

Time is flying by and it won't be long or stock will be turned out again which will ease the pressure on everyone. To avoid problems in late summer youngstock should receive Huskvac which should be given 6 and 2 weeks pre turn out. And what control is in place to tackle gutworms? Also fly control should be started before the fly population has established otherwise you will be chasing your tail the rest of the season. Sarah is traveling to Edinburgh later this month to attend a 2 day course on the latest on bulls and beef production. After that Sarah and I will be spearheading the beef and bull campaign to ensure both cows and bulls are fit for this year's breeding season. Also this month we hope to run a course on responsible medicine use. This should not only satisfy Red Tractor requirements

to have one person per farm trained in the use and administration of medicines but more important it will explain what can be done to reduce the use of antibiotics and slow down the resistance to antimicrobials. Megan and Sarah will be spearheading this campaign. All in all a busy month.

Maarten



Itchy Sheep Alert



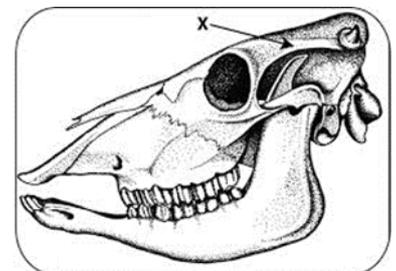
There have been recent cases of confirmed scab in local flocks which is a concern. This has coincided with reports of confirmed scab resistance to the 3-ML (clear injectable class) in the farming press. So although probably not what all you sheep farmers are currently thinking about, I feel its worth a mention. Scab is caused by a reaction to the Psoroptes ovis mite. It can only survive off the host (sheep) for 15-17 days. There are no other hosts for these mites (although they can survive on cats! Cats and sheep really don't help each other do they?!) The mite life-cycle takes 14 days. Scab can be spread via any contact with live mites. This is usually through sheep-to-sheep contact at market, in lorries, shared rubbing posts etc. Sheep may not appear that itchy to begin with, some increased rubbing/ wool loss over the flanks which is why it is IMPOSSIBLE to tell what the cause is without proper investi-

gation. If you have a mob affected please seek our help and advice to rule scab in or out. We are fortunate that there is now a reliable blood test to look for exposure to the mite. Throwing injectables at sheep that 'seem itchy' is partly to blame for the failure of these drugs to work, and we need them! Lice is another common cause at this time of year and has very different treatments. The only other treatment for Scab is OP dips and these must be used responsibly. SCOPS and Moredun are working on new industry guidelines and a mobile dipping service list, as OP's must never be used in jet/shower systems.

Sarah

Disbudding calves

As the spring calving season is well under way many of you have opted for the knock down disbud technique to disbud your calves with great results. For those who are sticking to the more traditional methods, no matter how experienced we can still perfect the technique. Claire and Maarten attended the British Cattle Veterinary Conference last autumn where techniques for disbudding calves was discussed. No matter which technique is used the best results for local pain relief are achieved when the needle is inserted just into the groove at a very shallow angle using a 21 gauge x 5/8" needle. This is because the nerve sits very close to the skin. Inject 3ml of local anaesthetic into either side keeping the needle shallow and aiming for the base of the opposite horn bud. Using the small needle size prevents the needle from going too deep and missing the nerve or injecting into the nerve itself which is extremely painful. Allow the local to work for 5-10minutes before applying the hot iron and use an NSAID. They will squirm if you don't!



Megan

NOTICE BOARD



Clinical Waste

Medisort will collect clinical waste on farm, they have agreed to do so for the same price as the previous contract you had and they will collect and drop off the bins. For any new clients they will take the first bin straight out and sign you up. Clients should call Medisort themselves and mention 'Livestock Partnership Vets'. Medisort : 01903 719646



Beef Canada Trip

I met three friends from Scotland at Heathrow then flew to Calgary, then was based at Red Deer then we toured Southern Alberta then down to Del Bonita on the American border then travelled through Saskatchewan via Medicine Hat and ended up in Regina for the Agribition show.

All the farms we visited were pedigree Aberdeen Angus, the friends I was travelling with were looking for donor cows to flush and get progeny off of stock bulls to import semen from (they succeeded in both). We also visited an embryo transplant centre which was capable of flushing to home and export standard, where we saw many breeds from Angus to Speckle Park.

The land size of Canada is vast with a great road infrastructure, everywhere was easy to find. Some of the ranches we visited were huge ie. Cudlove farm have 70,000 acres, 20,000 grass and 50,000 arable, and ran 1000 cows. Then to another farm which was running one cow to 40 acres, we went and looked at a bunch of cows in a 4000 acre field. It is really hard to explain just how vast it is, the cattle systems are run on a very simple commercial bases, short gestation, easy calving, temperament, feet and fleshing ability. Everything has to basically calve on his own, the calf has to get up and survive. They do not want heavy muscling or double muscled cattle. Average weight of the calves is between 72-80 lbs, one farm we went to doesn't register a pedigree calf born above 80lbs as it is seen to be too big.

The temperatures are very extreme from -30 in the winter to +30 in the summer, during calving if it does reach below -10 they wrap the calves' heads in duct tape or little hoods to stop the frost taking the end of their ears off. The coldest it was when we were there was -19, the following week it was -32. Everything calves outside.

There is no comparison with the UK and Canadian systems, they have no overheads compared to us (housing cattle buildings etc.) everything is stored outside (straw, machines, tractors). Cattle are stored outside all year round as the weather although cold is very dry, nothing needs to be stored inside.

The fat cattle we saw would be predominately R grades fat cover 4+ to 5+, we would be crucified in this country with cattle to that fat cover. They are paid for fat cover, marbling and intermuscular fat and not grade like this country. The meat is superb; I can vouch for that with the amount of steak I ate that week, it was outstanding.

The Agribition show is a must see, it was a show to behold. The standard of stockmanship and presentation was second to none. The standard of cattle is very good but very different to the UK, smaller, big topped but also with a big belly (they love that). Everything in Canada apart from the Herefords and Shorthorns (which were tremendous) tires and looks like an Angus ie Lims, Maine-anjou and the Simmentals which are vertically all polled and black. As international visitors, we were treated like royalty they could not do enough for you. Would really recommended going to this show.

Each country is producing what their country wants, it is really difficult to say which system is the best (although I think Canada is right) so you have to produce what is wanted. I will be looking at shorter gestation and easier calving bulls maybe for an easier life!! Trip of a life time and really really enjoyed it. *Michael Minto, Beef farmer in West Sussex*

Bull Fertility

2018 and another calving season in full swing for most beef suckler producers. Apart from a few hiccups as mentioned in the December newsletter, most beef herds had a reasonably good fertility last mating season. Due to the abundance of grass last autumn most sucklers were kept outside longer than other years and as far as I am aware without adverse effects other than the increased risk of fluke.

It is now case to hold condition; even for those in poorer condition as over feeding in the latter stages of pregnancy only results in bigger calves rather than increase in cow's body condition. Once calved a rising plain of nutrition will encourage milk production and follicle development which is crucial for a successful 2018

mating season. With that come the bulls as only 2-3% of the herd in numbers but 50% responsible for that herd's fertility! Bulls need to be fit but not fat as fat deposited in the scrotum interferes with the thermo-regulation of the testes. Feet need to be trimmed 8 weeks before mating so bulls can get used to their new "clogs". And last but not least the annual MOT. Although it is not a guarantee to success, every year we weed out about 14% bulls (1 in 7) before they are turned out and cause damage to the herds' fertility and calving pattern with all its financial consequences. This graph demonstrates that our clients understand the benefit of the pre mating breeding soundness examination and get it done annually. *Maarten*

