

# Black Sheep Farm Health

November 2018 Newsletter



## The Field Report

It was great to see so many of you around and about this show season, especially those of you who braved the Alwinton monsoon. There are still plenty of events to meet up at, including a free bus we've organised to AgriScot.

We go on about recording data on farm ad nauseam and have put our money where our mouths are: see overleaf for more details on **our new set of scales**.

This month we introduce a new feature for our frugal farmers - 'Things everyone should have that cost £15 or less'. Finally there is some housekeeping for anyone enrolled in the Premium Sheep and Goat Health Scheme.

## The Autumn Special: Calf Pneumonia

- Calf pneumonia is still one of the most significant diseases in beef cattle, despite a good understanding of the risk factors.
- No single thing causes calf pneumonia; even a strong calf can be overwhelmed by a poor environment.
- The greatest costs of pneumonia are the unseen losses to calf growth, on top of calf mortality and medicines.
- Pneumonia is the biggest cause of antibiotic use in the beef sector.

Pneumonia is one of the most common reasons for death and poor performance in young cattle from weaning to 10 months, costing the beef industry an estimated £50 million a year. Costs per affected animal range from £30-£80, with subclinical cases also causing significant performance losses.

**Although dead calves are the most striking, by far the greatest cost is in animals that survive but then suffer knocked growth rates.**

Calf pneumonia is a complex, multifactorial disease, with many animals in a group often showing subclinical signs, including reduced feeding, raised temperatures, increased breathing rate and effort, coughing, depression and nasal discharge.

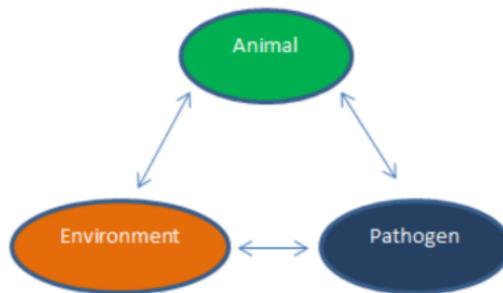
Any disease is a balance between protection and challenge. Many factors influence this including:

**Nutrition** - Adequate colostrum intake, supplementing youngstock during bad weather, monitoring BCS.

**Stress** - Avoid mixing age groups and high stocking densities, avoiding disbudding and castration at weaning, avoiding simultaneous housing

**Environment** - damp bedding, poor (<2m/s) airflow, lack of outflow, extreme variation in temperature

**Concurrent disease** - BVD, coccidiosis and heavy parasite burdens



## Dates for your Diary

### AgriScot: 21st November

We are putting on a free coach in conjunction with Scott Mitchell Associates, our closest XLVets neighbour. Kindly sponsored by Boehringer.

Spaces strictly on a first-come, first-served basis: ring the office to book yours.



**AHDB Sheep Meeting: 29th November, 19:30 @ Coquetvale Hotel**

**Using beef farm data to increase farm profit (Joe Henry)**

**Marketing lamb pre and post-Brexit (Ian Cairns on behalf of AHDB)**

Dinner provided - RSVP on 01669 838 288.

**High health, sustainable systems in an upland livestock farm: Monday 12th November, 12 noon—4pm.**

Hosted by Moredun, The Farmer Network and Scott Mitchell Associates. Meet @ Twice Brewed Inn for lunch.

**Limited numbers so RSVP to Beth Wells (beth.wells@moredun.ac.uk or 0131 445 6157)**



## Premium Sheep and Goat Health

### Schemes: Some rule changes

An increasing number of flock breakdowns with MV have led the PSGHS to update their rules.

As bringing in new stock is a major risk factor of introducing MV/CAE infection into an accredited flock, the changes relate mainly to animal movement.

The rule changes are as follows:

1. It will now be mandatory **to test all animals added to accredited flocks between 6 months and 12 months after arriving.** (It is also strongly recommended that even if the new stock is accredited, they are tested at the time they are added).

2. There will be a requirement for members with non MV/CAE accredited animals on the same holding to perform a **cull ewe screen** of 12 non MV/CAE accredited animals at the same time of RPBT.

3. **Imported animals accredited under a non-UK scheme must be kept isolated** until informed by the health scheme vet that they can be added to the MV/CAE accredited flock.

4. **Imported semen/embryos from animals accredited under a non-UK scheme must not be used/implanted in MV/CAE accredited animals** until authorisation is given by the health scheme vet.

These changes will be enforced from 1st January 2019 and failure to comply will lead to flocks reverting to one-yearly testing.



## BSFH weigh scales: find out how well you have done this summer

The foundation of a profitable suckler herd is a cow that weans a calf that is around 50% of her bodyweight. If we can't accurately measure either calf weaning weight or adult cow weight it is impossible to calculate this with any certainty. How many arable farmers would not know their yield in tonnes per hectare?

Once a baseline is established, this information can then be used to determine how effective a change in management has been - pneumonia vaccination, for example. It also helps identify the best cows: those which rear a good % of their bodyweight, year-in, year-out.

**To this end we now have a set of lightweight scales available to hire for clients. Just ring in to the practice to book them out for your spring born suckled calves.**

Given enough notice, the scales can be delivered. The only condition is that they should be spotless on their return; risk the wrath of Jenny and Hazel if not...



The new scales being christened by lovely Luings of Laingshill.

## Things everyone should have that cost less than £15 #1: Thermometer

Body temperature is a key piece of information when trying to find out why an animal is sick. A high temperature (>39.5°C) is often the first sign of disease, hence the use of 'fever tags' in some large calf rearing operations.



Animals with a fever frequently benefit from a non-steroidal e.g 'Recocam', and being able to pick up disease quickly helps nip it in the bud.

Additionally, it is really important to know just how cold hypothermic lambs are when reviving them as this affects how best to treat them.

### Lamb survival flow chart

