

Pre-Mating Sheep Blood Tests

The best time for checking up on the metabolic status of your sheep is fast approaching. Ewes, rams and post weaning lambs can all be sampled in late summer. It is important to check that the rams and ewes are in peak condition for mating and that the lambs have no trace element deficiencies or disease problems which could affect growth rates.

The analysis checks protein levels (albumin and globulin) and trace elements (Selenium, Copper and Vitamin B12).

Why are these important?

- **Selenium (GSHPx)** – low selenium levels at mating time can lead to an increase in early embryonic death and therefore reduced ewe productivity. Selenium soil levels are particularly low in Shropshire so this is a really important trace element to check. White muscle disease can lead to poor lambs, lowered growth rates and higher lamb losses.

- **Copper** – Low copper levels can lead to poor wool growth in all ages of sheep. It can also cause slow growing rates, fragile bones in lambs, anaemia and decreased immune system function.
- **Vitamin B12** – this is produced in the rumen from cobalt and is required by the enzymes that regulate energy metabolism. A deficiency in cobalt can lead to increased stillbirths and neonatal mortality.
- **Protein (Albumin and Globulin)** – these are a marker for conditions such as gut worms, liver fluke and John's disease.

We would recommend testing 6-8 weeks before the tups are put to the ewes as this allows time to correct any problems which may appear. We would recommend sampling between 5-10 sheep from each separate group. Please ring us at the practice for more details.

Ally



In June we said our goodbyes to Sam Ellis and wished her well in her relocation to Milton Keynes. We look forward to keeping in contact with Sam as she continues to work on The Shropshire Farm Vets website from a far.

We would like to introduce our newest member of the team, Vicki Richardson (pictured above). Vicki is a local girl who after obtaining a BA at de Montford University has worked in various customer service roles and is really looking forward to working with Shropshire farmers.

Our existing Support Team Members are dedicated in training newer members of the team to ensure continuity in the service we provide when you phone or call into the practice. We are always looking at ways to improve upon the service we provide and welcome any feedback you can give.

Tia

Safe use of Monensin... in products such as Kexxtone

We would like to reiterate the warning labels in reference to toxicity to dogs and horses.

The SPC states:

"Do not allow dogs, horses, other equines or guinea fowl access to formulations containing Monensin. Consumption of intraruminal device contents can be fatal in these species."

Please **DO NOT** let any of the above species access to Kexxtone Boluses.

If this does occur **immediate veterinary attention should be sought.**

If you need any advice regarding this please call the Practice **01743 860920**



SHROPSHIRE
FARM
NEWS

TOTAL DAIRY SEMINAR 2015

The Total Dairy Seminar took place in early June in Gloucester

The seminar involves a series of lectures with concurrent workshops where there can be a more interactive discussion between the speakers, dairy farmers, vets and industry. Along with this, there is a poster display on research projects undertaken, and a sponsor's tent to meet various members of the trade.

This year there were very interesting topics covered on Transition Feeding for optimum fertility, metabolic pathways, some very good sessions on lameness and foot trimming methods, business management especially in hard times, ventilation, and vaccination regimes.

The transition cow management talks were extremely informative, and managed to explain the topic in an easily understandable way. The message was that the modern cow is genetically programmed to produce milk at the expense of all other bodily functions, and if not treated carefully can crash very easily. He talked further on the feeding of protected fats, the measures of reproductive performance and how we affect these with our feeding regimes. Transition cow management is also highly pertinent to lameness. Does lameness come first, or is lameness caused by a cow's excessive weight and losing her cushioned hoof pad and making ulcers more likely

There were also discussions on the various foot trimming methods, and again the emphasis on restoring foot shape, not over-trimming and regular inspection of those cows that have been treated already. Accurate recording is also essential.

The effects of heat stress were discussed when above a critical 20°C dry Matter Intake will be reduced, and the welfare and production of the cow compromised.

There were some very good talks on managing in crisis, monitoring cows before they crash and cashing in on them while you can, but a big message was that trying to cut back on animal health costs was false economy, what you may save now will cost you later.

We will be holding a number of farmers meetings in the near future to discuss what we have learnt during our time at the seminar but in the meantime please feel free to contact Nathan or Myself to discuss in more detail

Rod

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BANK HOLIDAY CLOSURES

We will be closed on Monday 31st August 2015. An on call Vet will still be available throughout the day for emergency treatment.

COMMUNITY SHOWS

We will be at the Oswestry Show on the 1st August 2015 and The Minsterley Show on the 8th August it would be lovely to see you there please come by to have a chat and a beverage with us.

PRACTICE/DISPENSARY OPENING TIMES

Monday – Friday	8:15 – 17.30
Saturday/Sunday	Closed

SHREWSBURY LIVESTOCK MARKET

Every Tuesday from 9.30 am – 12 noon

Please order the Medications that you require for collection before 4 pm the previous day.

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A NEW KIWI PARLOUR

Despite the crisis in the dairy industry at the moment, and the suspension of re-investment back into the farm, there are still some of our farmers who are going ahead with building work, especially where it is to improve the throughput of cows through the parlour, and improve the lives of those carrying out the milking through less time spent in the parlour.

One such example of this is at Brockton Farm near Shifnal. Alan Chatham, his son James and Herdsman Chris Elliott have been milking 220 cows, just gone up to 250 with an influx of 100 heifers this spring, with plans to go to 280 cows. This is an organic spring calving (February to end of April) herd, on a non-antibiotic milk contract, which means any cows that are treated are excluded from the contract for the rest of their lives. This started last September, with a qualifying period before this. Milk is collected and when required is exported to France to be turned into whole milk powder, before going to the States. This has meant that management and welfare have to be of a high standard to avoid the use of antibiotics, and to this day, only one cow with a prolapse has had to be excluded.

of steelwork from New Zealand. A crew of Kiwis followed to build the parlour, living with Alan while they did so, and finished their building in early June. Alan explained "Most of the dairy is British, but we are still awaiting a shipment of equipment from New Zealand. The crew have now moved onto a new build near Evesham. The electricians are getting to work and we hope the new parlour will be in operation by August. At the moment, we are in the main service period so do not want to be stressing the cows by a switch over of milking routine, but will get them used to the parlour by allowing them to walk through on the way to pasture". There is a circular collecting yard, with backing gate, manual sorting system and handling facilities for AI, routines incorporated into the build. As in New Zealand parlours, it is fairly open, but with the present management system, during the colder months most cows will be dry. There will come a hectic day when units, bulk tank etc will all have to be moved, but the gain will be milking time reduced to less than two hours. ACRs and flushers will be moved over but are not critical.

Exciting times and Alan hopes for a smooth transition, and a more comfortable time for cows and milkers.

Rod



Milking was taking up to three and a half hours in a dated 10:20 Herring Bone parlour, with the change over from Holsteins to more grass related breeds, Jersey xs, Friesians etc meaning smaller cows were able to turn in the parlour, so sometimes needing 12 or 13 in at a time to keep the cows in place to milk.

The decision was made to develop a new parlour away from the present one, opting for a 24/48 Swing Over Parlour based on a Waikato design. Work started on the site in April, doing the groundwork, followed by the arrival

QUARANTINE

Buying in replacements is often a necessity however, it is not without risks. An effective quarantine plan can help reduce these risks and minimise introducing disease into your current flock. SCOPS (sustainable control of parasites in sheep) offer a basic protocol when considering worm resistance (including haemonchus) however, this can also be extended to other diseases such as foot rot, scab and varying causes of abortion. The guidelines consist of three steps.

1. Yard sheep (ewes AND rams) for 24-48 hours when brought onto farm

This allows any worm egg burden that the sheep already has to be passed out onto an easy to clean surface rather than onto your clean pasture. If you are worried about resistance issues this provides an ideal time to collect some faeces for a simple FEC to be carried out at the practice. In addition to this it is easy to spot any lame animals at this point.

2. Dose for worms and scab

Anthelmintic resistance in sheep is not a matter of if, it is **when**. With widespread white/group 1 drench and increasing yellow/group 2 drench resistance (and no prospect of any new groups of wormers being produced currently) it is vital that we preserve the wormers that we have. SCOPS recommends worming with either an orange/group 4 or purple/group 5 wormer plus moxidectin 1%* (ML/group 3). Worming with two groups will help to reduce the risk of resistance spread.

3. Turn out onto contaminated pasture

Having cleared the majority of worms out that the sheep were already carrying you now want them to pick up the ones that your sheep are already being challenged with. Ideally turn them onto pasture that has been grazed this season (but is now clear of sheep already in your flock) and leave them there for a minimum of three weeks. This allows them to pick up worm populations present on your farm and further dilutes any resistant worms still in the system.

Any questions please don't hesitate to contact the practice.

Emily



Shropshire Show

It was lovely to see many of you at the Shropshire Show this year. Thank you to all that came to see us at our stand we really enjoyed seeing you there and appreciated you coming to see us. We all hope you had a great day out. Our competitions that we held went down a storm, thank you to all that entered. Congratulations to Gail Pinches who guessed Tiffany as the name of our cow and Mike Roberts who correctly matched all our staff smiles to our names, well done to both of them.

We raised a grand total of £66.07 for our chosen charity MIND, again thank you to everyone who donated.

Caroline

