

## TB Testing

We are extremely busy with TB testing at the moment, therefore we would appreciate 2 weeks notice for any pre-movement tests required.

### Courses Coming up

#### Beef & Sheep Mastering Medicines

**When:** Friday 17th January

**Where:** Westmorland Vets, Natland Rd, Kendal,

**Time:** 1-3.30pm.

**Cost:** £35.00 ea



#### Milksure Course

**When:** Friday 14th February

**Where:** Westmorland Vets, Natland Rd, Kendal,

**Time:** 1-3.00pm.

#### Dairy Mastering Medicines

**When:** Friday 6th March

**Where:** Westmorland Vets, Natland Rd, Kendal,

**Time:** 1-3.30pm.

**Cost:** £35.00 ea



**To book onto any of these courses please tel Anne the office 01539 722692**

## Facebook / Twitter

Did you know Westmorland Farm Services has its own dedicated facebook and twitter pages. Great to keep you up to date with stories, courses, staff and news.

**Facebook**—Westmorland Veterinary Group—farm services

**Twitter**—Westmorland Farm Vets



#### Kendal Surgery

Monday to Friday 8.30am—7.00pm  
Saturday 8.30am-12noon  
Tel: 01539 722692

#### Kirkby Lonsdale Surgery

Monday & Thursday 8.30am-7.00pm  
Tuesday 8.30am-6.00pm  
Wednesday & Friday 8.30am-5.00pm  
Saturday 8.30am-12 noon  
Tel: 015242 71221

[www.westmorland-vets.co.uk](http://www.westmorland-vets.co.uk)



Happy New Year Folks! Well that's another year done and dusted, we've said goodbye to some old friends and met plenty of new ones too. There has always been uncertainty ahead, it's in the very nature of farming. I guess we'll just see what happens in 2020, especially at the end of this month!

A relatively benign back end (in terms of disease, certainly not in terms of weather) has been characterised mainly by fertility problems, especially poor conception rates.

If this happens, it's always good to do an audit of what is going on around serving time, as changes which are un-noted at the time can lead to reduced fertility. The check lists will vary though depending on your enterprise and also whether you're using artificial insemination, or a bull. A bull is usually relatively straightforward to assess, with the complexities being thrown in by artificial insemination and cow management. Cow management changes which can impact on fertility could be an increase in cow numbers leading to pressure on trough space and beds, alterations in milking routine which can mean that the cows are in the collecting yard without access to feed for longer, staff changes which mean that roles such as heat detection are unfulfilled and a change in forage, to name but a few. Keeping a farm diary noting the things that you do on your farm may seem a bit dull, however it can be really useful when it comes to identifying any potential causes of trouble, and also things that may have lead to an unexpected improvement too. Many of us start off with the best of intentions in a New Year, so this is a perfect time to start...

Richard Knight

### Tackling Calf Scour Pre-calving

Calf scour is an aggressive, costly disease commonly causing problems in both the beef and dairy sector. Commonly an outbreak of calf scour leads to additional costs in terms of veterinary costs and labour for looking after them but in more severe outbreaks deaths also occur. Once an outbreak has started due to the number of infective organisms being shed into the environment it can be very hard to get under control.

Vaccinating pregnant cows to provide specific immunity against Rotavirus, Coronavirus and E Coli is a very successful way of managing calf scour. In these times of restricted antibiotic use and societal concerns over calf rearing, vaccination is an extremely useful tool.

Calves are effectively born with no immunity so rely entirely on colostrum to protect them against disease. Colostrum (production of colostrum) starts around 3 weeks before calving; in order to get high levels of specific immunoglobulins (IgG) in the colostrum, a single dose of vaccine should be given at least 3 weeks (but no more than 12 weeks) before calving.

There have been some robust studies carried out looking at the effect of such vaccines pre-calving and then challenging the calves with Rotavirus, Coronavirus and E Coli; the results were as follows:

- **No deaths** in calves from vaccinated cows compared to 40% mortality in calves from unvaccinated cows.
- **Decreased duration of scour** and severity of clinical signs in calves from vaccinated cows.
- **Reduced excretion** of the bugs by ~50% in calves from vaccinated cows which means less environmental contamination.

It is important to note that colostrum management is still key in the control of calf scour; especially because the specific immunity from vaccinating the cows will only be passed on if the calf receives appropriate quantities of colostrum (10% of body weight) within 6 hours of birth. It is also beneficial to continue feeding colostrum from vaccinated cows for the first 7 days of life (please discuss this with your vet as risk of Johnes may make this practice more complicated on your farm).

For more information please speak to one of the farm team if you feel vaccination may be beneficial to your calves.



Kirsty Ranson

### Ewe nutrition during Pregnancy

Preparation for lambing time – already?! Perhaps alarmingly, that time of year is fast creeping up on us. For most sheep farmers there are still a few months until things start to kick off, but making sure that ewes are correctly conditioned and going on to good quality forage now will make things a lot easier in late pregnancy.

Correct nutritional management will ensure that lambs are born with optimum birthweights – which has a big knock-on effect on their survival and growth rates. It also means ewes have good udder development, milk production, and are at less of a risk of getting pregnancy toxemia/twin lamb disease and hypocalcaemia.

**Body condition scoring** is a great way to quickly and easily assess the group – a hand on the back can check whether current feeding is going to plan or changes need made. Scanning time is a good opportunity to sort out ewes with a lower condition score to feed up! Here are some reference ranges taken from the AHDB 'better returns' website:

|                | <b>Tupping</b> | <b>Mid Pregnancy</b> | <b>Lambing</b> |
|----------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------|
| <b>Lowland</b> | 3.5            | 3                    | 3              |
| <b>Upland</b>  | 3              | 2.5                  | 2.5            |
| <b>Hill</b>    | 2.5            | 2                    | 2              |

See how as pregnancy progresses, keeping the condition score level is the key. This is managed through.... **Providing the right energy levels:**

Here are the nutritional requirements of a 70kg ewe pre-lambing (again taken from AHDB):

| <b>Number of lambs</b> | <b>(MJ/day)</b> |                |                |               |
|------------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
|                        | <b>7 weeks</b>  | <b>5 weeks</b> | <b>3 weeks</b> | <b>1 week</b> |
| <b>1</b>               | <u>10.2</u>     | 11.2           | 12.6           | 14.4          |
| <b>2</b>               | <u>11.4</u>     | 13.1           | 15.3           | 18.3          |
| <b>3</b>               | <u>12.0</u>     | 14.0           | 16.7           | 20.3          |

Note the variation in ME requirements even 7 weeks before lambing depending on litter size (underlined). **Forage analysis** is important to work out whether the requirements are being met. In a recent SAC analysis of various bale silage samples, ME ranged from **8-12 MJ/kg** - and dry matter could vary from **16-75%**. This would mean that the actual energy going into the ewes could differ massively. If the same amount of forage was fed per day:

The lowest energy silage could result in a loss of **BCS 0.5** in a 70kg ewe carrying twins. Not good news as she heads into late pregnancy.

On the other hand, feeding the higher ME silage could lead to overfeeding to the tune of **£2.50 worth of concentrates**- multiply that by 100 or 500 ewes and there is a significant saving to be made! So we would urge you to have your forage analysed to better manage ewes this lambing season.

Gus Cassie