FarmVets SOUTHWEST

FarmNews

Modern approach, traditional values

Newsletter February 2022

Vaccinating Against Lungworm

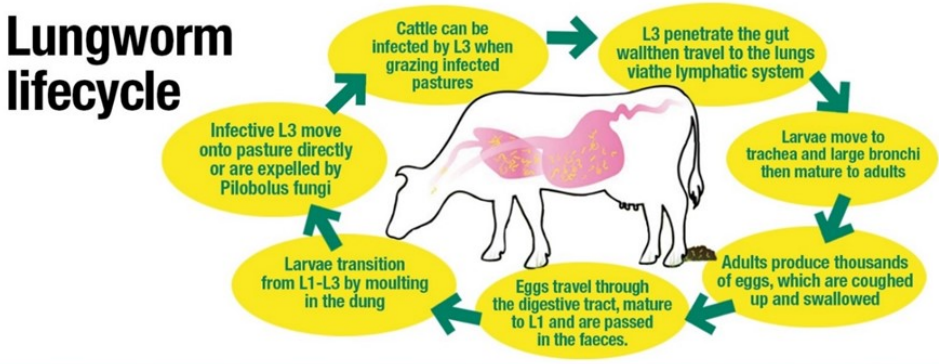
If you hear your cattle coughing at grass in autumn, this means they could have been harbouring lungworm burdens that compromise growth rates and lifetime milking performance. Most lungworm cases are reported at the back end of the grazing season. Unfortunately, lungworm larvae can overwinter on pasture and in carrier cattle to propagate infection year to year, which means cattle can pick up infection as soon as they are turned out in the spring. And if they do, it could be very costly.

It pays to vaccinate.
Vaccination against lungworm is a no brainer. In the dairy herd, lungworm infection could easily cost you £140 per cow with lost milk production averaging 4kg per cow per day – and that's a conservative estimate – because you can also lose cattle to lungworm.

Home-reared dairy replacements tend to graze on a separate pasture away from the milking herd and are often treated with long-acting wormers, perhaps in both the first and second grazing seasons. When this replacement group enters the main herd, they have no immunity to lungworm and the risk of a disease outbreak at grass is very high. Lungworm is unpredictable and best controlled through vaccination.

Boost immunity through vaccination
Huskvac is a live vaccine, made from irradiated lungworm larvae, which are incapable of causing disease. Vaccination should be completed at least two weeks before the herd is turned out to grass. Wormers should not be given until two weeks after the final dose of vaccine. The vaccine allows a small number of lungworm from natural infection to complete their life-cycle, this means there is a continued development of natural immunity throughout the grazing season. Over-reliance on wormers does not allow this natural boosting to occur.

Vaccination with a pre-turnout course of Huskvac is the most reliable and cost-effective way of ensuring the development of immunity to lungworm. Please give us a call to discuss your parasite control plan for the Spring and Summer.



Vaccinate now or **cough up** later!

Colostrum for Lambs

What is good colostrum?
Colostrum quality can be measured using a *BRIX Refractometer (>22 good <22 poor)*. These are cheap and easily purchased online or in agricultural supply stores.

How Much Colostrum does a lamb need?
50ml/kg in the first 6 hours (That is **250ml for a 5Kg lamb in the first 6 hours**) and 200ml/kg in the first 24 hours in total (**1litre for a 5Kg lamb in the first 24 hours of life**). Triplet lambs never drink enough colostrum by simply sucking and should always be supplemented.

Colostrum Supplements and Storage
- Ewe's Colostrum is the best replacement. Artificial replacements are poor in comparison and they cost money.
- Fresh colostrum can be stored in the fridge for 2 days and frozen for up to a year.
- Colostrum can be collected through the use of machines like the Udderly EZ sheep Milker where hand milking is considered too laborious.

A graduated approach to decreasing Spectam use can be used ***through only treating lambs that are at high risk of developing watery mouth such as triplets and those born later in the lambing period*** when pen hygiene has slipped for whatever reason.
Remember:
- 250ml/5kg lamb in the first 6 hours
- Clean, dry, disinfected pens
- Colostrum quality and quickly

Pre-Lambing Nutrition Blood testing (Funded by Norbrook)

The last trimester of pregnancy is when *70% of lamb growth* occurs in the womb and so this puts massive demands on the ewe. It is also when she starts making colostrum which will be fed to the lamb in the first 24 hours of life. **Adequate protein and energy supply** are crucial to ensure this and thus **reduce the risk of diseases such as twin lamb, watery mouth, pneumonia, lamb dysentery, navel ill, joint ill etc etc** *(this list could go on a while).*

Feeding ewes in the 6 week run up to lambing is also one of the ***largest costs associated with sheep farming and thus should be managed appropriately to ensure a profitable business.***
6 Blood samples taken from ewes approximately 3-4 weeks pre-lambing can give an indication to the energy and protein supply they are receiving and whether it is adequate.
Manage feed costs to manage profit!
Get your ewes sampled with **lab costs FREE** by ringing us today.