



## In this issue...

- Introduction
- Dealing with Dystocia
- Ketosis in Dairy Cows
- Flock Health Club
- Red Tractor Updates
- Survey: Redwater in Cattle
- Upcoming Courses/Webinars

## Introduction

We continue to be busy with herd and flock health plans and are excited to introduce some changes to our Flock Health Club membership to help us better support proactive flock planning for our sheep and goat clients – see later in the newsletter for more information. Looking back a year on from our January 2021 newsletter there are topics that remain obstinately relevant such as Avian Influenza, areas that we continue to be proud of such as our Vet Tech team and aspects that we hope to have seen the back of, namely needing to run all our farmer meetings online! Bird flu has recently been confirmed in the Romsey area so we remind you to keep your birds housed and be vigilant for sick and dying poultry. While the NHS is busy booster vaccinating the UK population, our Vet Tech team is gearing up for vaccination rounds as lambing approaches – sheep should be boosted with Heptavac P four to six weeks pre-lambing, so please book ahead to ensure you meet this window. As for meetings, we will continue to deliver our Responsible Use of Medicines courses virtually as we find this is most convenient for our farmers, but hope to build on the success of our autumn face to face meetings with more in the near future. From all at Endells we would like to wish our clients a Happy New Year and a prosperous 2022!

*Lucy Jerram, on behalf of the Endell Farm Vets team*

## Dealing with Dystocia – Harry Smith

*Lambing is a stressful but rewarding time of year and as 2022 starts, vets start to prepare for spring, our busiest time of year. This article aims to give you advice on stage 2 of parturition: delivery of the foetus. The focus is on ewes, but many of the same principles apply to cows.*

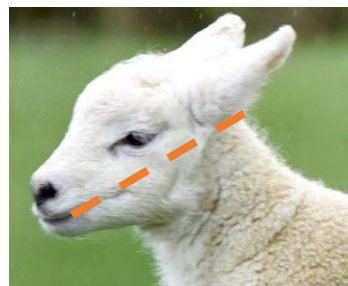
### Normal Parturition

- **Stage 1:** The ewe may become restless and separate herself from the flock, as her cervix dilates in preparation for birth, and a string like mucus is expelled from her vulva. This stage usually lasts for two to six hours.
- **Stage 2:** A water bag will protrude out of the vulva and should rupture quickly. The ewe will lie down as she starts to push and front limbs of the first lamb protrude, followed by the head until the entire new-born is delivered. This stage typically takes less than an hour however, varies from 30 minutes to two hours. For ewes with multiple lambs, we expect approximately 20 minute intervals between siblings.
- **Stage 3:** The placenta and foetal membranes should be expelled within two to three hours after giving birth. Ewes will often eat their placenta, this is completely normal and is a good source of nutrients. If a ewe doesn't expel her placenta within 12 hours it is considered retained.

### Dystocia

Dystocia is a medical term, meaning "Difficult birth, typically caused by a large or awkwardly positioned foetus, by smallness of the maternal pelvis, or by failure of the uterus and cervix to contract and expand normally."




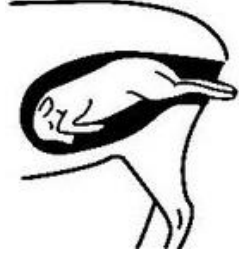


Normal foetal presentation is the forefeet first, with the head between them (nose first). The spine should be facing the sky. Dystocia often occurs because of large singles or due to the ewe being too narrow. If assistance is needed then lubrication is essential and if lambing ropes are to be used, ensure they are properly looped around each leg above the fetlock joint. Determining the front legs from the back legs is best done by bending them gently. The front legs bend the same way, forming a C-shape, the back legs bend in opposite directions, forming a Z-shape.



Head snares/ropes **MUST** be placed properly (orange line on image). They should be placed behind the ears and follow the jaw to the mouth. If placed round the chin, this may cause strangulation or damage to the spine. If placed above the mouth this is likely to slip off.

*Continued over...*

Most abnormal positions require correcting into the normal birthing position before delivery; these are shown in the table below.

Abnormal Presentation	Correction Advice
<b>Leg back</b> 	<p>The ewe may be able to deliver the lamb with a leg back if it is small. If assistance is needed, then slide your hand along the shoulder to locate the foot of the leg. Keep your hand between the hoof and the wall of the uterus by cupping it, to prevent damage and tearing. Very gently and slowly move the leg into the normal position.</p>
<b>Both legs back</b> 	<p>Apply the same technique for each leg as with one leg back. You may need to gently push the head back into the birth canal to create enough space. If concerned that you may lose the lamb then a lambing snare can be used, but must be placed properly.</p>
<b>Elbow lock</b> 	<p>The elbows may get caught at the entrance of the birth canal if not fully straightened. Gently push the head back into the birth canal, this should take the pressure off the front legs so they can then be gently brought forward, one at a time.</p>
<b>Backwards delivery</b> 	<p>Do not try to turn the lamb around as this will damage the uterus and may break the umbilical cord. As the umbilical cord may break before the head is out, you may have to act quickly, but still gently. If the hind legs are presented, then pull the legs straight back out until the lamb's pelvis is out of the vulva, then pull at a 45 degree angle towards the ground. The breech position is a backward delivery when both back legs are forward, often only the tail is seen out. Apply the same skills as above, gently push the lamb back into the uterus and carefully reposition the hind legs before pulling.</p>
<b>Head back</b> 	<p>Position lambing ropes correctly onto the legs so the lamb doesn't go too far back into the uterus. The lamb may need to be pushed back slightly to make space to gently move the head into the normal position. The lambing ropes can then be gently pulled in time with the ewe's contractions. If the head slips out again, then a head snare can be placed. Again, this must be applied correctly and should be used to guide the head, not pulled.</p>
<b>Multiple</b> 	<p>This can be very complicated and confusing when you find more than two limbs in the birth canal! Take your time, push the lambs back gently and try to work out which limbs belong to which lambs by following a leg back to the shoulder, feeling around the head and back up their other limb. You may be presented with front and back legs so it's important to decide which ones they are. Small contorted lambs may present side on, so a front and a back leg may belong to one lamb!</p>

*With any of these abnormal positions, the use of lube and correctly placed lambing ropes are essential to ensure proper and safe delivery. If you have any doubts or concerns, we are on call 24/7, 365 days a year so please give us a ring on 01722 333291.*

# Ketosis in Dairy Cows – George Lindley

If you could have a superpower, what would it be? Perhaps you would be able to predict which animals would fall unwell, before it happened? Or perhaps you would be able to see into the future and prevent animals getting ill in the first place? And what if I told you that in some circumstances, we can already achieve this?



## Negative energy balance and ketosis

In all animals energy balance describes the difference between energy intake via food and energy expenditure; to keep warm, to walk about, to urinate and defecate as well as (sometimes) to produce milk. An individual is in a positive energy balance when the energy they eat is greater than the energy they expend; something we aim for to ensure our stock are growing. Conversely, when the amount of energy an animal eats is less than the energy they expend, we describe it as a negative energy balance. In such circumstances, the animal must metabolise their own body reserves of fat and muscle in order to compensate.

A common example of this scenario is soon after calving in dairy cows. At this point in time, dry matter intake is low, but milk yield is increasing rapidly. Peak negative energy balance usually occurs within the first 10 days of lactation, and cows return to positive energy balance between 30 and 100 DIM.

If a large amount of fat is metabolised during early lactation ketone bodies - acetone, acetoacetate, and BHB are produced, or fat is stored in the liver as triglyceride. Subclinical ketosis is when these levels of ketone bodies are high enough to have consequences, although may not be associated with clinical signs at the time of measurement.

## Consequences of ketosis

The main costs associated with subclinical and clinical ketosis are due to losses of reproductive performance and losses of milk productivity. The cost of each case of subclinical ketosis is estimated to be between £110-220. Furthermore, cows with elevated ketone body levels are also more likely to encounter left displaced abomasum, metritis, retained foetal membranes, mastitis, increased somatic cell count and are more likely to be culled early (Lei and Simoes, 2021).

We generally see clinical ketosis quite rarely nowadays. Most commonly it is associated with reductions in milk production and appetite, as well as condition loss; the relative frequency of associated clinical signs are shown in the image below.

Clinical Sign	Number of Animals that Showed the Sign	Percentage from the Affected Animals (%)
Nervous signs	1	4
Reluctance to movement	1	4
Constipation	4	14
Acetone odor on breath or milk	5	18
Dry and fewer feces	6	21
Complete anorexia	7	25
Prostration	10	36
Selective food intake	21	75
Abrupt drop in productivity	28	100

From: Dar, A.M.; Malik, H.U.; Beigh, S.A.; Hussain, S.A.; Nabi, S.U.; Dar, A.A.; Dar, P.A.; Bhat, A.M. Clinico-biochemical alteration in bovine ketosis. J. Entomol. Zool.

## Prevention is better than cure

The causes of ketosis are multifactorial but are commonly associated with inadequate nutrition, which does not meet the needs of the cow; or depressions in dry matter intake – most commonly associated with cows that are over-conditioned prior to calving. Prevention centres around maintaining high dry matter intakes prior to, during and after calving as well as preventing cows from becoming over-conditioned at calving (BCS  $\geq 3.5$ ).

We can also monitor how well cows are getting on with the ration using metabolic scoring. Whilst this is commonly perceived to be an expensive and time-consuming task, in reality it can be performed informally very easily. Regular blood sampling of cows 2-14 days pre-calving, and 2-3 weeks after calving for measurement of BHBs (a ketone body) gives a useful indication of whether levels of subclinical ketosis are increasing, allowing further investigation and preventative strategies to be implemented before more severe consequences ensue. In such a way, BHBs really do allow you to predict the future...

# Flock Health Club – Mel McPherson



At the very enjoyable on-farm meeting for sheep clients that we held back in August, we asked those attending their thoughts on what was important to offer in a Flock Health Club and, having listened to the feedback, we have decided to make a couple of changes to our Flock Health Club Membership.

The main focus of the Flock Health Club is not only for the prevention of disease and to promote health and productivity in your flock, but also to improve the relationship between vets and sheep/goat farmers. A greater involvement on-farm, whether small or large, allows farmers to receive more cost-effective veterinary advice. It allows like-minded, enthusiastic farmers and vets to share

information and insight into the latest developments of the industry. Farming is continually changing and we want to facilitate your progression in flock health, knowledge development and business profitability all while meeting the demands of the evolving industry. Membership of the club is £18.75 + VAT/month and for this you will get:

- Free attendance at quarterly meetings (£5 each for non-members) including one practical workshop (topics can be chosen by you).
- 15% off **all vet time** for sheep/goats - this includes both pre-booked and emergency work. Visit fee not included.
- Seasonal offers on medicines and services eg: vasectomies, pre-lambing/kidding blood tests.
- A flat rate of £50 + VAT to set up a new Flock Health Plan plus a free annual review. Visit fee not included.
- Up to 12 worm egg counts per calendar year (including cocci, but not including fluke).
- An appointed first and second vet to provide continuity for non-emergency work.

We have increased the number of worm egg counts per year because we recognise the importance of regular counts for disease management as well as checking the resistance status of different wormer groups.

We are really looking forward to getting some of you signed up and planning the next meeting. Please contact the Farm Office if you would like to join or have any questions.



## Upcoming Courses

### Responsible Use of Medicines (Online Course)

Thursday 20 January, 1pm (fully booked)

Monday 21 February, 3pm

Thursday 24 March, 11am

### MilkSure Part 1 (Online Training)

Friday 28 January, 11am-2pm

If you would like to attend, please ring the office to book your place (01722-333291, option 1).

## Webinars

The following webinars are available on our website:

### Beef Benchmarking Introduction

### Bovine Respiratory Disease Prevention

### Colostrum Management in Beef Calves

### Block Calving – to Estrumate or CIDR?

### Getting Lambs to Grow Backyard Pigs

Please visit  
[www.endellfarmvets.co.uk](http://www.endellfarmvets.co.uk)  
for more information.

## Red Tractor Updates

New requirements were introduced by Red Tractor last November; a summary is outlined below, but please contact your routine vet or the practice with any specific questions:



### Beef and Sheep Farms

Herd health plans must be reviewed, signed, and dated yearly by your nominated vet (who should have visited your farm at least once in the preceding year), with recommendations for updates to the health plan if required. As of October 2022, beef herd health plans will need to include a BVD control plan!

A Health and Performance review should be completed by your vet. This includes collating data on lameness, mortality records, culling rate, disease, parasites, and abattoir feedback which should be analysed and discussed with key issues identified and actions defined to reduce or control them. Additionally, medicine usage data must be collated and analysed by your vet with strategies determined to reduce usage where possible, particularly focusing on antibiotics.

An important update for both beef and sheep farmers is the requirement for at least one person on each farm who is responsible for administering medicines to obtain a certificate of competence/attendance from training undertaken post October 2016. Any course attended must cover the necessary components required to fulfil the criteria set out by Red Tractor. Courses include but are not limited to: NOAH Animal Medicines, Best Practice, or our Responsible use of Medicines course. Additionally, it is now a requirement that a nominated vet/practice must visit a farm at least once a year to see the livestock.

Finally, the updated Red Tractor standards make it clear that pain associated with routine husbandry procedures in cattle and sheep should be controlled with appropriate analgesia. This includes the recommendation for the use of analgesia, even when disbudding calves under one week old with cauterising paste.

### Dairy Farms

There are a number of changes in the new Red Tractor Guidelines for Dairy Farms, most of which are already included in our current Health Plans.

A written breeding and management policy must be in place and implemented, which includes semen use, breeding management decisions and tools used to determine replacement rates. This policy must also include the sufficient provision of rearing facilities to cover the number of youngstock produced, identified market for breed of calf produced and a plan in case of TB breakdown.

The numbers of cows calved and detailed calf mortality data must be recorded and reviewed annually by a vet to observe trends and implement changes as necessary.

Housing must be constructed and maintained to provide a safe and secure environment for livestock. The farm must be aware of outcome measures relating to hair loss, lesions, swelling, cleanliness, body condition score and lameness.

Antibiotic footbaths are not permitted for use in dairy cattle.

For more information, please visit <https://assurance.redtractor.org.uk>

## Survey: Redwater in Cattle

Tick distribution across the UK is increasing, bringing with it the threat of tick-borne diseases. In Great Britain, the most reported tick-borne disease in cattle is bovine babesiosis, otherwise known as redwater. This condition can have significant effects on the health and welfare of cattle herds. Research on this disease is being carried out by veterinary surgeon Harriet McFadzean as part of her MSc dissertation at the University of Edinburgh; all cattle farmers are invited to participate, regardless of whether they experience outbreaks of redwater on their farm. If you are interested in participating, the survey takes approximately seven minutes and can be accessed via the following link in our online version of this newsletter ([www.endellfarmvets.co.uk](http://www.endellfarmvets.co.uk)):

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd5oxlQxbpGciKj8\\_B9c0Cp1Ei8BaTiCKDXUS7uIo\\_y7cwQ3A/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd5oxlQxbpGciKj8_B9c0Cp1Ei8BaTiCKDXUS7uIo_y7cwQ3A/viewform)



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