

Getting Ready for Lambing

Managing your ewes in the last 8 weeks before lambing is the crucial period for both ewe and lamb health.

- **Supplies**—have all your lambing supplies **ready**; ropes, lubricant, iodine, lamps, calcium, lamb feeding tube, colostrum supplement, lamb milk, disinfectants and many more..
- **Body Condition Score**—checking BCS in your ewes is hugely important to monitor their condition status. Overconditioned ewes are more likely to suffer with prolapses (reed/bed out) and thin ewes will have little milk and potentially poor lambs. For hill farms BCS should be 2.0 to 2.5 and lowland farms 2.5 to 3.0, and ideally this condition should be achieved at least **8 weeks** prior to lambing and maintained through to lambing and turnout.
- **Nutrition**—a vital ingredient in the making of a good lambing. Good quality forage (ideally analysed) should provide adequate nutrition until up to 2 weeks prior to lambing. Poorer quality forage will need supplementation with concentrates a lot earlier than this. Trace elements such a **selenium** and **iodine** are very important and checking these levels through a blood testing a handful of ewes is a useful exercise. Both these elements are hugely important for good brown fat reserves, reducing retained placentas, improving reproductive performance and aiding lamb vitality and overall health.
- **Antibiotic usage**—with the significant pressure to reduce antibiotic usage on farm, prophylactic use (preventative) of antibiotics should be avoided if possible. Colostrum and cleanliness are two factors which hugely influence disease incidence and can, relatively easily, be addressed. Blanket treating can not only lead to resistance issues but also affect health of newborn lambs as well.

Every farm is different in many ways and so there's definitely no one rule that fits all, but we would like to work with you to have a productive and healthy lambing. Please have a chat with one of us .



Tetanus!

We have seen a case of Tetanus in a horse recently which was unfortunately fatal. Tetanus is a **preventable** disease through vaccination. The bacteria *Clostridium tetanii* can be **found everywhere** in soil and droppings and therefore there is a constant source of infection. Puncture wounds on the sole of the hoof are a common source of entry and also ingestion of soil/droppings can lead to disease. The bacteria produce toxins within the body which are potent **neurotoxins** which cause the classical signs of tetanus.

The toxin attacks the nerves which control the muscles of the body leading to progressive **muscular stiffness**, difficulty eating, the tail is often held out and eventually the horse will die due to respiratory failure.

Unfortunately, tetanus is not often very successfully treated and many cases are fatal.

Tetanus is **easily preventable** through vaccination. Two vaccines are given 3 to 4 weeks apart followed by a 12 month booster and then boosters thereafter.

If your horse is unvaccinated or not recently vaccinated and has obtained a wound, it is extremely important to have tetanus antitoxin administered to try to prevent disease. **Any wound** can allow entry of the bacteria into the system.

It is recommended that **ALL** horses and ponies (and donkeys!) should be vaccinated against tetanus as disease is devastating.

Microchipping

ALL horses, ponies and donkeys will be required by law to be microchipped from October 2020. If you are unsure if your horse is microchipped we are able to scan to find out so please get in touch if your horse(s) need checking or a new microchip implanted.

Our facebook page and website provide interesting stories, cases and news and can be found at :
www.facebook.com/CrowgateVeterinarySurgery
www.bishopscastlelevets.co.uk



CROWGATE
Veterinary Surgery
Bishop's Castle



Winter Newsletter 2018

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

We would like to wish all of our clients a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year. Thank you all for your continued custom and we hope you and your animals thoroughly enjoy the festive period.

As always in case of any emergency, please ring the normal phone number: **01588 638 356**. Our festive opening hours can be found at the surgery or on our Facebook page.



Dental Care

We see a lot of dogs and cats with problems in the mouth which are mostly associated with their **dental care and diet**. Unfortunately a lot of the time, the dental disease is just the tip of the iceberg and the potential infection in the mouth has consequences for both the kidneys and the heart. Dental care is based upon a lot of factors depending on the individual animal and client. Options for dental care are fairly extensive and include: **dental chews, oral gels, tooth brushing, diet choice, additives in drinking water and dental treatments** (scale and polish) like in ourselves. A dental de-scale does require an anaesthetic and so preventative dental care is always preferable.

It's always important when getting a new puppy or kitten to get them used to having their mouths looked at from a young age. Even with an older animal, dental care can be put in place and a dental plan made.

Regular dental checks are really useful to monitor for any developing dental disease and aim to address any dental issues early.

Please get in touch if you would like to discuss this matter further.

Hazards over the Festive Period

The period over Christmas and New Year comes with many potential hazards for our pets, and not always just the well recognised poisonous foodstuffs. It's estimated that vets are 30% busier at this time of year than any other time!

Food: Chocolate, onions, grapes, raisins, dried fruit, garlic, some nuts, leeks and shallots all have potential for toxicity in dogs and cats. So the leftovers and food on the side should be well out of the way of any scavengers. What's really important to know is that in order for us to induce vomiting to get rid of the dangerous food, the optimum time is **less than 3 hours** after consumption.

Bones should be avoided at all costs. Cooked bones become very brittle and can shatter causing harm to anywhere along the digestive tract from mouth to rear-end. They have potential to perforate areas of the bowel or cause obstruction both of which have devastating consequences and may require surgery.

Toys that are small enough to be swallowed are also capable of causing a gastrointestinal obstruction.

Cables and electrics: not very often but it is possible with all the decorations and appliances around at this time of year for animals to be electrocuted.

Fireworks/Noises many of our pets do not like loud noises around the home or nearby, especially fireworks. So it's very important to remember this and prepare in advance by providing a safe area that is quiet and the animal feels comfortable in.

Christmas decorations / Candles / Wrapping paper if ingested, do have low toxicity but all have potential to very much upset the guts of our pets.

Christmas tree needles / Ivy / Mistletoe all have low toxicity again but may cause a stomach upset in more quantities.

Alcohol does have severe consequences if consumed by an animal and not always in very large quantities.

If you suspect your pet may have ingested anything potentially harmful, then please get in touch immediately. Signs such as vomiting, anorexia, shaking, salivating and lethargy should always ring alarm bells!

Cattle Abortions

Under the Brucellosis order, **all** cattle abortions are supposed to be notified and a potential investigation instigated. The APHA are meant to be notified **within 24 hours** of the abortion or premature calving, following which there may be further testing carried out depending on the individual circumstances of the case. It is recommended that the aborting cow is separated from other animals if possible, and the calf (along with cleansing /afterbirth) kept for inspection.

There can be **many causes** of abortion including viruses (e.g. IBR, BVD), bacteria (e.g. Brucella, Salmonella, E. Coli) and parasites (e.g. Neoplasma). Systemic injury or illness can also lead to abortion.

If you have a cow which calves before time please get in touch as soon as possible so that we can discuss further and notify APHA if appropriate.



BVDFree England

BVD (Bovine Viral Diarrhoea) is a constant **threat** to farm productivity and health, and there is a lot of nationwide pressure to try to eliminate this devastating disease.

BVD free England is a **voluntary** scheme, working to eliminate BVD in all cattle in England by 2022. There is a **national database** found online where herds and individual animals can be looked up to view their BVD status.

After signing up to the scheme, we will work with you to establish a control plan for the farm. This is done by:
Assessing the biosecurity and disease risk
Defining the BVD status of the herd
Having an **action** plan for control of BVD on farm and
Monitoring progress.

The BVD free website also is a great source of **information** on BVD and the database does give farmers confidence and traceability when buying/selling cattle.

Administering Medicines and Antibiotic Talk

It is now a recommendation, as part of the Red Tractor Scheme, to have attended a course on administering medicines on farm. Anyone attending this talk will receive a certificate of attendance which is compliant with red tractor standards.

Wednesday 13th February
7 pm

The Three Tunns Brewery, Bishops Castle
Sponsored by Zoetis

Please RSVP to let us know if you are able to attend.



Scanning Ewes

A lot of you will have had your ewes scanned already, how did it go? Less or more barren than expected? Sheep have had quite a good year so are generally in good condition, but overfat ewes may struggle with their fertility.

There are **many factors** which could have affected your scanning percentage this year including: tup health and productivity, condition of the ewes, any disease (including foot issues!), Toxoplasma and Enzootic abortion as well as trace element imbalances/ deficiencies.

MSD health do **subsidise** the blood sampling of ewes for Toxoplasmosis and Enzootic abortion and is a good way of establishing if either of these disease may be present in the flock (if unvaccinated). The impact of these two disease are devastating for productivity. Although mineral / trace element buckets may be provided, it is quite surprising how many ewes can still be deficient in certain trace elements which all play a role in productivity and fertility. Blood sampling a handful of ewes is a good screen to see if there any deficiencies present at a flock level.

So if you're scanning percentage wasn't as good as expected this year please have a chat with one of us.