

## RAM FERTILITY DAY - Thursday 25th August

With tugging time fast approaching ensuring rams are fit for work is essential. Rams that are infertile or subfertile lead to more empty ewes, less lambs to sell and less pennies in your pocket!!! Begin ram checks 8 weeks prior to tugging and look at the 4 T's:



1. **Teeth** – check all rams have a full and correct mouth. Poor dentition leads to reduced food intake, poor condition and reduced fertility.

2. **Toes** – check for any lameness. Not only is a ram with sore feet less likely to run about serving ewes, but if he has an infection he will be the perfect source of footrot or CODD to the breeding ewes.

3. **Testicles** – check the scrotum ensuring that the ram has two testicles that feel even in texture and no lumps or bumps. Measuring the circumference of the scrotum is also important, as the saying is true....bigger is better!

4. **Tone** - that is, Body Condition: Rams should be fit, not fat when they run with the ladies.

We are offering a **DISCOUNTED RAM FERTILITY DAY ON THURSDAY 25TH AUGUST**, where we will do a basic fertility examination suitable for commercial stock rams. This includes a brief look over the ram, palpate testes and measure scrotal size, then examine a semen sample to ensure there are live, viable sperm. The service costs £35 + VAT and £30 + VAT for any additional rams. Examinations will be done at the surgery but if you have several rams to do a visit can be arranged. Please note this examination is not suitable for pre-sale or insurance certification.

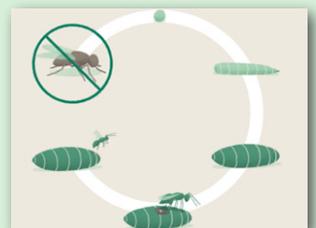
## RAM VASECTOMY DAYS - Tuesday 9th August & Wednesday 17th August

Teasers can really help group lambing tightly together at the start of the season. Teasers must meet all the same standards as the rams, apart from being able to release any sperm. Ewes must have total separation (sight, sound and smell) from any males for several weeks prior to tugging for the effects to fully work. Vasectomising rams involves a simple operation to remove part of the duct where the sperm travels out of the testis. Surgery should ideally be done at least 6 weeks prior to teasers being used to ensure they can't leave any lambs. **During this discount day a vasectomy will cost £78.66 + VAT for the 1st ram then £67.12 for any additional rams.**

**If you would like to book in for either the Ram Fertility or Vasectomy Days please contact the surgery on 01873 840167**

## Fly Parasites

An increasing number of livestock farmers have discovered an alternative to chemical pest control. Beneficial insects have proven to be the most effective and environmentally friendly strategy against flies in and around the livestock farm. The **Biowasp** is a parasitic mini wasp which controls flies in and around livestock units without the use of insecticides and chemicals. The Biowasp naturally controls flies by targeting fly pupae in and around **dairy farm buildings** with straw bedding or where dry manure is present.



**If you are interested in getting an action plan and quote for your farm done, in preparation for using these parasites next year, please contact the office by the end of August**, as we are trying to set up a demo day in the very near future. We have one client who has started using them this year and there definitely fewer flies in my car at the end of the visit.

## WHEN DO YOU VACCINATE AGAINST ENZOOTIC ABORTION OF EWES (EAE)?

Did you know that it can be done when it is most convenient for you?



- **CEVAC CHLAMYDIA** can be given from 4 months to 4 weeks before the rams go in.
- It can be given from 5 months of age to allow ewe lambs to be vaccinated and protected.
- **DO NOT** use in pregnant sheep.

We can usually supply this vaccine a couple of days after ordering.

**TOXOVAX**, the vaccine against the other main cause of sheep abortion, should be given at least 3 weeks before mating. It can be given from 5 months of age and no more than 4 months before mating. This vaccine **MUST** be ordered 2 weeks before you need it and has to be used **within 10 days of it being produced**, so it is crucial to time your order carefully.

### FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

We will be holding another popular NADIS/  
Farming Connect  
meeting soon:

## Sheep Fertility

at 7pm

on Monday, 15th August  
Monmouthshire Livestock Centre

You must be registered with  
Farming Connect.

To book your free place or for  
further details please contact  
the office: 01873 840167



**Neospora caninum** is a protozoan parasite that infects cows, causing abortion and stillbirths. It is the most commonly diagnosed cause of abortion in cattle in the UK. Neospora can cause abortion from three months of pregnancy onwards but typically we see cows aborting at around 5-7 months of gestation. There are two routes of transmission, vertical (from dam to calf) and horizontal (from dog to cow).

**In vertical transmission** when the cow is pregnant the parasite crosses the placenta and infects the calf. Most infected calves are born clinically normal, but if these are replacement heifers, they are a major source of infection in the herd as they will also produce infected offspring and maintain the parasite in the herd.

**In horizontal transmission**, dogs shed the parasite eggs in their faeces which cattle ingest and become infected. Dogs become infected by consuming raw meat or placenta from infected cattle. Most infected dogs show no clinical signs, but a small number of dogs may develop progressive lameness and paralysis. The most common route of spread is dog faeces in fields, but faeces can also contaminate cattle feed, bedding and water. So, it is very important to pick up and dispose of dog faeces correctly when on a dog walk. It is also important to ensure farm dogs are not defaecating in cattle pastures.

Diagnosis of Neospora in the dam is made by taking identifying antibodies in blood samples. However, antibody levels in the dam fluctuate throughout pregnancy therefore a negative result doesn't always confirm an animal is free from infection. The best time to test is in late pregnancy or around the time of aborting. An aborted calf can also be examined and may show brain and heart damage. There is no treatment for Neospora. Farmers can prevent this disease by identifying all positive cows, as these are potential sources of infection. Options for these animals are removal from the herd, service with a beef bull (for dairy animals) or if a valuable animal is affected, embryo transfer with implantation of the embryos into uninfected dams. Do not keep heifers from positive cows as it is very likely these will carry the infection and abort in the future. To prevent dogs from becoming infected around calving time do not allow dogs to eat cleansings, ensure correct disposal of the placenta and aborted material. Ensure livestock feed is covered and locked away to prevent access by dogs and wildlife. Isolating and blood sampling new cows before arrival is also beneficial. Dog owners can help prevent the disease by always collecting and disposing of dog faeces during walks and farmers by stopping dogs from eating placenta and carcasses found in fields or on farms.

**If you want to advice about any aspect of Neospora in your herd,  
please call Farm First Vets on 01873 840167.**

### SELEKT PUMP CLINIC

If you have a Grey and Blue Pump for giving fluids to you cattle, you are welcome to bring it along to our **FREE PUMP CLINIC at 2.30pm on Tuesday 9th August** where it will be given a full service and any worn parts replaced. If you can't make it on the day, you can drop the pump off before the clinic and we will make sure that it gets serviced.