



**We would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New year to all our clients**

Well the year is starting to draw to a close and what a year it has been. I think this year has reminded us just how much we are all at the mercy of the weather. It has been a year of extremes from the snowstorms at the beginning to the drought in the summer. Our livestock has coped with a lot, and the scanning results are coming in surprisingly well considering. The autumn has been busy with calving's now the cows' condition is improving.

I hope that you will all get time to put your feet up over Christmas at some point for a well earned rest and prepare yourselves for another busy year and whatever 2019 will bring.



## *Update on BVD testing for animals moving to Scotland*

Since 3<sup>rd</sup> April this year all cattle arriving in Scotland have been flagged as "risky" for BVD unless they have a BVD negative status on ScotEID. This has caused a number of problems, particularly when it has applied to carefully-sourced pedigree animals from herds accredited as "BVD free" by CHCS schemes.

This issue has now been resolved for at least some of the cattle moving in to Scotland from CHCS accredited herds. The following joint statement has been agreed by HiHealth Herdcare, the Premium Cattle Health Scheme, ScotEID and the Scottish Government:

**Cattle moving into Scotland will no longer require additional BVD testing when the holding of birth has been continuously Cattle Health Certification Standards (CHCS) accredited as "BVD free" since the animal was born.**

## *Don't forget to use...*

- **Fasinex** and **Endofluke** fluke treatments before Christmas then speak to your vet about further treatment as this will depend on weather conditions.
- **Spotinor/ Spot On** for lice problems in cattle.
- **Trodax** should be back in stock by early December but we are waiting for it to come back in-stock to the wholesaler.

## **Alnwick v. Rossendale Rugby Match**

We are sponsoring the Alnwick v Rossendale rugby match at Alnwick on the 8/12/18. Kick off is at 2.15pm.

## *Do you keep pigs, even as pets?*

It is important that even if you keep pigs as pets that you are aware of the legislation regarding feeding pigs waste from kitchens.

African Swine Fever is a disease that is not currently found within the UK but it is spreading within eastern and central Europe. This disease only affects pigs but it is highly contagious and often fatal.

**It is illegal to feed pigs with catering waste or kitchen scraps as these can transmit African Swine Fever as well as other serious diseases such as foot and mouth disease and classical swine fever.**

To help to reduce the risk of African Swine fever in the UK then please ensure you do not feed food scraps or catering waste from any restaurant or commercial kitchen (including vegan kitchens); feed domestic kitchen waste or scraps; feed raw, partially cooked or fully cooked meat and fish (including shellfish); or feed dog and cat food.

# Toe-Tip Necrosis Syndrome (TTNS) in weaned beef calves

TTNS is a syndrome which is seen sporadically in feedlot cattle in North America but more recently there have been two outbreaks of TTNS involving weaned suckled calves.

The calves presented with varying severity of lameness with one or more limbs affected. Unwillingness to bear weight on the affected legs was common. Pain could be elicited on percussion of the toe area of the sole of the affected limbs. On careful inspection of the toe area there was separation of the white line on the toe region of the foot. Deeper trimming on calves that had been euthanised on humane grounds revealed dead tissue at the tip of the pedal bone which is contained within the hoof.

Detailed examination of the foot by a pathologist revealed there was thinning of the sole and damage to the toe area with associated damage to the white line. On removing the horn from the bottom of the hoof there was evidence of infection of the tissue underlying as well as the pedal bone. It was shown that the infection had tracked up from the outside, through the split in the white line to infect the bone underneath in the foot.

In both the outbreaks there lameness noted in 20% of the calves within 7 days of them being handled and the use of long acting oxytetracycline by the farmers had not proven an effective treatment.

In summary:

- The pathological findings indicate that the disease is caused by damage to the white line which allows infection to enter into the claw.
- Injectable antibiotics were shown to be ineffective and the best treatment is either surgically cleaning the area to remove the dead tissue and infection or amputating the affected claw.
- Risk factors for TTNS are
  - \* Transport
  - \* Road walking
  - \* Handling fractious calves in a crush with a solid steel floor
  - \* Prolonged standing on concrete
  - \* Poor quality horn growth due to general ill health/ill thrift.

This article was based on work recently published by Colin Penny, Robert Anderson and Stephen Bradley. [Penny, Anderson and Bradley. (2018). *Toe tip Necrosis Syndrome*



## Ewe Nutrition— thinking ahead to spring

Nutrition is probably one of the largest variable costs with sheep production. Making good quality silage of > 11 MJ of ME/ kg DM for feeding during late pregnancy helps but there are alternatives if silage stocks are insufficient.

In the first 90 days of pregnancy severe undernutrition can have a negative impact on the lamb birthweight but also it can cause a reduction in muscle growth, affect the immune system and the reproduction potential of the lambs. The importance of this was seen in January and February when there was heavy snowfall . Supplementing the ewes with reasonable quality conserved forage such as hay or big bale silage would be enough to meet the modest energy requirements of the ewes at this stage. It is advisable to try to maintain the body condition of ewes that are around 2.5-3.0 at this stage as previously it was though ok to allow mobilisation of half a body condition score at this time.

Late pregnancy is the time where nutrition has a major impact on ewe health, the vigour of the lambs born and the subsequent lamb growth rates. The most growth of the lamb occurs in the last 6 weeks of pregnancy and this is commonly when concentrates are supplied. It goes without saying that the higher the quality of forage then the less concentrates that are required to meet the protein and energy requirement of the ewe in late pregnancy.

Grass silage is a high value feedstuff for sheep but the digestibility of it is an important factor as poor quality silage will reduce the intakes of dry matter and energy in late pregnancy and make the ewes susceptible to pregnancy toxemia. Sheep are also more susceptible to *Listeria* than cattle so care should be taken in the storage of the silage and ensuring the silage being fed is not spoiled. Good quality grass silage (> 11MJ ME/kg DM) will supply 75% of the ewes protein requirements in late pregnancy , bypass protein will be required to

meet the rest of the ewes requirements. Maize silage and wholecrop is low in protein, so supplementation with both effective rumen degradable protein and digestible undegradable protein is required.

Wheat or barley straw can be fed as the sole forage source but it is low in both energy and protein. Therefore straw based diets will require significant concentrate feeding (up to 1.2kg /ewe/ day for twin-bearing ewes in the last 2 weeks of pregnancy). This is the maximum concentrate : forage ratio of 60:40 that should be fed. The usual recommendation is to feed 1.5 kg of straw/ ewe/ day and allow for 50% wastage. Ewes must be in good body condition score ( BCS 3) and split into groups based on foetal numbers and fed accordingly. The ewes should be moved onto the straw diet 6-7 weeks pre-lambing to allow the ewes to get used to the high levels of straw in the diet. No more than 400g of concentrate should be given per feed in the late lambing period which means the ewes will need fed 3-4 times a day.

Brassicas should not make up more than 50 % of the dry matter intake of the sheep. The ewes need a source of forage to maintain good rumen health and this can be in the form of straw or big bale silage. There are hazards of feeding brassicas as they can interfere with iodine uptake leading to deficiency. Kale can potentially cause redwater and weak lambs. Fodder beet can make ewes susceptible to hypocalcaemia in late pregnancy. Finally in unvaccinated sheep there is a risk of clostridial infection from high levels of soil ingestion.

Given the spring and summer we have had this year it is worth considering alternatives feeding regimens for ewes around lambing time. Why not discuss the different options with your vet.

This article is based on the paper as follows: Macrae, A (2018). Sheep Nutrition— what can I feed sheep other than grass, hay and ewe nuts?. *Cattle Practice* Volume 26 Part 2 pp. 34-40.