

JANUARY 2023

NAVEL DIPPING

The following information has been prepared by the Sheep Vet Society as we have been made aware of a risk of reduced availability/high cost of strong iodine for navel dressing this spring. This has arisen due to production ceasing at the main source in Chile, causing prices to quadruple. We have secured a similar volume of product to what we sold last year, but it has almost doubled in cost.



Navel dressing is important however, most cases of joint ill and other bacteraemic conditions follow inadequate colostrum intake and / or a contaminated environment. The most important things flock farmers can do to avoid these conditions is therefore to ensure an adequate supply of quality colostrum and decrease the environmental challenge of pathogens by:

- Management of the body condition and nutrition of pregnant animals (consider forage analysis and metabolic profiling in later pregnancy)
- Ensuring a high quality and quantity of clean colostrum intake in the first hours of life
- Provision of a clean and dry lambing/calving environment

Lower iodine concentrations (often quoted as below 7%) are considered to be less effective in drying and disinfecting the navel. It is not appropriate to use tetracycline antibiotic sprays for treating the navels of neonatal animals – they do not dry them very effectively and it is an unnecessary use of antibiotics. Similarly, it is not appropriate to plan to use blanket systemic/oral antibiotic prophylaxis to control neonatal infections.

Alternative navel dressings

Navel dressing can help reduce some risk and there are proprietary alternatives to iodine on the market. Agents that desiccate with residual antibacterial activity are likely to be the best choice. There is little or no data available on their use in lambs, and limited data available in calves.

Alternatives include:

- **Vetericyn Super 7 Plus spray/dip** – sodium hydroxide and alcohol in electrolysed water (which produces sodium hydroxide), with sodium bicarbonate. Small study showing reduced navel drying time in calves compared with 7% iodine tincture with no increase in infections
- **Intra Repiderma spray** – chelated copper sulphate, zinc chloride and alcohol in butane. Small study showing no significant difference in navel drying time or signs of infection compared with 4% iodine
- **4% chlorhexidine, or a 50/50 mix 4% chlorhexidine and alcohol** – there are limited studies reporting equivalence with 7% iodine

Other products:

- 70% alcohol (dries the navel but antibacterial effects are short lasting)
- Copper sulphate solution (may not dry as effectively, precautions required to avoid contact with skin, eyes and clothing)

It is important to scrutinise the safety datasheet for whatever product is used, including the requirements for disposal.

EWE METABOLIC PROFILES

Norbrook have kindly agreed to cover the lab costs of Ewe Metabolic Profiles. This is available for three farms that haven't used the scheme before. We will be putting the names in a hat to be drawn during the middle of January, so if you are interested in getting this done in your flock, please ring the office as soon as possible and get your name on the list.

SCANNING RESULTS



Scanning results have been disappointing for many flocks this year, and it is likely that lower numbers of lambs per ewe are a result of the challenging dry conditions in the run up to tupping. However, if there are large numbers of barren ewes, there is likely to be another explanation for this e.g., an infection or issues with ram fertility. If there were far more barren ewes than usual in your flock at scanning, we would advise blood sampling some barren ewes before they are sold to look for infectious causes which can be prevented by vaccination. There is funding available for this via the drug companies, or farms in Wales could use a Farming Connect clinic to pay for this work.

Farming Connect Clinics

Farms in Wales can once again take advantage of £250 to cover the cost of testing. At this time of year, the following investigations would be useful on many farms: ewe metabolic profiles, barren ewe screening, fluke testing on blood, faeces or bulk milks, pneumonia sampling in cattle, mastitis bacteriology, teat scoring. Please contact us if you would like to proceed with any of those sampling ideas listed or if you have another specific problem that you would like us to investigate. One clinic is available per farm, and it is on a first come, first served basis.

Insurance Certificates

We have had a couple of situations recently where we have been asked to supply insurance certificates for animals weeks or days after an incident has occurred. Please remember that we can only certify what we know to be true, so if something has happened that is likely to lead to an insurance claim, please follow the following procedure.

1. Contact the insurance company to find out exactly what they require e.g., post-mortem or just a death certificate; letter or specific form to be filled in.
2. Contact us ASAP so that we can arrange to do whatever is required - a time delay can affect how useful a post-mortem is.
3. Leave the animal in situ if possible or take photographs if this is not possible.
4. DO NOT dispose of the animal if we need to certify that it is dead or has a particular injury.



! JOKE TIME !

This year, my New Year's resolution is to finally go to the gym... and cancel that membership I've been wasting money on every month since last year!!

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Thursday 12th January

Monmouthshire Livestock Market, Raglan NP15 2BH at 7pm

NADIS Lambing Losses Workshop (post-lambing losses from birth to weaning).

Clients must be registered with Farming Connect. A hot meal will be provided.

Thursday 26th January

Monmouthshire Livestock Market, Raglan NP15 2BH at 7pm

NADIS Youngstock Health Part 2.

To cover all stages of youngstock production from weaning to finishing or calving identifying key areas to improve health and productivity. Clients must be registered with Farming Connect.

A hot meal will be provided.

Monday 30th January

There will be John's meeting for dairy farmer clients of Belmont and Farm First Vets via zoom at 7.30 pm. Pete Orpin will use a range of case studies to help you design appropriate, practical and affordable control strategies and biosecurity measures;

Dr James Hanks (University of Reading) will describe how the John's Disease Tracker in InterHerd+ provides key data for farmer/vet discussions and Dr Rosie Morrison (University of Cranfield) will explore other barriers to John's Disease control.

Please contact the office to book your FREE place - 01873 840167 or visit our website for more details