



As I write this, most of the country is bathing in sunshine and the grass is really starting to take off in time for turning out freshly lambed / calved ewes and cows and their offspring. What a difference a year makes! Recent worries over the lack of straw and forage may not come to a head if this pattern continues.

Due to the relatively mild winter, ewes in particular seem to be in very good condition so there seems to be more assistance required due to oversized lambs. The surprise result of last spring's bad weather was a very good scan result for cattle on most farms and I'm sure the actual calving percentage will be boosted further by the number of twin calves that I've heard about.



Give and Let Live – with the time you've invested, you don't deserve to lose lambs—MSD

Sheep pregnancy scanners across the UK have reported variable results over the winter with some flocks in some areas carrying 20% to 40% fewer lambs than last year. Farmers are therefore being urged to protect every newborn lamb this spring from preventable disease threats.

"It looks like lamb numbers may well be down nationally this year, but if we get a kind spring weather-wise that will certainly help producers maximise the number of lambs reared, which is what counts. However, what sheep producers simply cannot afford to do is lose more lambs to easily preventable diseases," says sheep vet Phillippa Page from Flock Health Limited.

Ms Page says that farmers facing a lower lamb crop must not react to a depressed productivity challenge by skimping on essential vaccinations that will protect young lambs against diseases that can cause significant mortalities.

"Clostridial diseases and pasteurellosis are both silent

killers. Typically, the first sign a farmer will see is a dead lamb, sometimes, losses can be catastrophic."

"In an era when proven and highly cost-effective vaccines are available, no lamb should die from a clostridial disease," she adds.

Ms Page says that it is impossible to control the multiple and varied stress-related 'trigger' factors (e.g. a sudden change in the weather, change in diet or parasite infection) for clostridial disease and pasteurellosis in lambs, so vaccination of these newborns is essential.

"Provided a ewe has been fully vaccinated against these two key disease threats, the colostrum her lambs receive shortly after birth gives them short-lived protection against pasteurellosis and clostridial diseases like pulpy kidney, braxy, blackleg and tetanus. However, this so-called passive immunity only lasts for so long. This means lambs must be vaccinated themselves from three weeks of age."

Key points:

Clostridial diseases and pasteurellosis are real threats in unvaccinated lambs.

Colostrum from vaccinated ewes gives disease protection to lambs provided they receive enough in the first 24 hours, but only lasts for a limited period.

Vaccination of newborn lambs **from three weeks of age** will protect them from the main clostridial diseases and pasteurellosis.

Don't Forget to Use...

- **Mistral** or **Stalosan** disinfectant: drying agent for lambing / calving pens.
- **Baycox** for coccidiosis
- **Ovovac P** clostridial and *Pasteurella* vaccination for lambs
- **Cydetin 10% LA** turnout cattle wormer
- **Immunocol Platinum** colostrum replacer for calves and lambs
- **Rotavec Corona** for any late spring calvers to prevent calf scour (3-12wks pre-calving)

Coccidiosis in Lambs and Calves—Pam Brown

With the pleasant warm weather, unfortunately some problems come, namely an earlier parasite season than last year. I've already diagnosed a case of coccidiosis in 4 week old calves at the point of turnout.

What is coccidiosis?

Coccidia is a single-celled parasite which damages the wall of the intestine leading to diarrhoea (which may contain blood), staining of the tail region, rapid weight loss, painful straining and death if left untreated. Coccidiosis can severely impact growth and future production if not treated early and correctly due to the gut damage left behind. It also makes lambs susceptible to fly strike and bacterial gut infections. The species of *Coccidia* that affect lambs and calves are different so there is not thought to be spread between species.

Who is most at risk?

Lambs and calves are most at risk from 4-6 weeks of age as their maternal immunity wanes before they develop their own immunity. Adults and older lambs / calves act as a source of infection – shedding oocysts (similar to worm eggs) onto pasture and bedding, which are subsequently eaten by young animals. Oocysts can survive on pasture for up to two years so often last year's lamb / calf crop will be the source of infection for this year's. Stressful events, including diet change, severe weather, shipping and overcrowding, can also predispose lambs and calves to coccidiosis.

How is it diagnosed?

Coccidiosis is diagnosed through faecal egg counts. The other serious common cause of diarrhoea in young lambs is *Nematodirus* (a worm causing high mortality in lambs) and the two need to be differentiated through faecal examination. Treating for the wrong parasite can cause costly delays in getting the right treatment in at the right time.



How is it treated?

Treating early is vital to prevent losses. Waiting until half the field of lambs / calves are scoured is too late. Early faecal egg counts at the first sign of scour and diagnosis is essential and then treating the whole field without delay. Treating early will also reduce the shedding of oocysts into the environment and contamination.

Treatment options include: **Vecoxan** (diclazuril) - oral drench—zero withdrawal

Baycox (toltrazuril) - oral drench—our preferred product but the withdrawal is 63 days for cattle and 42 days for sheep

Beware, treating too early can cause problems later—DO NOT treat animals under 3wks old as they need some exposure to develop resistance.

How can it be managed?

Good management is key to reducing the risk of coccidiosis. Minimising faecal contamination around feed troughs by moving them regularly is good practice to prevent the build up of oocysts in the area. Ensuring adequate colostrum intake and attention to hygiene are also fundamental. Future preventative treatments can be timed according to the time of year that outbreaks have occurred in the past, to make them more likely to be successful.

Preparing for Cattle Turnout—A few things to consider:

- Have you done your BVD check test yet? —5 calves per group of 9-18mth olds to blood sample.
- Are your bulls / cows / heifers up to date with vaccinations e.g. Bovela, Spirovac, Rispoval IBR? Courses must be completed at least 3wks before bulling.
- Boluses for cattle.
- Worming for yearling cattle.
- Fertility testing of bulls—ideally 6wks before bulling starts, and before the bull sales!

Changes to Closamectin® 5mg/ml + 200mg/ml Pour-on Solution for Cattle withdrawal period

Due to a licence variation, we would like to make you aware of an extension to the withdrawal period for Closamectin 5mg/ml + 200mg/ml Pour-on Solution for Cattle (CPO) **from 28 days to 58 days for meat and offal.**

We have not stocked Closamectin for some time due to concerns about the ability of the product to treat fluke in the desired manner.