

Black Sheep Farm Health

April 2022 Newsletter



The Field Report

Spring this year doesn't just mean new life for us, it means a new member of the Black Sheep flock. For more about Claire, just see below.

Otherwise, we're up to the usual spring shenanigans and we're here to support you through yours: see the extended opening hours in April.

Extended Saturday Opening Hours in April

To keep the out-of-hours service as smooth as possible and keep vets free to go to calls, Hazel and Carole have kindly agreed to come in on Saturday mornings.

So, for the month of April, the practice will be open between 08:30 - 13:00. If you need supplies, just drop in and you will get sorted.



A New Team Member! Welcoming Claire

Due to growing demand, we are delighted to welcome Claire Neillans onto the BSFH team. Claire will be joining us from 11th April so keep your eyes peeled for her.

In her own words:

Claire grew up on a beef and arable farm in East Lothian and graduated from the University of Glasgow in 2020. After working for a short time in a mixed practice in East Lothian she moved to Aberdeenshire to work as a farm vet in January of 2021. She is particularly interested in beef and sheep medicine, particularly the herd health aspect of both. In her spare time she enjoys baking and walking in the countryside, especially if near a beach.



Don't forget your pre-turnout BVD Check Test

The title says it all: get the check test done *before* turnout - **remember farm assurance now require that: 'BVD eradication must be managed as detailed in the herd health plan'**.

Last calls for lambing/calving list

As the later lambers and calvers start to get busy, don't forget to submit your 'list' that was sent out with the last couple of months' bills. If you need a spare copy, just ring in and let Hazel/Carole know. For bigger orders, if you give them some notice, we will make sure everything is ready for you to pick up! Otherwise, best of luck and enjoy!

Cool bag call out!

We're really glad everyone is making use of the cool bags provided on loan to take drugs back to the farm BUT we are running rather low ourselves.

If you have a moment and are dropping by, we would appreciate any returns that may be languishing in medicines cupboards, pickup footwells etc etc.



One of the things we pride ourselves on is our continuity of service, which is in large part down to consistency of vets: a rapid turnover of staff never bodes well for practice or farmer. We put that low turnover partly down to a positive, engaged client base (i.e. you guys!). Nonetheless, every practice needs a steady trickle of new talent to come through to maintain a quality service, so we would we really appreciate any efforts to make her feel welcome when you see her out and about.



'On The Hoof' updates - from our colleagues at SRUC Veterinary Services

Streptococcus Joint Ill in Lambs

Streptococcus dysgalactiae is the most common cause of joint ill in UK lambs and is also an issue in other countries. There have been some recent publications that add some interesting information about this condition – although it should be noted that the research was carried out in different climates and management systems.

New Zealand: An outbreak in a large outdoor lambing research flock allowed some data to be collected. This showed that:

- Mortality to weaning in affected lambs was 14.5% compared to 4.6% in unaffected lambs.
- Affected lambs were 4.5 kg lighter than unaffected lambs at weaning.
- Lambs born between days 13 to 18 were 5.6 x more likely to be affected than lambs born in days 1 to 6.
- Lambs born in the worst affected paddocks were 7.7 x more likely to be affected.

Norway: Indoor lambing flocks were monitored and samples collected for S. dysgalactiae PCR testing.

The results in the table are for 24 flocks, 9 of which had an outbreak (>5% of lambs affected) during the study.

Sample	Outbreak flock % of samples PCR* +ve	Non outbreak flock % of samples PCR +ve
Ewe vagina	48	20.5
Udder skin	70.8	30.3
Environment	81.5	37.9
Navel	92.6	34.3
Ear tag site	100	34.6

The findings show the **production impacts** that this condition can have and **how important it is to pay attention to detail to limit environmental bacterial challenge, improve navel and skin hygiene at tag sites**, particularly as lambing progresses.

*'PCR' being 'Polymerase Chain Reaction': a common test for infectious conditions.

Factors Affecting Colostrum Quality in Ewes

Below is a summary of some of some recent study results that could be useful if you are experiencing poor colostrum quality this spring.

- Colostrum quality was considered to be adequate if the sample gave a reading of $\geq 26.5\%$ when tested using a Brix refractometer.
- 1279 samples from 64 farms were tested and 74.8% were classed as adequate.
- There were only 9 farms where all samples were classed as adequate.
- Colostrum that was difficult to strip from the udder was an indicator of possible poor quality.
- Ewe body condition, trough space and nutrition affected colostrum quality – see table for more details.

Factor		Number of adequate quality colostrum samples (%)
Ewe body condition score	3	76.6
	≤ 2	68.6
Trough space/ewe (cm)	≥ 45	84
	< 45	68
Silage crude protein (g/kg)	> 120	85
	< 120	68
Supplementation of twin bearing ewes	Yes	77
	No	61
Supplementation of triplet bearing ewes	Yes	77
	No	52