

Clevedale Farm Newsletter

February 2014

“Preparation for Lambing”

– Fox & Hounds, Ainthorpe, 4th March, 6.30pm

In the run up to the main lambing season, we are holding a meeting in association with EBLEX, to discuss ways of reducing losses at lambing, the benefits of recording losses and some tips on establishing causes of losses (including post-mortem technique). A buffet will be provided.

To book your free place, please contact us at the surgery (01287 623802) or else EBLEX directly on 01904 771211.

Staying Safe on Farm

It's not news to hear and we certainly don't need the Health and Safety Executive to tell us that farming is a hazardous occupation. In October last year, *The Farmer's Weekly* stated that farming is still the most dangerous industry with 29 fatalities in 2012/13 - **one fifth** of fatal injuries to ALL workers in the UK!

With this mind we want to remind you of the risks of working with livestock to farmers and vets, something those of us who handle them on a daily basis sometimes forget: there is always a risk from crushing, kicking, butting or gorging. When we're handling larger numbers, for example when we're dehorning, scanning/PD'ing or TB testing, this risk is increased. If the risk of injury remains likely, then steps need to be taken to allow the procedures to be carried out safely and if this can't be done then the procedure must stop immediately. When handling cattle, proper handling facilities should be used which are well maintained and in good order i.e. a race and suitable crush; ensure people handling the animals/equipment are competently trained; cull temperamental animals. This all sounds common sense but too many injuries are still recorded where makeshift facilities are used or procedures are carried out in corridors/narrow enclosures causing operators to get trapped. Your welfare is important to us as well as your livestock's!

Pre-calving trace element testing

In the run up to spring calving you might want to consider checking the levels of copper, selenium and iodine in your cows. These are all elements which contribute to healthy calves and subsequent cow fertility. Supplementation is usually in-feed or by oral bolus but depending on which deficiency is identified may be possible by other means – the benefits in deficient herds are undoubted with farmers reporting cows calving down more quickly, producing stronger calves and a more fertile bulling period subsequently.

Suckler performance

Further to improving your suckler herd performance, recording a few bits of information about the numbers of cows that went to the bull, number calves born dead/alive etc is very useful. To help you record this data you can download a form from our website www.clevedalevets.co.uk – just go to “Farm Animal” then select “Farm Animal News” and you’ll see a list of downloads. If you would prefer for us to put one in the post for you, just give us a shout. At the end of the year, reviewing the data may offer insight into just where improvements might be made to increase your profitability.

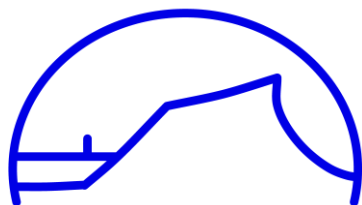
Blood sampling sheep pre-lambing

Problems at lambing time attributable to poor nutrition in late pregnancy are very difficult to fix - blood sampling 2-3 weeks before ewes are due to lamb can give information about the nutritional status of ewes and prevent potential problems arising by adjusting the ration. If sheep are scanned and grouped accordingly, precise advice can be given about levels of concentrate feeding, even reducing it for some groups. Feed adjustments can result in more economic use of available concentrates. Even in flocks that don’t scan, blood testing can still be beneficial. Please ring the surgery and speak to one of the farm vets to discuss if you are interested in this service.

SBV – Schmallenberg still has many questions unanswered – what will happen this/next year? Will vaccine become a necessity? Is vaccine indeed as protective as we’re led to believe? Please let us know your experiences as the season progresses – your feedback is very important so that instructive decisions can be made going forward.

Neil’s Quick Release Halters

And finally, talking of Health & Safety, it might be of interest to some of you to know that Neil Fletcher of Glaisdale finally got fed up with getting poked in the face by his Highland Cattle when taking off halters and decided to improve his Health and Safety by producing a Quick-Release halter. Anyone interested might want to visit his web-site www.neilshalters.com



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