

Vet Viewpoint

A regional round-up of key veterinary issues

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Farm Solutions
Rutland



* Body condition scoring (BCS) ewes and cows before they give birth is a vital tool to help reduce metabolic and physical problems before, during and after birth, promoting optimal reproductive performance.

More than 90% of sheep in most flocks should be BCS 2.0-3.5.

Ewes with multiple lambs and low BCS need to be fed quality fibre and supplementary concentrates to avoid twin lamb disease.

Beef and dairy cows need to be BCS 3.0 prior to calving.

Group overfat or thin cows and feed accordingly to reduce ketosis risk.

Robert Smith

Farm First Services
Monmouthshire



* We have seen a lot of pasteurellosis in sheep over these past few weeks.

With lambing under way or rapidly approaching farmers are reminded to boost their ewes in the run-up to lambing with a combined clostridial and pasteurella vaccine).

Sheep not previously vaccinated with this need a course of two injections four to six weeks apart. Booster doses are then given to in-lamb ewes at four to six weeks before they lamb.

This acts as an aid to control clostridial disease and pasteurellosis in their lambs, as long as they receive sufficient colostrum during those first few hours of life.

The immunity to pasteurella lambs get from colostrum only lasts about a month.

Sam Ecroyd

Tyndale Vets
Gloucestershire



* Many sheep farmers are preparing for early lambing and combating the age-old foe, watery mouth.

This is caused by rapidly multiplying E coli bacteria in the small intestine which later die releasing toxins.

E coli bacteria come from dirty environments and faecal staining of the ewe's wool in areas encountered by the lamb searching for the teat. Poor or delayed colostrum intake allows E coli to proliferate.

Lambs can be lifeless and dull, reluctant to suck, have a wet lower jaw and abdominal distension despite not sucking.

It is serious and, untreated, often

leads to death. While prompt antibiotic treatment is essential in outbreaks, prevention is always better than cure.

Hygienic lambing areas and adequate colostrum intake are key.

Hamish Howie



Clyde Vet Group
Lanarkshire

* January has seen a new phase in the Scottish bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD)

eradication scheme.

It is important to remember when buying store cattle that they are from a screened negative herd.

When buying heifers that are either in-calf or that have calves at foot make sure you are certain they

have not come into contact with BVD prior to service or during the first trimester of pregnancy.

This could result in the birth of persistently infected (PI) calves, which frequently fail to thrive.

With margins under increasing pressure and any available efficiencies being sought, you don't want a PI animal in your herd.

If you have any doubt about your BVD status, talk with your vet. fwlivestock@rbi.co.uk

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