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The Calf and Lamb Recovery Position

We've all seen and heard of vets and farmers of old hoisting calves over gates or swinging lambs by their back legs to stimulate them to breathe, however we are probably doing more harm than good!

In the past, we would have been told to do this for neonates who aren't breathing or to clear fluid from their lungs (particularly in breach/backwards presentations). Instead, all we are achieving is compression of the lungs and diaphragm from the weight of the guts pressing down, and with this the forced emptying of fluid from the stomach.

What we actually want to achieve is increased ventilation, or to reduce the effort required to ventilate/breathe. A calf lying on its side is already compromising its ability to breathe by 50% as the lung closest to the ground is being compressed by its own body weight. The same occurs when hanging them up over the gate or swinging them. Instead, we need to get the neonate sitting on its sternum, so that both sides of the chest can expand.

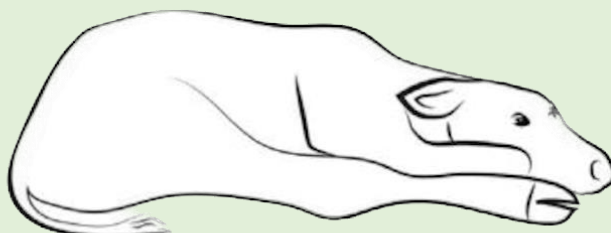
What about the fluid on their lungs? Lungs are much better at absorbing/mopping up excess fluid than we give them credit for, and we can help them to achieve this faster by increasing ventilation/breathing (the recovery position!). Remember, the fluid we see draining out of a calf or lamb when they are suspended is mainly coming from the stomach, and not the lungs.



What should I do?

- Place the calf or lamb in the recovery position.
- Rub them vigorously.
- Additional methods to stimulate breathing:
 - Stimulate/poke the nasal septum (soft tissue between both nostrils) with straw.
 - Squirt cold water into an ear (a syringe works very well for this).

The Recovery Position: What is it?



1. Sit the calf/lamb up on its sternum.
2. Pull the front feet forward.
 - This stabilises its position, allowing both lungs to expand.
3. Pull the back legs forwards, so that their toes are almost touching their ears.



Events and Courses

Foot trimming

Locations TBC

Thursday 9 March, 10am-4pm

Thursday 15 June, 10am-4pm

Thursday 19 October, 10am-4pm

£250 incl VAT per person

The Basics of Lambing

At Newton Wood Barns,

GU34 3EW

Small, in-person, practical one-hour sessions that allow you (and up to three guests) to focus on what you need to work on, whether it be lambing, tube feeding, injections, castrations, colostrum etc.

Sessions are being held between

9am and 5pm on:

Thursday 16 March

Thursday 13 April

Cost £75 incl VAT per hour

Responsible Use of Medicines

Online Course

Monday 17 April, 2pm

Friday 23 June, 12pm

Tuesday 19 September, 12pm

£25 incl VAT per person

MilkSure

Online Course

Wednesday 12 July, 11.30am

Wednesday 15 November,

11.30am

£350 incl VAT per farm

AI Course

Locations TBC

15 and 16 May, 9.30am-4.30pm

7 and 8 August, 9.30am-4.30pm

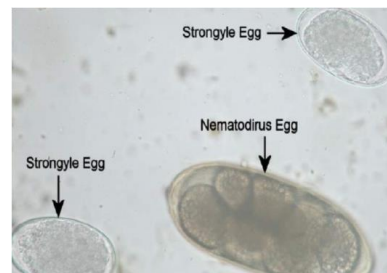
£450 incl VAT per person

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

Managing Nematodirus

Nematodirus batus acts very differently to other gut worms such as Trichostrongylus species and therefore requires a different approach to its management:

- Eggs survive the winter on pasture due to the presence of a resilient double wall.
- An extra stage of larval development occurs in the egg so when hatching occurs, the larvae are already able to infect the animals, leading to sudden onset of disease.
- 'Mass hatching' occurs in the spring time when the weather warms up, leading to sudden onset of disease.
- The larvae cause disease as well as the adults, leading to sudden onset of disease.
- Faecal worm egg counts will be negative early on in the season when only larvae (and not egg-producing adults) are present.
- Nematodirus adults do not produce many eggs so lower faecal worm egg counts may still be significant.



Our advice:

Follow the SCOPS Nematodirus forecast to find out when the ambient temperature is conducive to 'mass hatching' in your area. At this point, all grazing lambs should be given a dose of 'white drench' wormer belonging to the benzimidazole group of wormers, eg: Rycoben. Thankfully there is minimal resistance of Nematodirus to white drenches and therefore this is a good opportunity to use this wormer which may be of less use at other times of the year when there may be resistant trichostrongyles present. Sheep develop a natural immunity to Nematodirus by six months of age so adults do not require treatment.

NB: This is the ONLY time throughout the year when we would recommend worming without performing a faecal worm egg count first.

TB Cattle Vaccination Update



At the beginning of February, the Wiltshire TB Eradication Group (TBEG) held its biannual meeting in Market Lavington, Devizes, attended by farmers, farm vets and others from within our industry. Phil Hogarth, Lead Scientist for Bovine Tuberculosis at APHA, gave a very enlightening and optimistic talk about the progress of the TB vaccination for cattle. For the last twenty years the cattle vaccine has been 'five years away' but now it really is looking to be less than that!

Phil explained the very complicated process involved in not only establishing the efficacy and safety of the BCG vaccine (the same TB vaccine used in people) in cattle but also developing and trialling a new TB skin test that allows us to differentiate infected animals from those that are vaccinated (DIVA test – Detect Infected among Vaccinated Animals). In the skin test that we currently use, all vaccinated animals would react to the bovine tuberculin injected into the skin with big 'bottom lumps' and therefore be classed as reactors. The DIVA test uses a different solution that would only need to be injected in one place on the neck. Vaccinated animals will not react to this solution but those affected with TB will, and therefore be classed as reactors.

Currently, we are looking at the vaccination and DIVA test being available in 2026 so fingers crossed everything continues to go smoothly with the licensing process! The vaccination policy still needs to be decided so we do not currently know if cattle vaccination will be compulsory, or who will administer the vaccination – if APHA makes a process compulsory then they have to pay for it!

Wiltshire TBEG meets twice a year, organised and chaired by our vet Mel McPherson. The meetings are open to all; if you are interested in coming along, please let the farm office know and they can pass your details on to Mel.



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