



**Daleside**  
Veterinary Group

# FARM NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2021

## Lameness meeting

**DATE** 23 November  
**TIME** 7:30pm  
**VENUE** The Wynnstay Hotel,  
Ruabon

Thank you to those of you who have already expressed interest in attending the meeting.

As a reminder, the meeting will be held at 7.30pm on 23rd of November at The Wynnstay Hotel, Ruabon. Nichol will be hosting the evening sponsored by CEVA animal health.

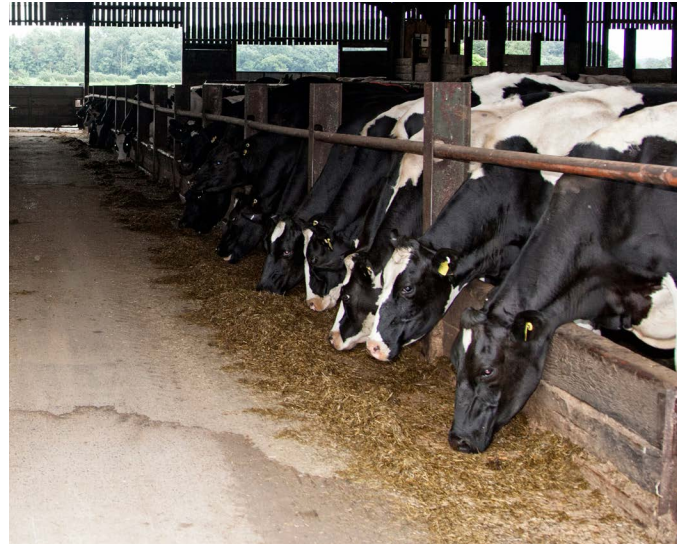
**We do require pre-bookings for this event and so contact the office on**

## Christmas party

**DATE** 7 December  
**TIME** 7:30pm  
**VENUE** Wrexham Rugby Club

Christmas may still seem a long way away, but we have been busy planning the farmers Christmas party. It will be hosted on the 7th of December at the Wrexham Rugby Club from 7.30.

After the last 18 months of lockdowns and restrictions, it will be great to see you face to face for some food, drinks, and an evening of catching up!



## Optimising the suckler herd

We often discuss key performance indicators (KPIs) for our Dairy herds, but they are equally important in the suckler herd.

Perhaps the most important one of all is producing a calf a year per cow, however, only 82% of suckler cows achieve this target, with the average age at first calving up at 32.8 months compared to the target of 24 months. We have outlined what we believe to be the most important KPIs for your suckler herd.

### Cow herd efficiency

- This assesses the relationship between cow weight and calf output. This is linked to profitability and reflects herd fertility, health, genetics, feed, and management.
- To calculate, you require a weaning weight for the calves, liveweight of the dam and age at weaning

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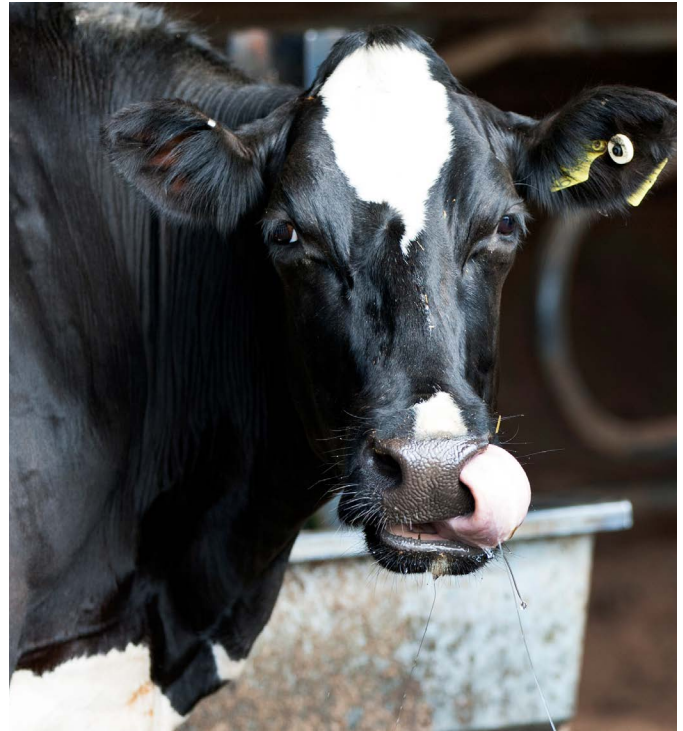
- A cow should wean 50% of her liveweight in calves by 200d of age
- This can be achieved by careful selection of heifer replacements by looking at the mothers' ability to hit this target
- We must not forget about the choice bull - milk EBV, mature cow weight EBV and 200-growth EBV all play a vital part
- If you're interested in weighing your stock, we have scales at the practice which can be loaned out

### Tight calving block

- A tight calving block indicates good fertility and makes management easier - resulting in more consistent calves at weaning, easier to market, and can be effectively managed in a block
- The aim is for more than 65% of the herd to calve within the first three weeks, and 90% to have calved in the first 6 weeks
- Nutrition, minerals, and general management can have a huge impact on fertility. Nutrition pre-calving is equally important as post-calving.
- Body condition scoring is a good indicator of energy status and allows the diet to be tailored to reach the desired condition
- Consider keeping heifers in a separate management group right through until second calving to minimise the stress upon them

### Age at first calving

- As mentioned previously, the average age at first calving is way above the target. With the cost of replacement heifers accounting for almost 10% of all cost, can you really afford not to calve heifers at 2 years old?
- The target is calving down at 22-26 months
- To achieve this, it is vital to hit target bulling weights to ensure puberty is reached early enough to serve. Good nutrition and selecting for positive 200-day and 400-day growth EBV can help in reaching the goal



## Winter diet

With the last of the maize now harvested its time to start thinking about the winter diet.

To truly understand what we are feeding, we must know the quality of this year's forage crops. These will be the foundation of the diet, with any supplementation designed to balance and deficiencies and compliment the forage.

### Taking silage samples

1. Wait at least 6 weeks after harvest
2. Take several core samples across the clamp at least 1.5cm deep or from 5 bales of the same batch to make it representative
3. Pack into polythene bags and squeeze air out before sealing
4. Give the lab as much information as possible e.g. grass only, red clover, first or second cut, bale or clamp, additives used etc.

To discussed any of the topics raised in this months newsletter, we are more than happy to help. Please contact the office and you will be directed to the most relevant staff

