

Ruminant Newsletter

Spring 2023



Like us on Facebook



Follow us on Instagram

@howellsvets



01347 823678



York Road, Easingwold, YO61 3EB

Spring Rise/ Periparturient Rise

What is it?

These terms refer to the period of time over lambing when a pregnant ewe's immune system is compromised. Normally fit mature ewes immune systems are strong enough that they have a good immunity to worms (except *Haemonchus contortus*). However over lambing the ewe's body is under a lot of nutritional strain trying to support her lambs. The result of this is that there is a drop in the her immunity. This starts around 4 weeks pre-lambing and continues for 6-8 weeks post-lambing.

These changes in her immune status result in synchronised re-awakening and maturation of arrested worm larvae and increased production of eggs by female roundworms. The result is increased shedding of eggs by ewes and increased numbers of larvae on pasture.

Key points:

Ewes that are kept on pastures before lambing create a high worm burden for subsequent ewes and lambs that are turned out onto that same pasture.

The egg and larval pasture burden soon leads to reduced growth rates in lambs.

What to do about it:

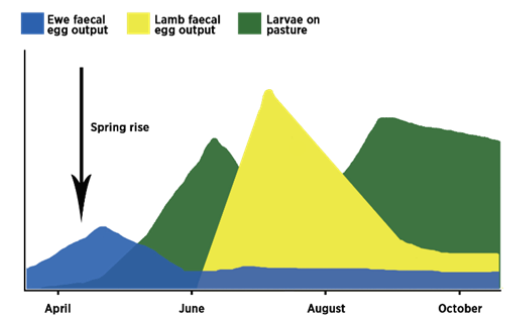
Recent research has demonstrated that body condition score is best used to indicate the chance of a ewe having a periparturient rise in worm egg shedding. Ewes with a good body condition score have strong enough immune systems to resist the Periparturient Rise.

This means that ewes that have low body condition scores (BCS <2/5) should be treated, but if the ewes have held their condition they do not need to be.

For example, you should treat a thin ewe carrying a single but leave a well-conditioned ewe with triplets.

You should not worm all of your sheep as this can lead to anthelmintic resistance developing.

The Spring rise in egg output and pasture contamination



In conclusion:

Keep ewes pre-lambing on a different pasture from where you will turn out ewes and young lambs after lambing.

Only worm ewes with low BCS. You should leave a minimum of 10-20% of your flock untreated.

If you have sheep with low BCS and want to worm them: worm them with either a clear or yellow wormer at turn out.

Only if you suspect *Nematodirus* should you use a white wormer.

(The spring rise phenomenon doesn't apply to *Nematodirus*, this is much more weather dependent and lambs should be treated with a white wormer during high risk periods according to the SCOPs *Nematodirus* forecast)

By Sophie Walker-Munro



DOWNLAND
PARTNERS IN FARMING HEALTH

Available from



Spring is a key time in both the cattle and lambing lifecycles as turnout and weaning bring very specific nutritional challenges and work must be done to minimise any associated performance lags. Optimised nutrition of lambs at weaning and cattle at turnout is key, using a supplement such as Optigain; a safe, high-quality product, can be vital to help maintain that growth potential.

Check out our website www.howellsvets.co.uk

Available from Howells Farm Dispensary

Specially formulated for growing lambs



OPTIGAIN[®] LAMB

Also available
with Copper

A highly concentrated liquid
supplement containing
key ingredients known to
support growth and development
in young and growing lambs.

**Vitamins
A, D3 & E**
Key vitamins to
support lamb growth



**Increased
Cobalt**
For rumen
development



Maximising Lamb Survival Rate



As the 2023 lambing season gets underway, everyone is trying to improve lamb survival and so boost sheep reproductive efficiency. This not only means maximising lambs born alive, but also achieving good suckling and weaning rates. Lambs can present challenges in all stages of growth, but through following the principles below and learning from success stories and difficulties this year we can plan to improve the crop next year.

Key goals for improving lamb survival:

1. **Hygiene** – This is incredibly important in disease prevention. Cleaning and disinfecting sheds, regularly replacing straw and emptying/disinfecting pens can make all the difference. Keep the ewes as clean as possible – you could consider dagging or clipping off contamination.
2. **Colostrum** – Quality (50g/L IgG/>26.5% on brix refractometer), quantity (50ml/kg within first two hours of birth, 200ml/kg within first 24 hours) and quickly (within 24hrs). Mum's colostrum is always best but powdered is a good alternative.
3. **Navels** – Dipping is better than spraying, we recommend using a strong veterinary iodine (10% iodine) mixed 50:50 with alcohol. Apply immediately after birth then again 2 to 4 hours later.
4. **Equipment** – Bottles, teats and stomach tubes need to be cleaned thoroughly after every use. Wash equipment in hot water (at least 74°C) with a detergent and soak in hot water with a suitable disinfectant (e.g. PERADOX) for at least 20 minutes.
5. **Ewe nutrition** – Well fed ewes produce better colostrum. Make use of scanning results and review ration accordingly. Ensure ewes maintain their target body condition score in the last six weeks of pregnancy - target 3.0 to 3.5 for lowland and 2.5 for upland ewes. Body condition score is a good general guide to sheep nutrition, but pre-lambing bloods give a more accurate view of nutritional state.
6. **Health** – Hygiene at and after lambing, colostrum and navel treatment are the keys to preventing most conditions in lambs, a probiotic oral solution can also help. If you are presented with clinical cases of watery mouth or joint ill please contact one of our vets.
7. **Genetics** – Select for lamb vigour and lambing ease – A good start in life is more likely to follow through to a successful rearing.
8. **Data recording** – Keeping a simple log of data can help decision making and improve lamb survival rate next year. For example, as a minimum you may record lamb deaths, when they occurred and suspected causes for insight next year.

by Lizzie Relph



Est. 2000
HOWELLS
VETERINARY SERVICES

Paraprofessional Services

Our Other Paraprofessional Services

TB Testing
Blood sampling
Calf Management
Disbudding/Dehorning
Milk Machine Testing
Sheep Scanning
Mobility & Cleanliness
Scoring

Speak to us about
**Foot Trimming
&
Freeze Branding**



Call us on 01347 823678 to find out more

Best Start in Life

With Spring calving in full flow, it's important to give all calves the best start in life. Colostrum quantity, quality and timing of feeding should be at the forefront of our minds to ensure successful passive transfer of antibodies. Colostrum is key, providing vital protection against disease. In the UK each year 1 in 7 dairy calves and 1 in 13 beef calves are lost during rearing due to a variety of factors (NADIS UK) carrying significant cost.

63% of losses are due to challenges shortly after birth. Scour accounts for 50% of losses, as the calves' immature immune system is taken advantage of by bacteria and viruses present in the environment.

Unlike whole milk, colostrum contains many important substances for calf health including immunoglobulins (antibodies), energy, growth factors, and increased levels of vitamins and minerals. In addition, colostrum has a higher fat and protein content than whole milk. A calf is born without protective immunoglobulins/antibodies to guard it against disease, their only source of these is from colostrum. Without protection from colostrum the calf is essentially left without a functional immune system and is likely to succumb to a multitude of opportunistic bacteria and viruses.

Things to remember for successful passive transfer of antibodies:

Quantity:

4L within 4 hours:

Calves need 10% bodyweight or 4L of colostrum within 4 hours of birth (up to 6L for larger beef calves). Followed by another feed within 12 hours of birth. Colostrum should be fed at body temperature, around 38°C. If they don't finish the bottle, stomach tubing ensures the calf gets the full 4L. Using a stomach tube should only be done by a trained member of staff.

Quality:

Good quality colostrum contains at least 50g/L of IgG. Colostrum quality can be measured on farm using a handheld BRUX refractometer. Colostrum is measured by placing a drop onto the refractometer and looking at a bright light through the refractometer. A measurement of 22% means that there's 50g/L of IgG.

Quickly:

By far the biggest factor on colostrum quality is how quickly it gets from the cow to the calf. Colostrum quality is highest immediately after calving and drops 3.7% every hour after birth. A new-born calf has an "open gut" which closes over time. At 12 hours old the calf's ability to absorb colostrum is only 50%. Getting colostrum into the calf within 4 hours is vital!

By Ryan Gallagher



Support a healthy immune system and help promote growth

Natural
Vitamin E

Available from Howells Farm Dispensary

OPTIGAIN®

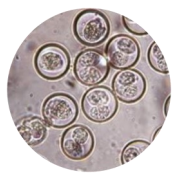
DOWNLAND
PARTNERS IN FARMING HEALTH



Check out our website www.howellsvets.co.uk

Coccidiosis in calves.

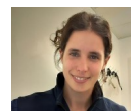
Coccidiosis or 'cocci' as a cause of scour, loss of condition and on occasion losses of calves will not be an unfamiliar disease discussed and managed in most farming operations. The causative agent is a single-celled, organism that live and reproduce in animal cells (mainly intestines). All species have their own variety of coccidia and there is no cross infection between species. In cattle more than 20 types of cocci been identified, however, only four are known to cause significant damage and clinical disease.



Disease occurs when large numbers of sporulated oocysts (the infectious form of cocci) are ingested. Oocysts can live for years in the environment and are resistant to temperature fluctuations and many different types of disinfectant. Advice on correct disinfectants can be provided through Roxby Farm Supplies and our Veterinary Surgeons. More commonly seen in indoor raised calves we also see disease in outdoor calves especially where there is a high stocking density or where calves are fed from one position and the ground becomes poached.

Calves are usually affected between 1 and 2 months old but it can be seen in calves as young as 16 days. Affected animals usually have diarrhoea and a reduction in appetite, in severe cases we can see bloody diarrhoea and prolapses. Dehydration and weight loss follow initial clinical signs. Clinical signs will be worse if other infections are present along side – Salmonella, Clostridium perfringens, Coronavirus, Rotavirus, Cryptosporidium.

It is important, especially when groups of calves are affected with scour, to thoroughly investigate and diagnose the causative agents. Coccidiosis can be diagnosed by observing cocci oocysts in the faeces and can be further investigated by laboratory analysis to identify the types of cocci present on your farm.



Coccidiosis is an economically important disease. There are several options for treatment of coccidiosis either via drench or feed. It is important to understand that each farm is unique and requires a bespoke plan to manage both clinical and sub-clinical coccidiosis to maximise performance in their herd. A management plan incorporating hygiene, pasture rotation, disinfection planning and thorough monitoring of diseases causing co-morbidity is essential. Our team would be pleased to work with your enterprise to formulate an effective management plan.

By Sara Couto

Call us 01347 821898

Email:

office@roxbyfarmsupplies.co.uk



VISIT US

Roxby Farm Supplies, Roxby Business Park, Easingwold, York, YO61 3EF

BIOSECURITY: IT'S AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING WE DO



EXPERTISE

At Roxby Farm Suppliers we completely understand the central role which biosecurity plays in the effective management of your enterprise. Our team has a wealth of combined experience built up over many decades from working within the industry.

SOUND ADVICE

We work with you to develop an approach that is right for you and your farm. We gain a real understanding of your farm layout and management, this helps us to provide bespoke technical and practical advice.

COMPETITIVE

Our suppliers see the value in what we are trying to achieve this enables us to source the best products at an extremely competitive price. More importantly, we will help you to monitor results and work with you to refine procedures and help maximise profit.