beef and dairy herds to produce a tighter calving period, create a block calving pattern or reduce calving index. A.I. can achieve high conception rates when used correctly.
- Sexed semen can be used to breed desired replacements and increase productivity, with female dairy semen, and both male and female beef semen available. Sexed semen typically contains 90% sperm of the desired sex.
- Using A.I. can eliminate the need to keep a bull, and consequently the associated costs and health and safety risks. The cost of keeping a reasonable quality beef stock bull works out at around £45 per calf produced.

Disadvantages of A.I.

- A.I. requires training, knowledge and skill to be used effectively.
- Investment in resources and time for accurate heat detection are needed.
- Extra handling of beef cattle is required for service to A.I.

Optimising timing of A.I. in dairy herds

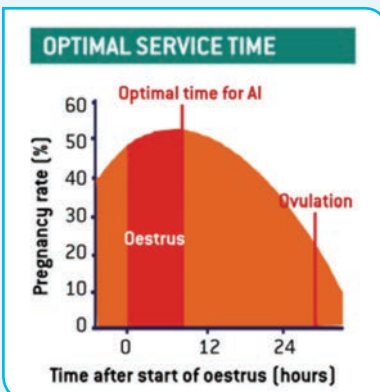


Image from *Farmers Weekly*

– cows seen bulling on a morning are inseminated the same evening, and those bulling on an afternoon/evening are inseminated the following morning.

Accurate heat detection is key to good results, and while there are many tools available that can greatly aid heat detection (from tail paint/kamars to pedometers), if used alone they are still not as accurate as observation. Two 30-minute observation periods a day, after the cows have been milked, fed and have settled (e.g. at 8am and 8pm), can achieve a 70% heat detection accuracy. A combination of heat detection tools and observation periods is the best solution for many farms.

The timing of insemination is based on predicting when ovulation will occur. The aim is for viable sperm to be in the oviduct before the egg gets there – too early and the sperm will deteriorate, too late and the egg will no longer be viable.

Ovulation occurs 24-32 hours after the start of standing heat, which means the ideal time to inseminate is at the end of standing heat. Oestrus lasts for 18 hours on average, but can be as short as 6 hours in some cows, with only 50% showing standing heat. This makes it very difficult to predict the end of standing heat, so the best advice is to follow the 'am/pm rule'

Preparation in beef herds to achieve the best results from A.I.

Cows must be at least 40 days calved before entering a synchronisation programme, as before this they are unlikely to be cycling and conception rates will be poor. For heifers to calve at two years they must be in calf by 15 months of age and should be 65% of mature body weight at service. Generally A.I. results will be good if heifers are cycling before the programme, but younger heifers (especially late maturing breeds such as limousins), may not have reached sexual maturity, leading to poorer results.



Cows should calve at body condition score 2.5-3 (out of 5) to ensure that most are cycling by 40 days post-calving. Nutrition should be kept at a steady or slightly increasing plane with no sudden changes, and any trace element deficiencies should be corrected well before

the synchronisation programme. However, the most common cause of poor fertility is simple protein and energy deficiency leading to poor body condition score and delayed return to cycling, rather than trace element deficiency.

The presence of active BVD, IBR or leptospirosis infection in a breeding group can have a big impact on pregnancy rates. Vaccination programmes should be fully completed before the breeding programme, and bought-in animals should be quarantined, tested and vaccinated as appropriate. Adult cows do not usually require treatment for gut worms, but a fluke control plan should be in place. Thought should also be given to suitable handling facilities.



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