



DECEMBER 2023

INVESTIGATING HIGH BARREN RATES IN EWES

Sheep scanners are busy at the moment and we hope that results are generally better than last year. If you do have a disappointing result, there are quite a few possible reasons for us to consider.

- 1) Infections such as Toxoplasmosis or Border disease, these tend to occur more in younger or bought-in ewes.
- 2) Have they had access to brassicas/red clover? Oestrogenic feeds can affect fertility.
- 3) What was ewe body condition like at tugging and now? Ewes that were too thin at tugging or have lost a lot of condition can scan poorly. Overfat ewes also carry fewer lambs.
- 4) Are there any issues with lameness, sheep scab or liver fluke? In addition to effects on body condition anything that causes significant liver damage could affect the maintenance of pregnancy.
- 5) Were there any issues with the tups? Were they all working, were there enough of them in for long enough and were they tested beforehand? One consideration to bear in mind: was the new tup(s) purchased after experiencing heat stress either at a sale or during transport. There were some sales on hot days earlier this year. If so, there is an increased risk of poorer semen quality for 6-8 weeks after a heat stress event.
- 6) Is the ewes' trace element status known as selenium and iodine deficiency are often seen in this part of the world and are associated with poor fertility.
- 7) Were the ewes gathered for any stressful procedures after tugging?

Depending on answers to these questions, we could carry out some testing, which could include border disease and toxoplasma serology, selenium levels and pooled iodine. **For Welsh farms, this would be a good use of the Farming Connect Funding that is currently available.**



**WE ARE OFFERING
SCANNING SESSIONS
FOR SMALL FLOCKS
OF EWES OR GOATS
CONTACT US
FOR MORE INFO**

CHRISTMAS OPENING TIMES

Friday 22nd December- 8.15am to 5.30pm

Christmas Day & Boxing Day- Closed

Tuesday 27th to Friday 29th- 8.15am to 5.30pm

New Years Day- Closed

**OPEN AS USUAL FROM TUESDAY
2ND JANUARY**

FREE EWE MASTITIS SAMPLING

APHA is undertaking a suckler ewe mastitis bacteriology project during the 2023/2024 lambing season. The aim of the project is to improve surveillance of bacteria causing mastitis in suckler ewes and provide antimicrobial resistance data. In addition, samples will also be used to provide surveillance for Contagious Agalactiae and identify Mycoplasma organisms that may play a role in suckler ewe mastitis. We have been asked to submit milk samples from flocks experiencing cases of mastitis. Farms can submit up to three samples from each lambing cohort of ewes / ewe lambs throughout the lambing season. Although the lab fees will be covered, there will be our usual charge for postage and interpretation. Samples can be submitted between November 2023 and May 2024. Samples will need to be collected aseptically and we will be holding a meeting early next year about Mastitis in sheep, where this technique will be covered.



LEAD POISONING RISK

APHA have told us that there have recently been two significant incidents relating to lead shot. In one, sheep had been grazing a pasture which had been heavily contaminated with lead shot. This followed a period of several years when the pasture had been adjacent to an area used for clay shooting. Shot had repeatedly been fired in the direction of the pasture. Several lambs died from acute lead toxicity and restrictions were placed on the remainder of the group, precluding their entry into the food chain. Additional measures required blood sampling of the group at the owner's expense and offal discard at slaughter. As the pasture is clearly a high-risk source of lead for grazing animals the farmer plans to turn it into a wildlife meadow, utilising an environmental programme.

In the cattle incident, an entire group of 48 fattening animals either died from lead poisoning or were euthanised. The source in this case was contaminated maize silage. Lead shot from a clay shoot had become trapped in the hollow between the maize leaf and stem and had then become incorporated into the maize silage. Younger cattle on the farm were also fed the contaminated silage and blood sampling established they had raised lead concentrations. They are currently under restriction and will be subject to further analysis, at which point further risk assessment will be carried out.

There has been an increase in the provision of clay pigeon shooting, as farms look to diversify and expand their business portfolios. In many shoots, stainless steel shot has replaced the use of lead shot, but the amount of lead shot still being used is uncertain. If there are shoots near the area where animals graze, or where forage is harvested, then it is advisable for the livestock keeper to check that lead contamination of those areas is not occurring.

NEW TB RULES FROM 1ST FEBRUARY 2024

New rules are coming onto place which include the following: Bovine animals that have been injected with tuberculin on day one (TT1) are not permitted to move off the holding until the results of that test have been read on the reading day (TT2). Bovine animals that have had a sample taken for a TB blood test cannot be moved off until the results of the test are received. In exceptional cases, APHA will issue a licence to allow such moves.

Prohibition on feeding untreated milk. From 1 February 2024 there is an automatic prohibition on feeding of untreated milk to calves or any other mammals on premises where reactors or inconclusive reactors have been disclosed. The feeding of colostrum from an individual cow to a calf under 24 hours old is allowed. The prohibition does not apply to suckling calves. Full guidance will be available on GOV.WALES.



STAFF NEWS



INVOICE LAYOUT



Vicki Fisher – we are delighted to announce that Vicki and Dan have had a little girl called Erin. She was born on 1st December by caesarean section. We hope that the surgeon was as good as Vicki at doing the procedure.

Charlie Phillips will be joining the veterinary team at the end of January. Charlie saw practice with us when she was a student, and since qualifying she has been working for a farm practice in Carmarthen. We are really looking forwards to her joining the team .

We occasionally have comments from clients about the layout of our bills. Having spoken to other veterinary practices, ours is not the only system that confuses people. To help you with this, we have included a sample bill in with this newsletter with comments encircled in different colours to explain what the various columns and totals represent. As ever, if you are struggling to make sense of an invoice, please phone us or call in for a face-to-face explanation.

