

## BVD Stamp It Out

Do you know the BVD status of your herd? RDPE Government funding is available for testing your herd. We already have more than 50 clients signed up!

We only have a few places left now. If you are interested and would like to be added to our list give us a ring or speak to your farm vet and have a chat. We aim to hold our last cluster meeting after lambing time.

Don't miss out on establishing your BVD status for free!

### Milksure Course

The MilkSure initiative is something you may or may not have heard of yet. It has been initiated by Dairy UK and developed in conjunction with The British Cattle Veterinary Association, with the aim to ensure that the production of milk is free of veterinary medicine residues. MilkSure is an accredited training course for British dairy farmers and their employees, delivered by us to you. The course is split into 3 parts: part 1 - technical issues, including why tank failures occur, the different tests available to check for residue levels, how residue levels are set (which can be carried out in the office or round the kitchen table), part 2 - practical issues (this section must be done on farm) and part 3, which is the on-line test, to check understanding after completing parts 1 and 2. Don't worry about the test as this can be done with the vet present to help you along.

We have a few names for a milksure course but need a few more. Please contact the office if you are interested then we can find a convenient date. Thanks

### Spring Vaccines

Despite the recent awful weather spring is approaching rapidly and hopefully turnout will appear on the horizon shortly! Please place your orders for your spring vaccines (BVD, Lepto, IBR and Huskvac) ASAP to ensure that you are ready to turnout when the weather comes good. **See right for our super spring offer.**



Westmorland Veterinary Group  
Kendal • Kirkby Lonsdale • Ulverston

**Spring Offer**

**5% OFF all BVD vaccine when ordered with Spirovac**



Please contact the surgery for further information  
Valid for orders placed between February and the end of April



**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)

With early lambing seeming to go well, for most folk, we now get into the serious business of the main bulk of lambing, with a chunk of calvings thrown in too! Those of you that are involved in the Flock Health Club will know that the trickle-down message from a lot of work that has been done in dairy calves, of the critical importance of adequate and good quality colostrum intake, cannot be overstated.



We know from many examples that this is the best chance for a healthy

disease-free start to the lambs' lives. Impacting on the susceptibility to watery-mouth, joint ill and all other infectious diseases, the message is all the more important this year with industry-wide focus on usage of prophylactic antibiotics (those used as a precaution in attempt to reduce incidence of disease), mostly through farm assurance schemes run by those such as Red Tractor. Adequate and timely administration of good quality colostrum to vulnerable lambs such as those which have suffered a difficult birth, those from multiple births, those where the ewe has a poorer mothering ability through ill health or bad temperament and even those where you're not sure if they've had enough, will reduce the need for prophylactic antibiotics and therefore reliance on them. If lambs are being tubed, then good technique is essential to ensure gentle and accurate administration, along with scrupulously clean kit and a well-made colostrum solution (exactly to the manufacturers guidelines) if powder is being used. If problems such as watery mouth do occur, then a sample for us to culture and try to determine the sensitivity of the bacteria to antibiotics (often over a range of cases to get an accurate picture) will stand you in good stead. Such tests may seem academic, but they give an understanding of sensitivity patterns to enable the best use of any treatments such as antibiotics, with the additional benefits of providing evidence for you health plan. More importantly though, it will allow us to help you formulate a plan for the future and preventive strategies.

*Richard Knight*

## Steps to improve the efficacy of footbathing

Footbathing to control infectious causes of lameness is common practice nowadays on most dairy farms. Despite this, levels of digital dermatitis in particular still remain high on many farms. In discussions regarding footbathing much emphasis centres on the chemical used in the footbath, be it copper sulphate, formalin or antibiotics. However this is only one factor of many that will effect how successful footbathing is in the control of infectious lameness. Here are six steps to help you improve your footbathing efficacy:

1. **Check the dilution rate-** it may seem obvious but it is not uncommon to find that the amount of chemical added to a footbath is wrong. There is a dilution rate calculator on AHDB you can use.
2. **Is it the right depth?**-after filling, the footbath should be approximately 10-12cm deep to ensure there is enough coverage of the foot and heel. Obviously as more cows go through there will be some spillage but a 12cm depth should allow for this.
3. **Is it long enough?**-cows need to be able to dip each foot twice so the footbath needs to be at least 3-4m long. It should also be wide enough to prevent cows straddling it and promote good cow flow to avoid creating congestion.
4. **How often should the solution be replaced?**-there should be at least 1L/cow. So a footbath filled with 200L of solution is sufficient for 200 cows to pass through and then it will need changing. Footbathing in highly contaminated solution is a good way of spreading infection!
5. **Cow flow**-this is important and often overlooked. Cows must walk steadily through the footbath to allow good contact but also prevent splashing of the teats. If cows are walking briskly only 60% will achieve four steps through a 3m footbath. Cows need to stand on a clean dry area post treatment to allow the solution to take effect.
6. **Frequency**-if over 10% of cows are lame then footbathing should be done at least three times a week. The importance of frequent footbathing cannot be over emphasised.

It is important to remember that footbathing is a tool for prevention of lameness and not necessarily treatment. Footbathing with antibiotic solutions, whilst associated with a transient improvement in lameness is associated with constant flare-ups and thus footbathing more frequently i.e. every other day in non-antibiotic solutions is often more effective. If you have any questions or would like one of the farm vets to review your current footbathing regime and design please do not hesitate to get in touch.



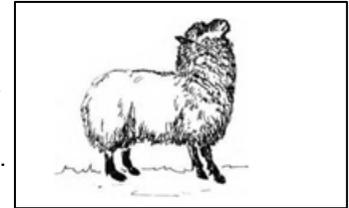
*Jasmine Smith*

## Common Ewe diseases at Lambing: What to do

### **Twin lamb**

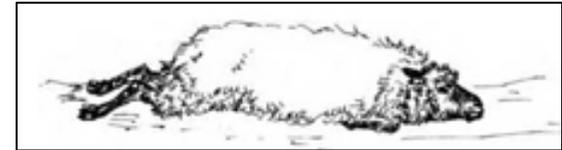
Twin lamb (pregnancy toxaemia) is typically seen during the last month of gestation in old, thin or in ewes carrying multiple lambs. Clinical signs appear after a period of severe energy shortage and sudden stressors can precipitate clinical signs. Affected ewes are disorientated, separate from the flock, have a dull and depressed appearance, blind and may head press. Ewes become weak, go down and eventually die.

Treatment: Immediate treatment with a drench containing propylene glycol or another energy source such as "Ewe-go". Repeat twice a day and offer good hay and concentrates. Calcium 20% injected under the skin is advisable. If signs are severe or the ewe doesn't respond seek veterinary assistance. Good nutrition in the last 8 weeks of gestation should prevent problems; scanning and condition scoring allows feeding to be tailored to the ewe's requirements.



### **Milk Fever**

Milk fever (hypocalcaemia) is commonly seen in older ewes during late gestation but it can also occur during early lactation. Affected ewes are depressed, weak and are unable to stand. Ewes bloat due to rumen stasis. Green fluid may be present at the nostrils and around the mouth. If not treated appropriately the condition develops to coma and death within 24-48hrs.

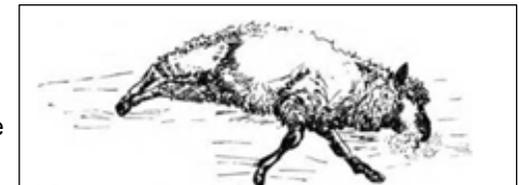


Treatment: 80ml of Calcium 20% under the skin should provide a rapid response. Oral supplement such as "Ewe-go" is also advisable.

Minimise stress in late pregnancy (careful handling, avoiding carrying out too many procedures at once).

### **Grass staggers**

Grass staggers (hypomagnesaemia) usually occurs at peak lactation. Lush grass contains low levels of magnesium and this puts ewes grazing such pastures at risk of developing the condition. Clinical signs include excitability, shaking and convulsions. Death quickly follows; ewes are often found dead.



Treatment: If cases are found early give 75ml Magnesium sulphate under the skin. If there is no improvement seek veterinary assistance.

Carefully monitor flocks on lush pasture. In high risk flocks magnesium supplementation may be advisable.

*Bethany Collins*