

## 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.

## Free uploads to BVDFree database

English beef and dairy farmers can have their Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) test results uploaded to the national BVDFree database without charge until the end of March\*.

The offer is open to all farmers who are registered with the BVDFree England scheme and is available for all results uploaded by the following labs: APHA, Biobest, CIS and NML. Farmers can register with the scheme at [bvdfree.org.uk](http://bvdfree.org.uk). The aim is to grow the number of searchable BVD statuses on the existing 65,000 strong database.

Farmers don't need to wait for the outcome of existing testing as they're able to have any results from the previous 12 months uploaded.

Bill Mellor, BVDFree Chairman, said: "We can only eliminate BVD from the national herd if farmers test their animals and load their results onto the central database. By removing the cost, we hope this is the final encouragement farmers need to take part in this crucial scheme.

"With the busy spring sale period approaching, farmers can often command an additional premium for animals known to be BVD free as well as giving buyers confidence in the status of purchased animals."

Farmers whose results are on the database can sell their animals with a known BVD status, which is especially important for those in the North of England as Scottish buyers require English animals to be tested for BVD.

\*This offer is available for all results uploaded by the following labs: APHA, Biobest, CIS and NML.

### For more information contact:

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FARM SERVICES

**PRACTICE NEWS**

KENDAL ○ KIRKBY LONSDALE ○ ULVERSTON

Feb 2018

With January firmly behind us, it's a chance to enjoy a bit more daylight as we go through February- it doesn't take much to keep us happy!

There seems to be a lot fewer folk with early lambing sheep this year, a change on last year. There have been a few around with liver fluke problems too. A bit of investment in finding out the liver fluke infection status of different groups of sheep on your farm, and more importantly some post-drench efficacy testing, while coming up with an ongoing plan, will be time and money well invested. All too often the only investment made in liver fluke management is the money spent on purchasing treatments and the time to administer them. It's a good idea to try to see where things are going rather than to stumble into problems with untreated animals and drug resistance issues. Try to manage flukicide (and other anthelmintic) use like you would the use of antibiotics. Think about how you decide to use them and how you monitor whether a treatment is successful or not.

The risk of pneumonia in calves is still high, and with variable weather and air temperatures folk still need to be on their guard for issues as they arise. A keen eye and a thermometer are still the best weapons for detection, with a veterinary examination of the lungs still indicated for many cases. The normal temperature of a calf is 38.6°C (101.5°F), with treatment indicated if the temperature is 39.4°C (103°F) or above, or if the animal is visibly ill. Don't sit and wait for the first sign of pneumonia as sometimes initial symptoms can fade after a few days even with no treatment, only to come back with a vengeance days or even a week or two later. Act straight away to get on top of the problem- give one of the farm vets a call if you are unsure of how to progress.

On the LDA front (the twisted stomach) we have seen an increase in the last week, after a relatively quiet spell. Usually there is a history of some diet change coupled with individual cow risk factors such as illness around calving. Most of the time these cases occur within the first few weeks after calving and can be linked with slow fever in some way. However, as always the cow is her own boss and we have been known to see these at any stage of lactation and occasionally even in the dry period!

*Richard Knight*



### The 'slow' calf

I'm sure you know what I'm referring to when we use the phrase 'slow' calf or 'dopey' calf. There are many other words commonly used for them but we try not to use expletives in the newsletter! They can be incredibly frustrating, but the odd calf like this is probably nothing to worry about. If however, you seem to be having a few more than usual there could be something wrong. Possible explanations for slow calves are:

**Difficult /Slow Calving**—The impact this has on the calf is hugely underestimated. During a very slow or difficult calving CO<sup>2</sup> builds up excessively in the blood. This gas is acidic and makes the calf's blood acidic, which in turn affects its brain function. These calves are often dopey and can't sit up by themselves. If they cannot sit up by themselves in less than 5 minutes this indicates that they could be acidotic. This can happen even if the cow calves without any assistance particularly if it is a big calf. These calves would benefit from veterinary treatment to correct the acidity of their blood. They will not consume enough colostrum themselves so it is essential to ensure they are given at least 3L once the acidosis has been corrected and then another 3L within 6 hours of birth ideally.

**Lack of Colostrum**—It goes without saying that if a calf does not get enough good quality colostrum it will not thrive. Calves that have not had enough colostrum can appear 'dull' without any specific signs of disease. This is not just a problem in dairy calves. Studies have shown that failure of passive transfer can occur in up to 30% of beef suckler calves. A recent study showed that a lack dietary protein and energy in the weeks running up to calving can have a significant effect on failure of passive transfer in calves. Blood sampling cows whilst they are on the winter ration, shortly before and after calving allows us to see if the ration is fulfilling their requirements.

### **Trace elements and minerals (TEMs)**

Provided the ration has sufficient levels of TEMs it is uncommon to see problems relating to these in young calves, however some deficiencies can have severe consequences in regards to calf mortality and vigour.

**Iodine**-Iodine is an essential component of thyroid hormones. Calves born to deficient dams can be still born or weak and unwilling to suck and therefore mortality rates due to this can be very high.

**Vitamin E and Selenium**- Essential for optimal immune function amongst other things. Deficiency in the dams can cause still births and weak calves.

**Cobalt**-Deficiency is usually seen in slightly older calves and presents as ill thrift, failure to grow, poor coat condition and anaemia.

**Infectious disease**—Infectious diseases, in particular BVD, IBR, Leptospirosis and Neospora can all lead to dull, ill thriven calves. Know your status!

If you have any questions about this please get in touch with one of the farm vets.

*Becky Inman*

### Flock Health Planning

Now, don't start yawning just yet!

We are regularly being asked to do flock health plans for our clients. This is an interesting and (we hope) useful exercise for both the client and ourselves. However, there are often gaping holes in the available information on flock performance which limits any advice we can give to improve flock profitability. My dream for this year is that our clients will come armed to these meetings with some concrete figures on ewe deaths and lamb losses and now is the time to start!

With lambing coming up why not get ready to keep a daily tally chart of lamb losses and ewe deaths. If you can add likely reasons for losses, this will give us a great start in providing you with individual advice on disease control and how to reduce the number of animals you lose. A daily diary of the following would be ideal but use a format which is quick and easy for you.

Date:	Number	Notes (include likely causes)
Ewes Died		
Ewes Aborting		
Stillborn Lambs		
Lambs died pre turnout		
Lambs died after turnout		



I realise this is a busy time for everyone but with an average of 30 lambs lost per 100 ewes put to the ram from scanning to weaning there is a lot of room for improvement across the country. There could even be lots more income for you if we can give focussed advice about specific issues on your farm.

In another worrying development, moxidectin resistance has been identified in sheep scab mites on several farms. As dipping sheep can be fraught with issues, using injectable products has seemed an easy solution but it looks like those days may be numbered. Lice can also make sheep itchy and are

easily spread at lambing time so if you are really having issues with itchy sheep, please phone the surgery to discuss a solution.

**Watery Mouth in Lambs** —A number of the products we have used in previous years to prevent watery mouth have now been discontinued. This means we need to help you find a suitable alternative. In addition, a study produced by the SAC last May showed that many of the e.coli bacteria causing watery mouth are resistant to some antibiotics, with Oxytet having the highest levels of resistance at 50%. We would encourage you to speak to one of the farm team regarding the options for watery mouth prevention and to get in touch if you are using a preventative product but are still having problems.

*Judith Lee*