

Newsletter

May 2024



Welcome

How has it got to May already? Spring has been a soggy and muddy blur with plenty of interesting cases to keep us out of mischief. The wet weather has taken its toll on the stock and has delayed turnout. As it is still wet it will be perfect for worms and fluke so we will need to watch out for them through faecal egg counts. I do think that grass quality will not be as good as other years so we may have to supplement more trace elements and energy. TB has raised its ugly head again in the practice and as we thought we would get a little bit of a breather after lambing time we will be busy testing cattle.

Jim McKinstry

Included this month

- **How do yours grow** – Jim McKinstry
- **Calves that won't suck** - Charlotte Chapman
- **Blowfly Strike** - Beth Thornton
- **Nematodirus** – Thom Leman
- **News and Diary Dates**

How do yours Grow?

Lambing time this year has not been easy to say the least. Lambs have been under pressure from hitting the ground, so we need to help them as well as we can.

May is when we are starting to dose for Nematodirus and as I write this a moderate risk of infection is being forecast. A dose of CLIK EXTRA is also advisable to cover against blowfly for 19 weeks protection.

We diagnose more and more cobalt deficiency in sheep. This is hardly surprising with the amount of rain we get and we keep breeding for fast growing lambs. Young lambs will get all their cobalt from their mother's milk. As the lambs get bigger and the milk supply decreases, they need a bit of help. We can blood sample some lambs for Vitamin B12 to see if they are deficient. Cobalt is needed to make Vitamin B12 which is then used by the liver to make energy and make the lamb grow. Supplementing lambs from 8 weeks of age will improve growth rates. We supplement our own lambs and think that it definitely makes a difference. There are a few ways to supplement lambs, so have a word with one of us to work out what is the best way to get cobalt into your lambs.



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Jim McKinstry



Fly control products, wormers and vaccines are all in stock for the summer season at competitive prices. Please speak to us.



Calves that won't Suck



A frustrating problem for all involved but here are some thoughts and tips on dealing with calves that won't suck.

Problems with the calf

Assisted calvings

- Can cause a calf to become acidotic.
- Compression on the umbilical cord can cause lack of oxygen to the brain
- Dummy/dopey calves.
- Often present dull, unable to stand and no suck reflex.

Birth defects:

- Cleft palates can stop a calf from sucking;

check for gaps in the roof of their mouths (may need a torch to help look at it).

- Check there is nothing wrong with tongues and jaws etc.

Poor calf vigour

- Slow to rise, weak calves can be as a result of deficiencies such as selenium or iodine. In this instance you would more likely see more than one case and it would be unlikely for an affected calf to be bright enough to head butt for feed.

Bonded calf

- Calves which have had the opportunity to suck from their mothers can be challenging to transition to a teat or bucket. If this is the case persistence will be key in managing the calf.

Problems with the feeding management

Feeding practices can affect a calf's willingness and ability to suck. Considerations:

- The teat - teat size and the size of the hole in the teat. Is it a new teat or is it leaking milk? If this calf has sucked off its mother, it may be easier to transition to a teat instead of a bucket. It is also a more natural to suck from a teat.
- The temperature of the milk.
- The concentration of the milk powder.
- The height the milk is offered from.
- Visualisation of other calves drinking to establish a learnt behaviour.
- The timings of milk feed; calves can get very accustomed to a routine.

Recommendations

Ultimately if the calf goes longer than 12 hours without a feed and is unwilling to suck it may need tubing. If you bucket feed try a calf on a teat (I've heard calves do well on peach teats). Calves can have anti-inflammatories and treatments for selenium deficiencies; bicarbonate may be recommended if there is concern the calf is acidotic. Water can also be tubed at 1-2 litres every 2-4 hours, depending on hydration status. Ultimately if you're at your wits end another alternative would be to see if the calf will suckle a cow? But please don't hesitate to get in touch with us or get us out to examine any calves you are struggling with.



Charlotte Chapman

Blowfly Strike



The risk of blow fly strike may arrive early this year due to the warmer wet spring, here are a few pointers on prevention.

Manage the fly population:

- Reducing the fly population early in the year has the greatest impact.
- Flies can lay up to 3000 eggs in a 3-month period so populations can increase quickly.

- Inexpensive fly traps have been shown to reduce strike incidence by 80% in a season.
- Consider how muck heaps are sited and managed and encourage prompt disposal of deadstock.

Reduce fleece contamination by Minimising scour due to worms and dagging to remove soiled fleece from around the back end.

Treatments and Prevention Apply preventative treatments in advance of the high-risk period e.g. Clik extra. Make sure you use the correct product and apply it according to datasheet advice.

Beth Thornton (prior to maternity leave!)

Nematodirus

As we move into May we can only hope it gets warmer and drier, however, this brings its own problems. One of these is the parasitic worm *Nematodirus battus*. This worm passes from one crop of lambs to the next through faeces on the pasture with the infective L3 stage developing in the egg over the winter. A mass hatch poses the greatest risk to lambs where the temperature increases to around 10°C over a short period, leading to high levels of infective worms on the pasture at one time. Lambs ingest these worms which disrupt the gut lining reducing absorption causing diarrhoea and dehydration which can be severe and even if lamb recover expect growth to be stunted. Normally Faecal Worm Egg Counting is effective at monitoring worm burden, however, *Nematodirus* causes pre-patent disease where clinical signs appear before eggs are seen in the faeces. Due to this, treatment can be based off of analysis of risk factors including;

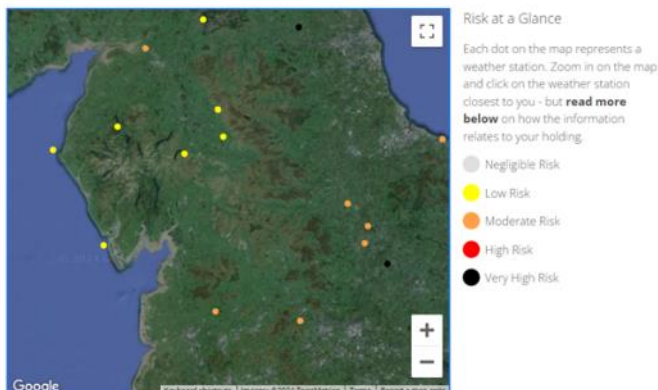
- Recent warm temperatures
- Pasture grazed by lambs the previous year
- Lambs under other stresses (triplets, fostered, young/older ewes)
- 6-12 week old lambs

Clinical signs include weight loss, diarrhoea and dehydration and can have a 'tucked up' appearance with a dirty back end (this can increase the likelihood of fly-strike as well).

Whilst anthelmintic resistance is a big topic, *Nematodirus* remains largely sensitive to white wormer (1-BZ) drenches. We do recommend undertaking a worm egg reduction test at some point in the season to check for efficacy on your farm, however, it is a good frontline option for early in the risk period. Another way to control the risk is to try and limit the

amount of grazing lambs do on pasture occupied by lambs the previous year, at least until the lambs are out of the initial risk

period and have built up some immunity. Another useful tool is the SCOPs *Nematodirus* forecast which predicts hatching based on temperature data from weather stations in the area. (<https://www.scops.org.uk/forecasts/nematodirus-forecast/>)



Thom Leman

SQP Congratulations to Mary and Ruby



Our SQP (Suitably Qualified Person) team expanded last month as both our Vet Techs Ruby and Mary passed their exams. This means they are now qualified to advise on over the

counter (POM-VPS) products such as wormers, vaccines and fly treatments. Congratulations from all the team.

Beef Expo at J36

On Saturday the 27th of April we attended the NBA Beef Expo at Junction 36. All the animals stayed healthy so there was no action for Mark, the who was the event's on call vet. The turnout of trade stands was excellent. Although the event was a couple of weeks too early for many farmers in the local area, we did have a few conversations around bull fertility testing, cattle health schemes and the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway money.



Great British Beef Week Master Chef of the Kitchen- Winner!



To support the Great British Beef Week (23rd – 30th April) we had a staff cooking competition to decide who was Master Chef of the Kitchen for Farm Gate Vets. The winning dish with a staggering 70 likes was the **Tomahawk Steak** cooked by **Finbarr!** Is there no end to this man's talents? The runner up was awarded to **Sol** with her Beef casserole and mash at 40

likes. She wasn't bitter at all and took second place gracefully :)



#gbbw2024



Dates For Your Diary

Please keep an eye out for diary dates as we make summer plans for the next Sheep Club and Healthy Heifer Scheme meetings, along with a specialist meeting for Housed Dairy Herds.

Lancaster Office

Tel: 01524 60006

Open 8:30am-5pm

Monday-Friday

9am—12noon Saturdays

CLOSED Sundays

J36 Kendal Office

Tel: 015395 67899

Open 8:30am-5pm

Monday-Friday

9am—12noon Saturdays

CLOSED Sundays

Sedbergh Office

Tel: 015396 20335

Open 8:30--5pm

Monday-Friday

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