

March 2019 was a bit different to 2018 wasn't it! Perhaps we have gotten away with the weather so far? We are in the midst of lambing now and approaching the final round ups for Autumn calving herds which stopped serving a few weeks ago. We have had increasing interest in embryos which I am sure will grow next year—more on this from Ben. The guys at CLARIFIDE recently came to speak to us at the practice about how we can use genomics to further improve the herds we work with and I am keen to get involved here. I have had some great discussions with a few of you already and as a practice we look forward to working with you on this. The West Sussex Grasslands Society met recently and Amy Carver from Marshall's Farm presented her work which looked at young people's perceptions of a career in agriculture. I know many of you feel passionately about getting young people involved in rural work and keeping them in it. School visits to farms seem to be a good thing we can offer our youngsters but be advised that schools plan their visits for the year ahead far in advance. As a practice we offer many student placements and attend careers conventions where we can but I am always keen to do more so let us know if there is

something going on you think we should hear about. The uptake to the BVD scheme has been fantastic with nearly 3,500 farmers enrolled nationally which goes a long way to achieving the target of BVD eradication by 2022. Great news for BVD Free as well, 3,175 registered holdings and 391,536 breeding stock are signed up. Be aware that CHECS accredited free herds can register for free on the BVDFree database. This might help to bring the national numbers of registered breeding stock up a bit as the database is only as good as the data within it. As a reminder please, we are moving away from cheque payments which come at a cost to us to process but also cost you a stamp; the price of which increased on 25th March. "And now for something completely different": Meet Alfie, who weighs a whopping 400kg. He needed his tusks trimming which he was very well behaved for. Let's hope they don't grow back too soon! *(Megan)*



John and his pig Alfie

Sheep News round up! *(Sarah)*

I hope lambing is going well for all of you just starting, or about to start! What a contrast this year's weather has been for us all, a 'kind' winter and a tropical bout of weather in February. As always our lambing and following parasite challenges are dictated by our weather systems. There was a parasite warning put out via NADIS and SCOPs earlier this month to warn of the unusually early occurrence of nematodirus, or 'black scour worm' in lambs this year. Lesley Stubbings of SCOPs says: "Nematodirus eggs look set to hatch much earlier than last year amid recent record-breaking temperatures in February." Locations throughout the UK are already showing a moderate risk on the SCOPs Nematodirus Forecast map, which means a hatch is likely to take place within seven to 14 days if warm weather persists, putting lambs aged six to 12 weeks of age at the most risk.

The forecast map is updated daily using data from more than 140 weather stations around the UK, tracking changes in risk throughout the spring and early summer. Last year it showed the 'Beast from the East' delayed the annual hatch and, therefore, the threat to lambs in most areas. In stark contrast, the early hatch this year poses a threat to earlier-born lambs. The www.scops.org.uk/nematodirus is such a useful tool for all of us when it comes to monitoring what parasites we should be considering, and when.

There have been a few reports of malformed lambs, but at the time of writing this Surrey university reassure me that there has been no conclusive proof of any nasty diseases that we need to be worrying about. However remain vigilant as always, and they are doing post mortems, with collection included (depending on your post code) for £50 for 1 lamb and £69 for 3 lambs.

I am doing my rounds to the **Flock Health Club** members that have expressed an interest in completing my 'Lambing Live' Questionnaire. I will aim to do this either on my own or with you, in 15 -20 mins, then the idea is we book in a post lambing review at a discounted rate in the practice before tupping! Hopefully this will help me get a better insight into how different lambing enterprises are run, to explore where we can all make gains and give us an opportunity to record some physical performance as we go. That's the aim anyway! If you are interested in this exercise, please give me a call to discuss further.

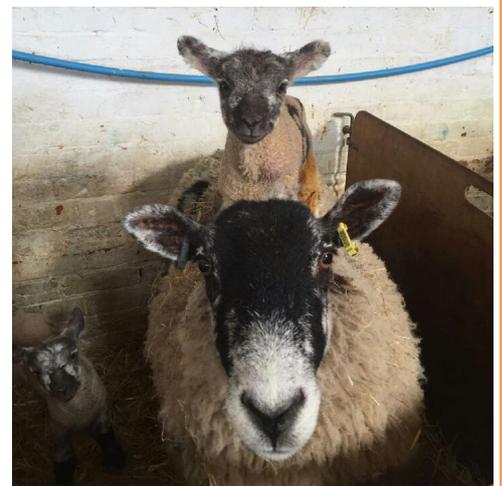


Photo courtesy of Lucie Payton

NOTICE BOARD

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First Aid Training Places

We'll be hosting a one-day 'Emergency First Aid at Work' course for our employees on **Tuesday, 7th and/or Monday 20th May** and potentially have additional spaces available.

The course (run by Worsley Training www.worsleytraining.co.uk) mixes theoretical and practical learning and assessment, and the accredited certificate would last for three years.

Please contact the practice ASAP (on 01798 343538 or info@livestockvets.co.uk) if you are interested in attending for a small fee (in the region of £70 per person).



Calf pneumonia investigations offer (Laura)

As we turn our backs on winter, it's a good time to reflect on the incidence/severity of bovine respiratory disease (BRD) or 'pneumonia' over the housing period. Although animals of any age can succumb to BRD, young calves are most commonly affected.

BRD causes damage to the animal's respiratory tract and lungs, reducing the calf's ability to breathe and at its worst, resulting in death. The disease reduces feed intake, feed conversion rates and negatively affects subsequent weight gain, which in dairy-bred beef calves results in increased input costs and finishing times and in dairy heifer replacements can increase age at first calving and reduce subsequent lactational yields.

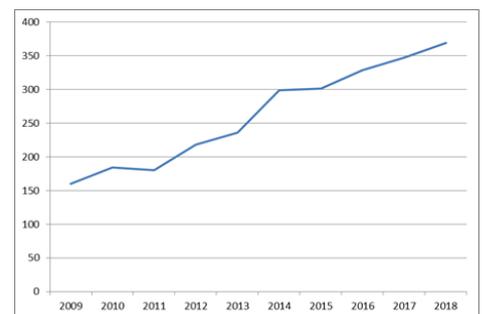
Given the long-term effects of the disease, prevention (as always) is better than treatment, with vaccination being one means of helping control disease. Establishing what respiratory pathogens your calves have been exposed to may help with an appropriate choice of vaccine programme as different vaccines protect against different viruses. Furthermore, evidence of exposure to Mycoplasma may dictate your 1st line choice of antibiotic for treatment as not all antibiotics are effective against Mycoplasma. Zoetis offer subsidised blood tests for 5 calves per farm to test exposure to the 5 major respiratory pathogens; RSV, PI3, IBR, BVD and Mycoplasma. Lab fees range from £7.50- £14.50 per calf depending on which pathogens you wish to test for. We can help guide you with this depending on your individual circumstances and farm history (e.g. IBR tends to affect older calves, worth testing for Mycoplasma if response to antibiotics has been poor or you're had a high incidence of lameness/mastitis, not necessary to screen for BVD if good control programme in place and/or calves <9 months old because of MDA interference). Calves to be tested need to be at least 4 months old and if you have good medicine records, ideally we would test animals known to have had pneumonia previously. This screening test is obviously only useful if you are rearing home-bred calves or buying in calves from the same source(s) year-on-year. Additionally, vaccination doesn't replace the need for awesome colostrum management, optimal building function particularly regarding ventilation, good group management and minimising of other calf stressors.

Please give one of us a call if you have further questions!



Bulls (Maarten)

The bull testing season is in full swing. Pretty much most of our clients get their bulls tested on an annual basis and make sure that newly purchased bulls have been tested. Still we find 1 in 7 bulls being infertile or subfertile so it is important that these are identified before they cause losses. Pre-Breeding Soundness Examination is a quick, safe and cheap way to test half your herd's fertility.



Bulls tested by TLP

#ColostrumIsGold

Quality, quantity, timing. If newborns get this liquid gold it forms the basis of their immune system reducing the likelihood of disease and therefore the need for antibiotics later in life. They are born with little fat so the carbohydrates and fats in colostrum are essential to keep them warm and maintain growth. The vitamins help the gut absorb these nutrients, the enzymes and proteins have an antibacterial effect as well as contributing to the immune system. Feed high quality: calves >50mg/ml antibody colostrum at 10% body weight within 2 hours. Lambs: 210-290ml/kg within 24 hours— first feed within the first 2 hours. Many of you test your colostrum before feeding. Those who don't, please get in touch if you want advice on which refractometer/colostrometer will suit your farm best. Be aware that 50% of neonatal lamb *E.coli* is resistant to spectinomycin— the most common watery mouth treatment; and a third of pre-weaning mortality in calves is attributed to poor colostrum management. Give them good quality colostrum at the right time. (Megan)

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