

South Wales Farm Vets

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Our Team



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Living And Working In Your Community

February 2022

Hello and welcome to the February Newsletter. The weather was quite kind to us in the end last month – lucky for you early lambers. We've already done quite a few lambings and caesarians and talked to a lot of you about the lack of Spectam. Also, we are starting to do some of the pre-lambing blood samples to check on nutritional status – to be done 3 weeks before the start of lambing. These two things are related – the lack of pre-emptive antibiotic treatment makes the quality of ewe colostrum all the more important, along with hygiene, cleanliness, warmth etc. – anything that can reduce the risk of watery mouth (E. coli). If any of you would like some advice about this or anything else to do with lambing, we are at the end of the phone. We look forward to seeing you soon!

We're also starting to see a few calves as well. Both lambs and calves can benefit from a coat – there are biodegradable jackets – waterproof ones – available for lambs, and reusable fabric coats for calves. The energy that they save by not having to keep themselves so warm is instead used in live weight gain. Worth considering.

Just a reminder about the TB changes – the main one being that if you have an IR (inconclusive reactor) at a test, your whole herd is shut down until that IR is retested 60 days later.

Sadly, we continue to see dog attacks on sheep. If you are unlucky enough to have this happen to your sheep, please report it to the police and ask to have it logged with the Rural Coordinator. All cases need to be recorded for the true incidence to be known.

Mary

The Benefits of Anti-Inflammatories at Lambing Time

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are a group of medications that provide pain relief, reduce fever and inflammation plus they also prevent and treat endotoxaemia (blood poisoning). You may recognise names such as Loxicom or Metacam. These are different brand names of the same NSAID.

There are many licenced NSAIDs in cattle but none currently licenced for sheep. They are however equally beneficial in both species. We can use products, that are licenced for cattle, in sheep. They are useful in many situations and some examples are:

Difficult lambing

Those that have required assistance and manipulation of the lambs within the ewe. The resultant bruising and trauma can be very uncomfortable for the ewe. Early pain relief will aid their recovery and get them back to mothering the lamb(s).

Prolapsed vagina or uterus

When replacing the prolapse it is key to make the ewe feel more comfortable by giving anti-inflammatories. This will reduce any straining that may cause her to re prolapse. It may also be necessary to call a vet as an epidural can aid replacement of a difficult prolapse.

Mastitis

A very painful condition of the udder. It is generally caused by a bacterial infection post lambing. Signs to look out for are:

- A sick ewe (feverish, depressed and inappotent).
- A ewe not allowing her lamb to feed.
- A hard, swollen, warm udder (only one side may be affected).

Antibiotics may be required to treat the bacterial infection but anti-inflammatories are also key to make the ewe feel more comfortable and





Sian Fuller



Dom Day



Jimmy Jackson



Sian Lloyd



Helen Dando



Tracey Huntley

reduce an elevated temperature.

Twin lamb disease

This is a condition of ewes in late gestation where the ewe’s blood glucose falls too low, as the growing lambs demand is greater than the supply. The ewe may also have a low blood calcium at the same time, this can worsen her condition as it affects the ewes’ ability to produce glucose. Treatment relies on a propylene glycol drench which the ewe converts into glucose in the body. Calcium is also recommended to be given to help restore these low levels. We combine this in an oral drench called ‘Pep Up’ which is simple to give and available at SWFV. Pep up also contains cobalt which helps with energy release.

Often affected ewes are down and unable to stand which causes muscle damage and pain. Anti inflammatories are again essential in combination with a product like Pep Up. They will provide pain relief and aid feed intake to help restore energy levels, in addition to this they will help reduce levels of inflammatory chemicals involved in starting the disease process.

Lambs

A lamb that is injured (fractured leg) or sick may benefit from an NSAID injection. It is crucial that they are hydrated enough to process the medication. Also ensuring accurate dosing by using a small 1 ml syringe is sensible.

In general, anti-inflammatories alongside other specific treatments help the animal to recover quicker. It is important to give them early to minimise pain and discomfort, if you think it’s something you would take paracetamol for then give them the animal equivalent. Speak to one of our team if you have any questions regarding medication administration.

Scottish ponderings from Jimmy

I have so far found Welsh farmers to be little different from my Scots acquaintances and ex clients. Same dress code; waterproofs, designer boiler suits (John Deere mostly) and either base ball hat or cloth cap depending on rank and status and, of course’ the same ubiquitous cheerful optimism?

The little differences though may be more interesting. There is, very understandably, a palpably genuine anxiety at the reading of a tuberculin test here which I was never aware of previously. In 42 years of tuberculin testing in Scotland, I have only once ever found a reactor that subsequently was confirmed to have been infected with tuberculosis. That was 40 years ago. Scottish farmers, I feel, are not fully aware of how fortunate they are. I do try and tell them.

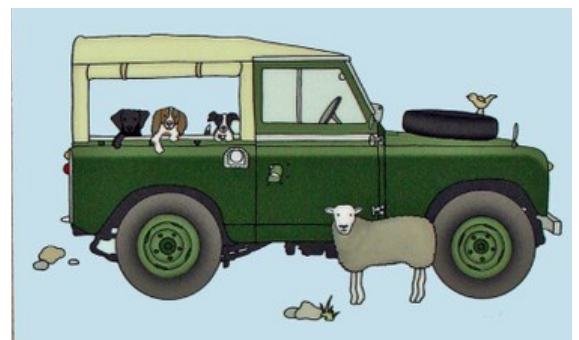
There are some differences in terminology. For one, ‘Gathering the hill’ can mean sending the sheep dogs to the summit of Ben Lomond or Beinn Ime whereas here a mountain in South Wales can, as you know, be substantially lower, but as I have found, no less steep.

Scottish holdings tend to be at the bottom of the mountain. Not so here. I am not used to the commonly found narrow, precipitous, and unmarked track that serves, and serves very well I am usually assured, as a farm road. There are no crash barriers! When I relayed this sense of peril to one of our clients, who admittedly looked as if he had safely made the same journey all of his life, he wisely advised, ‘Don’t look down, look where you are going!’ Probably good to keep in mind for many things in life.

Another difference is the small selection of surnames in Wales. Our largest client file used to be under the letter M for McAllister to MacVicar. However, this also displays something in common. Rural people mostly still haven’t moved far from their ancestors

From valley to vale. Those single track vale roads with high hedges. For the first couple of days after starting with the practice I got completely lost. Like being in a maze. When, as the last resort, phoning for directions, the first question asked in reply nearly always is, ‘well where are you now?’ That’s usually the problem!

Thank goodness for space age technology, Google Maps and the enviable patience of the ladies in the office!



Office opening hours

Monday – Friday

8.30am - 5.30pm

Emergency out of hours service

Weeknights 5.30pm - 8.30am

Saturday & Sunday all day