



Farm Vet News

September 2022



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Preparing your Sheep for Breeding

Make sure your ewes AND rams are fit for purpose at the start of your breeding season:

Rams

Ram MOTs should be done 10 weeks prior to tupping to ensure you have enough time to get a replacement or treat any underlying problems. Semen testing can be done, but with caution; a negative semen test does not necessarily indicate infertility and re-testing may be needed.

Check Your 5 Ts:	
Toes	Trim/inspect toes, locomotion/and signs of arthritis
Teeth	Check for gaps/loss of teeth, bony lumps/tooth abscesses, under/overshot jaw
Testicles/Teats	Testicles - Measure and check firmness (should feel like a human flexed bicep with no lumps or bumps) Teats - Check no mastitis, no lumps/bumps
Tone	Body Condition Score - aim for a body condition of 2.5-4 out of 5 (spine well covered)
Treat	Vaccinate (clostridial diseases and Pasteurella), lameness issues and internal/external parasites.

Ewes

Ewes should be given vaccines (Toxoplasmosis and Enzootic Abortion) 4-6 weeks BEFORE tupping.

Replacement and retained ewes will need Clostridial/Pasteurella vaccines pre-lambing (2 doses 4-6 weeks apart OR a booster 4-6 weeks pre-lambing). This gives the lambs immunity (via colostrum) for up to 5 weeks.

Worming and fluking? Discuss with a vet if that is appropriate to do before tupping. Consider a faecal worm egg count in your decision making and monitoring technique. Younger replacement ewes may need worming, but your more mature ewes probably don't.

Ewe:ram ratio

To optimise pregnancy rates, allow one adult ram for every 60 ewes, or one ram lamb for every 40 ewes.

Manipulating the breeding season

Ewes are seasonal, short day breeders with a 16-17 day oestrous cycle and peak fertility in most breeds around late October/November for a March/April lambing.

There are a number of reasons why sheep farmers may consider manipulating reproduction:

- to tighten your lambing season to ease management (labour, feed etc.) and improve disease control
- to advance your lambing to have early lambs to meet the Easter fat lamb market- getting better prices with even lamb batches
- to sell/show pedigree breeding animals
- to synchronise for AI (Artificial Insemination) to improve and expand your genetics

There are three main methods for hormonal control:

- 'The Ram Effect' using Teaser rams
- Progesterone Sponges or CIDRS (+/- PMSG injections)
- Melatonin implants (Regulin)

Using hormones to manipulate breeding does not guarantee that your ewes will become pregnant. They must have good nutrition and body condition and be free from disease. It is also important that there are enough healthy rams, staff and space at lambing time.

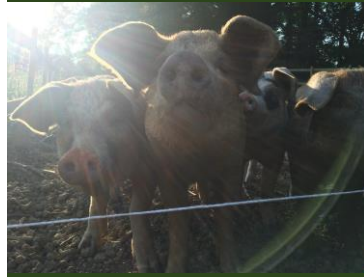
If you would like more information on any of these methods, please phone the practice to speak to one of our vets.

'The Ram Effect'

Using 'The Ram Effect' with teaser (vasectomised) rams is an easy way to advance the breeding season by 2-3 weeks and tighten up your lambing period, allowing for more even lamb batches and helps improve overall management. If you would like to discuss using teaser rams or other ways to advance, tighten or synchronise your lambing season to best suit your farm, please ask to speak with one of our vets. (Vasectomies need to be done at least 6-8 weeks before use.)

★Flock Health Club members receive 50% off vasectomies★





Upcoming Events and Courses

Ewe Mastitis

Monday 12 September, 2pm
At Elmgrove Farm, Braishfield
Learn more about ewe mastitis
and the new mastitis
vaccination
£10 for non-Flock Health Club
Members

DIY AI

Face to face practical course
19 and 20 September
9.30am-4.30pm
£450 incl VAT per person

Responsible Use of Medicines

Online Course
Thursday 22 September, 9-11am
£25 incl VAT per person

Ketosis in Dairy Cows

Kindly sponsored by
Elanco Animal Health
Tuesday 18 October, 6.45-9pm
At The Wheatsheaf, Lower
Woodford
The fertility of your dairy cows
can have a big impact on the
success of your farm. Addressing
subclinical ketosis can help
improve milk yields, fertility and
levels of disease.

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

Calf Respiratory Campaign

At Endells we are constantly looking to improve what we do and how we manage cases. This autumn/winter we are keen to work with cattle farmers to increase the diagnostics of calf pneumonia that we carry out, allowing us to tailor vaccination programs, with the ultimate aim of decreasing antibiotic use on farm.

Whether you are breeding your own calves, buying from a private source or buying from market, calf pneumonia can be a problem. As well as the cost of medicines and your time dealing with these cases, there is a significant effect on growth rates, as well as production in later life of animals that suffer with pneumonia as calves. There are many different bacteria and viruses that cause pneumonia; it is possible to take a sample of the mucus at the back of the throat using a nasopharyngeal swab (a bit like the COVID test!) to determine which pathogens are present at the time. The swab is 'guarded' to avoid picking up pathogens in the nasal passage. Cases for sampling must be acute (not more than two days of clinical signs) to avoid the sample finding secondary bacterial infection.



If you have a case or an outbreak of pneumonia in your calves under a year of age then please call for a vet visit as we will be offering a **HUGE DISCOUNT** on laboratory testing on nasopharyngeal swabs, heavily subsidised, for a period of time, by the drug companies that make pneumonia vaccines.

Instead of costing £86 for the laboratory fee (pooling samples from up to three animals), it will cost you just **£15!** Knowledge of which viruses/ bacteria are present in your calves will help us to help you to choose a suitable vaccine.

TB Advisory Service

ALL farmers will be given the opportunity to have a FREE visit from one of our vets to discuss ways in which you can decrease TB on your farm. Whether you have suffered a new breakdown, you have been under restriction for a long period of time or are currently clear of TB, small changes can all help. Here are some examples of some simple measures our farmers have taken:



Raising up the feed containers in the fields to stop badgers accessing



Installing wildlife cameras in the yard to assess whether badgers are accessing livestock and feed



Supplying water to calves via a teat rather than bucket/trough to decrease contact with badgers



Covering up stored feed to stop badgers accessing



Ensuring feed stores are badger proof

Not all measures involve decreasing cattle contact with badgers, but for many farmers the feeling is that the presence of badgers is contributing to the farm's TB problem.

Some examples of other measures are voluntary culling of IRs (two thirds of IRs go on to become reactors), care when buying in cattle and with shared boundaries with neighbours, and post movement testing.

You will be asked whether you would like to book a TBAS at your next TB test, but if you would like to arrange one sooner then please call the Endell Farm office on 01722 333291.



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