

# Black Sheep Farm Health

December 2019 Newsletter



## The Field Report

The calendar year may be coming to a close but the farming year is well underway. December is another key month for PD'ing and BVD/Johne's testing. If you have a TB test due this can often dovetailed nicely with these jobs.

As the tups finish up or are taken out, the next hurdle will be scanning. Don't forget that disappointing scan results happen for a reason - which is often preventable. Barren ewe checks are often a fruitful method of getting to the bottom of these issues.

See you in the New Year....

## Dates for your Diary

**Farmer Meeting: TB in Northumberland, Johne's in Sheep and BVD Stamp It Out**

**11th December @ Coquetvale Hotel. Beef and tatties from 7pm.**

RSVP on 01669 838 288 so we can make sure we've got plenty of dinner! Kindly sponsored by Virbac

## Christmas Office Opening Hours

Up to the 23rd December inclusive, we will be open as usual with the usual hours.

**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December Christmas Eve – Open as usual (closing at 4pm)**

**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> December Christmas Day - Closed**

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> December Boxing Day - Closed**

**Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> December New Year's Eve – Opening as usual (closing at 4pm)**

**Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> January New Year's Day – Closed**

Business as usual from 2<sup>nd</sup> January . Emergency 24-hour cover is available as always - just phone the main number to get directly through to the vets on call.



## BSFH Vet Tech Services

We're coming up to a busy time of year for our various Vet Tech services.

*Synchronisation and AI (Jack and Jenny):* Jack is already out serving the autumn calving herds. Sync'd AI is a great way to tighten the calving pattern and to access phenomenal genetics for calving ease and growth. Remember if you're organic, AI is still an option - it just has to be to natural cycling. Get in touch with Jack on 07793 078 949 if you're interested to know how sync'd AI could benefit you.

*Sheep Scanning (Joe):* Don't forget we have a sheep (and goat) scanning service. Ideal timing is 60-80 days to aid the counting of lambs. For more information contact Joe on 07502 290 044

*Freezebranding (Kaz):* Now cows are housed, . Freezebrands are great way to identify cows in a race or at a distance - and they don't fall out! The white hair takes a few months to come out so now is an ideal time to get it done for calving. Get Kaz on 07557 092 760.



## Housing Treatments

With housing underway there are a few things to check that we have covered.



- **Pneumonia:** Most of the calves have now had their pneumonia vaccine that will go a long way to protecting them until spring. Just remember that if you are still getting cases of pneumonia it may be worth checking which bug is causing the problem. With a tweak in vaccine choice next year we could further decrease the number of cases requiring treatment.
- **Fluke:** Cows, bulls and calves are all going to require fluke treatment. Bear in mind that with this autumn being wet and relatively warm fluke will be active very late into the year.
- **Worms:** Calves will need worming along with any leaner cows.
- **Lice:** For those cattle that aren't wormed with a pour-on ivermectin it is a good idea to give a treatment for lice once they are housed.

## Helping first-calved heifers

At this time of year, even excellent pregnancy diagnosis results in spring calvers are often let down by one disappointing cohort - the first calved heifers.

Transition into the breeding herd is an extremely stressful period. Not only are these inexperienced cows rearing their first calf (energy requirements for milk production are massive even in beef heifers), but they are still growing themselves. It is also common for them to be suddenly introduced to a new social environment with the older cows, where they find themselves bullied at the bottom of pecking order. Thus, the animals most in need of a kind environment often end up in the most challenging one.

Keeping these first calvers in good fettle maximising the chances of them being in calf the second time around.



To ensure they aren't bullied out of feed, first calvers should be housed separately this autumn. If it is more convenient from a shed space point of view, numbers can be made up with the leanest of the older cows. Penning them separately has the dual advantage of allowing them to be fed preferentially as well as avoiding the social stress of being bullied by older cows. They will thank you when they come to calve - their improved body condition should mean more vigorous calves and better colostrum supply.

## Reminders: End of the year housekeeping

**Weaning Weights Competition** - Don't miss out on a chance to win bottles of Hepple gin. Get your weights into the practice to enter the draw. For more detail give us a ring or see November's newsletter.

**Mastering Medicines** - well done to all who came for the November session: plenty of discussion to be had! If missed out but are keen to come along, just ring 01669 838 288 to register your interest so we can let you know when the next course is being planned.

**RSVP for December Farmer Meeting** - see overleaf for more details.

**BVD Check Testing** - The calf crop of spring 2019 are now coming of age for BVD check testing: don't miss the opportunity to monitor exposure to this costly disease and gain accredited free status for selling cattle.

**Vet Student Lambing Help** - Don't forget we can help out by circulating details of placements to vet schools. Just send Kaz the details (Kaz.Strycharczyk@bsfh.co.uk) and he will pass them on.