

Happy New year!

Happy new year, it was great to see so many of you at the Christmas party last month, the first without COVID restrictions!

As we welcome in the new year, we have got some good news, Farming Connect Animal Health Clinics are back. Many of you will be familiar with the scheme and will have taken advantage of last years funding. The funding is available to all Farming Connect registered farms and can be used on sampling, testing and one to one advise. Previously we used the clinics for investigations ranging from bull/ram fertility testing, pneumonia investigations to performing worm egg counts. Contact the office on 01978 311444 for more information or to book in a health clinic.



Blood testing (trace elements, metabolic profiling, Johnes)
FEC Ram or bull fertility
Leptospirosis **IBR**
 GENETIC DISORDERS / SCREENING
 Bacteriology – culture and sensitivity, lameness, postmortem
Any animal health related issues

Preparing for lambing

Lambing is already under way for some of our clients, and not far around the corner for most. After months of hard work preparing the ewes for tugging and ultimately getting the ewes in-lamb, lambing time will determine next seasons profitability and so for many is seen as the main focal point of the season.

As the old saying goes 'failing to prepare is preparing to fail' and this could not be anymore true for the lambing season. Here are some things for you to think about:

Check list...

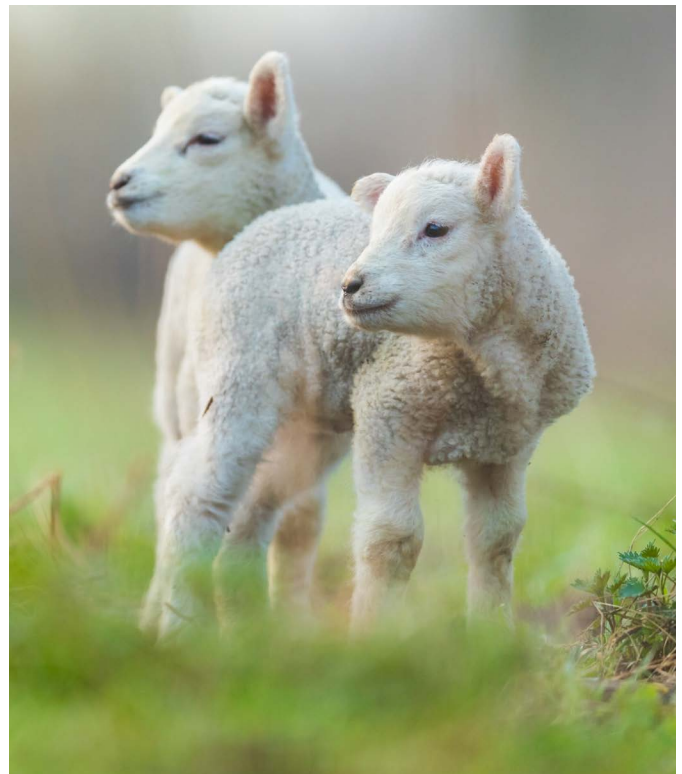
- Lubricant
- Disposable gloves
- Disinfectant
- Iodine Solution
- Glucose Solution
- Electrolytes
- Infa-red Lamps
- Prolapse Harnesses
- Lambing Ropes
- Colostrum



Sometimes it is easy to overlook nutrition, but it is one of the corner stones of a successful lambing season. To truly understand what we are feeding our ewes we must first assess the quality of the forage fed. Whether we are feeding hay or silage, knowing the energy and protein of the forage is the bare minimum we need to formulate the pre-lambing diet. Free sampling is often offered by feed mills so get in touch with your feed rep to see what they've got on offer. Now that we've got the correct diet, how are the ewes performing? Metabolic profiling is an invaluable tool which involves blood sampling a small number of ewes approximately three weeks prior to lambing. From this sample we can analyse if the ewe's energy requirements are being met, short- and long-term protein status, plus magnesium and copper levels. Taking these samples three weeks prior to lambing is important to allow time to make nutritional adjustments if we are concerned by the results. Lastly, we need to make sure our ewes have enough space to eat the ration without competition. A large ewe will require 50cm of trough space for concentrate feeding, 25cm for restricted forage feeding or 15cm for ad-lib forage feeding. Access to fresh water should be available at all times.

Don't forget about your pre-lambing clostridial vaccination booster, depending on the product used the timings may differ slightly. Most of you will have a Heptavac P + vaccination protocol, it is important that the annual booster is given 4-6 weeks prior to lambing. Worming at lambing time is a subject that divides opinions, most ewes don't need worming at lambing time, provided they are in good body condition and on a suitable diet meeting their nutritional needs. However, it is well-known that immunity dips around lambing time and so selective worming might be appropriate on your farm i.e. thin ewes or those carrying triplets. This will be very farm dependant so speak to one of our vets about what protocol will work best for you.

Low level abortions are a normal part of lambing, however, at what level should we be concerned? We advise investigations if two or more abortions are seen on a given day or more than 2% abortions in total. Some of the infections causing abortions can also cause disease in humans, so please take precautions when handling abortion



cases. This is especially important for pregnant women, who should under no circumstances come into contact with lambing ewes. Aborting ewes should be marked and isolated from the rest of the flock, female lambs should not be fostered on to these ewes.

Most importantly, please look after yourself! Lambing time is a high-pressure period and so it is understandable that stress levels will be higher than usual. Ensure that you have enough help at hand to ease the pressure. If you are struggling with any aspect then talking and asking for help is invaluable.

Lambing shed at Pen y ffordd

Due to building work at our Penyffordd branch we will not have our lambing shed available for the next few months, all emergency calls will be operational as always.

