

Lambing Hamper Competition

We are running a competition on Facebook and Twitter to win a lambing hamper. All you need to do is go to facebook.com/DalesideFarm/ or twitter.com/DalesideFarmVet, 'Like' or 'Follow' our page, and 'Share' the post about the competition. We will be drawing the prize winner on Friday 18th February.

Good Luck!



Welsh TB Rule changes

From the 17th of January there have been some rule changes across the whole of Wales. All Official TB Free herds in which only Inconclusive Reactors (IRs) are disclosed will remain under movement restrictions until the retest of IRs 60 days later. If the IR retest is negative, then the herds movement restrictions will be lifted but if one or more of the IRs become reactors or IRs for a second time then the herd loses their Official TB Free status.

Preparing For Lambing

The lambing season is upon us and as most of you will be aware by now, Spectam Scour Halt has been discontinued, and therefore we are unsure if we will have any available this spring. Therefore, there is even more emphasis on preventing the disease rather than cure.

Colostrum is one of the most important components when it comes to preventing watery mouth. The all-important antibodies passed on through the colostrum enables the lamb to fight off the bacteria which causes the disease, E. coli. Ensuring colostrum quality is up to scratch comes from the ewe management weeks prior to this. By blood sampling ewes 2-4 weeks pre lambing to assess their metabolic profile and reviewing silage analysis we can ensure that the diet fed, and more important what is actually being eaten by the sheep is meeting their requirements in the lead up to lambing. Without the right diet balance, colostrum quality is massively reduced and can lead

to increased lamb loss. For those ewes which don't seem to be producing enough colostrum or for any rejected/weak lambs then powdered colostrum replacer is a good alternative. We advise using Immucol Lamb colostrum replacer, many other commercial preparations often meet the lambs energy requirement but, offer very little antibodies to stimulate the lambs immune system.

Along with good colostrum quality and management to ensure lambs receive enough, hygiene is another key element in preventing watery mouth. Lambing pen hygiene is paramount, when the lamb is born this is the first thing they will come into contact with. Keeping ewes clean pre lambing and stocking density is also key.

Farming Connect funding is available to contribute towards metabolic profiling or an investigation if watery mouth is a real concern on your farm. If the lack of spectam availability is a concern for you going into lambing this year then please speak to one of our vets for advice on preventative measures and other treatment options.



Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis can have a detrimental effect on a cattle herds profitability but can often go un-noticed.

These losses are mainly due to reduced milk yield, reduced fertility, weak calves, and an increase in the number of abortions. It can also be a human health risk, with farmers at particular risk from the urine of infected cattle. Risk factors for leptospirosis in cattle include buying-in stock of unknown disease status, using a bull of unknown disease status, grazing near waterways and grazing with sheep.

If you remember back to our bulk milk testing campaign a few months ago, we also investigated the prevalence of Leptospirosis on our farms. Out of the unvaccinated herds we tested, 50% came back as being positive.

Vaccination remains an important control measure and continues to be effective at reducing the incidence of clinical disease and the risk of infection. It is important that your herd is fully vaccinated before Spring turnout because uninfected cattle are more likely to be exposed to Leptospirosis. Natural service also spreads leptospirosis so remember to vaccinate the bull. Currently we have a seasonal offer on Leptospirosis vaccine until the end of March. For a quote or to discuss vaccinating your herd please get in touch.

Preparing Youngstock for Turnout

Turnout may still seem some time away but planning ahead is key to a trouble-free grazing season.

Worm control

Using wormers responsibly is key to

minimise the risk of resistance developing within the worm population to the wormers used. Some classes of wormers also have a negative impact on insects on the pasture such as dung beetles, which play a vital role in breaking down dung pats on the pasture. Grazing management such as rotating grazing, and grazing youngstock on clean pasture such as silage aftermath does take time and effort to plan. But it does significantly slow down the build-up of worm burden and reduces the need to treat as often with wormers. Monitoring the worm burden in youngstock throughout the grazing season is vital to know when treatment with a wormer is necessary. We do this through carrying out a monthly worm egg count on a pooled faeces sample from the group.

Lungworm

Lungworm burden can build up over the grazing season. Clinical signs such as increased respiratory rate and coughing are commonly seen in mid to late summer. Vaccination pre turnout is very effective at preventing disease and is well worth doing as part of an overall worm control strategy. Speak to the farm team for more details.

Clostridial disease

Spores from Clostridial bacteria are widespread in the environment particularly in soil and organic matter. Cattle can become very ill very quickly when infected, and often the only sign is sudden death. Again vaccination pre turnout is very effective and inexpensive way of preventing losses due to clostridial disease during the grazing season.

