



## Farm Newsletter – February 2022

- **Welcome** – First of all we would like to welcome all newcomers to the practice over the last year, there has been a few changes to the provision of veterinary service in the area and we look forward to working with you all. For those that haven't been to the Egremont surgery yet, there is a car park which can be accessed down the side of the post office. A vehicle with small trailer will fit down there for any lambings you may wish to bring down – please give us a call before you set off.
- **New Faces** – We also have added a few new members to our team who have settled in well over the last year. On reception, helping with large animal matters we have Ellie Stamper and in our nursing team we have Beth Reece who is training on the job through a myercough college vet nurse course. In the veterinary department we have Eugenie Moxon who joined us last spring and Lizzie Relph who joined us in August with Phil Shepherd helping us out with some part time work.
- **Responsible use of medicines meeting** – Well done to all the participants at the latest zoom meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> January, there was a good attendance with some interesting points. We have distributed all the certificates with this newsletter, please give us a call if any are missed out. The meeting covered all aspects of safe medicine use and is now a requirement of the red tractor scheme for beef and sheep farmers as well as dairy. We have organized another meeting, at the Egremont surgery this Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> February at 12 noon, with lunch provided. If you are interested in attending this next meeting, then please call the surgery before thursday and book your place.
- **FECPAK (rapid faecal worm egg counting)** - We have recently invested in the FECPAK system, which is used for Faecal egg counts on sheep, cattle and horses. The worm egg count found in the animal's muck tells us if a wormer is required or not. Faecal samples are prepared at the surgery, and images are uploaded for analysis at a remote lab via the internet. Results are e-mailed back which will be faster than sending off to a lab. We can then advise you on the need for and type of treatment. Please call the surgery to find out more and to order your pack with the equipment needed to get started. As always when considering groups of animals, we ask that you collect ten individual samples (at random) and submit them to us in separate bags which are provided.

**Spectam Scour Halt** (Ceva Animal Health) is currently experiencing availability issues, and this is the only licensed oral antibiotic for the prevention of watery mouth in neonatal lambs. There is increasingly a good awareness that it is inappropriate to use any prophylactic antibiotics and we know that many flocks have made significant progress in reducing their use of oral antibiotics in lambs through hygiene, provision of colostrum and good ewe nutrition. Firstly, we would emphasise the importance of :

### **1. good ewe nutrition and correct body condition score**

- Ensure ewes maintain their target body condition score in the last 6w of pregnancy (target 3.0–3.5 for lowland and 2.5 for upland ewes)
- Blood samples two to three weeks before lambing can be taken to assess the nutrition in late pregnancy (metabolic profiles)
- Young first-time lambers (ewe lambs or shearlings) should be fed in separate groups, by litter size, to adult ewes. Consider scanning to determine how many lambs and feed accordingly.
- During the last 4 weeks of pregnancy we start to see mammary development and in the last 3 weeks of pregnancy, there is a clear relationship between energy intake and colostrum production. Well-fed ewes have also been shown to have a better maternal ability than those which are under-fed or over-fed. Inadequate nutrition results in: • Reduced quantity of colostrum • Reduced quality of milk produced • Delay in the onset of lactation • Increased thickness of colostrum (which the lamb may find more difficult to extract from the teat)

### **2. Hygiene at lambing and in the lambing environment**

### **3. Colostrum supply to newborn lambs to prevent watery mouth**

- (50ml/kg body weight within 4-6h of birth and 3x daily)
- Remember – artificial colostrum is a supplement to ewe’s colostrum and NOT an alternative, it should be used as an addition to poor quality ewe colostrum.
- Plenty of commercial flocks with good ewe nutrition, hygiene and colostrum management have shown that prophylactic antibiotics are *not* essential to commercial sheep farming. In individual flocks it may be appropriate to use targeted control measures that may include antibiotic treatment, but in no flock is it appropriate for large numbers of lambs to be treated routinely from the start of a new lambing season. Metaphylactic antibiotic treatment should be targeted only towards high-risk individuals, following a proactive flock health plan. This may include low birthweight lambs, triplets and using antibiotics only in the latter part of the lambing period.
- Watery mouth is considered to be a bacterial overgrowth and endotoxaemia in colostrum deprived lambs. Please call the surgery if you wish to discuss losses due to watery mouth.