

Hale Veterinary Group

Farm Newsletter

August 2015



Sam has now joined us. He is settling in well and beginning to know his way around the farms of North Wiltshire. Parking at our Small animal hospital in Chippenham is at a premium with building work on expanding the operating theatres, dog ward and cat wards underway.

Pre-Tupping Checks and Flock Vaccinations

We are now approaching tupping time and those of you with sheep flocks will be thinking about the preparations for this vital time of year. One of the most important parts of pre-tupping preparation is a pre-tupping health check for both ewes and rams. This should be done at least 4-6 weeks before the rams are due to go in with the ewes. This time allows for any problems or illnesses to be picked up to be treated and hopefully cured before tupping begins – any ongoing health issues in the flock can have a serious negative impact on fertility (both conception rate and abortion/resorption rate).

- Ewes should be body condition scored (ideal score at this stage is 2.5-3.5) and have their teeth, udders and feet checked, and any which are not fit to lamb (e.g. broken mouthed, only one quarter) should be culled, whilst any with disease should be treated appropriately.
- Rams should be body condition scored (ideal score at this stage is 3.5-4) and their teeth and feet should be checked. It is particularly important to treat and resolve any foot problems or lameness before tupping starts. The rams' testicles should also be checked. These should be of equal size and move freely within the scrotum with no heat, swelling, redness or excessive hardness or softness.

If you think you have found a problem in your eyes or rams, or you are unsure of the best way to treat a disease, please do give us a call and we'll be happy to help.

Please remember that our weekend staff are unable to dispense POM-V or POM-VPS drugs without authorisation from the duty vet. Wherever possible, please ensure that orders are placed by Friday afternoon.

If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically, please contact us via email: farmlab@halevethospital.co.uk

The Importance of Records

Keeping accurate records of health issues is important for all livestock production systems. Dairy farmers have been monitoring Somatic Cell Counts for many years through services such as NMR, CIS and QMMS. These services also offer an easy way of recording mastitis and fertility performance. Other areas on farm often suffer from a lack of detailed records. Without maintaining good, accurate records of health issues, production losses and growth performance, it is difficult to see which areas need improvement and, more specifically, what changes will bring about the greatest cost benefit.

By keeping records, it is also possible to monitor the effects that management changes make, ensuring that these changes are having a positive effect.

Examples of records that we should all aim to keep include:

- Still births and losses within 24hrs
- Pre-weaning losses
- Post weaning losses
- Age at first calving
- Weight at key stages (to record Daily Live Weight Gain – DLWG)
- Killing out weights
- Calving/lambing problems

Herd Health Plans such as MyHealthyHerd which is available through us, enable you to keep and monitor livestock performance with ease.

If you want to discuss how you can improve your recording system, or to discuss your records further, please contact the surgery or speak to one of the farm team on farm

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