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## Bull Breeding Soundness Examinations

With 2-3 months to go before Spring-calving herds put the bulls back to work, now is the time to get them "serviced" so that any problems can be corrected before use:

**BODY CONDITION** - Bulls should be in moderate body condition for breeding ("fit not fat"). Fertility will be reduced if bulls are overweight or in poor body condition.

**FEET** - Consider getting your bulls foot-trimmed:

- Correcting overgrown claws will reduce the chance of your bull going lame during the breeding period.
- If problems are found they can be corrected in time; lameness can significantly reduce sperm counts and prevent the bull from working. It takes approximately 2 months for sperm counts to fully recover following a lameness episode, so now is the time to get problems sorted.



**FERTILITY** - 1 in 5 bulls are sub-fertile or have underlying problems which could cause problems during the breeding period. Having your bulls fertility tested is important for maximising pregnancies and to prevent any fertility disasters! A fertility exam involves:

1. **A full physical exam of the bull** - Anything that may affect the ability of the bull to serve cows (e.g. arthritis, back pain, bad heart/lungs, lameness) can be found and corrected if possible.
2. **Examination of the reproductive tract** - The testicles, prostate & penis are examined for abnormalities and testicular size is measured.
3. **Semen Assessment** - A semen sample is collected and analysed under a microscope to assess sperm concentration, motility and quality.

The fertility test is quick (approx. 20 minutes per bull) and all tests are performed crush-side so you get the results immediately. As well as identifying sub-fertile bulls, the results can be used to help guide how many cows should be put to each bull. Cost of Bull Fertility Test = £100 exc. VAT.

## Lambing Essentials

For those of you preparing for lambing, we are fully stocked with all the necessary equipment and vital veterinary drugs to hopefully aid a successful lambing season. If you require anything that is not listed here, would like advice regarding use of products or wish to put in an order please contact us.

### Antibiotics & Anti-inflammatories & Vaccines:

- Duphamox LA
- Metacam
- Allevinix – i/v & i/m daily anti-inflammatory
- Spectam Scour Halt
- Heptavac P plus



### Other treatments and supplements:

- Immucol Lamb Colostrum
- "Iodophore" Uterine pessaries
- Super 7+ Navel protection
- Iodine 10% Solution for navel dip
- Ketosaid – Propylene Glycol
- Calciject 6 20% CMD
- Col-Late Lamb Kick Start
- Glucose 40% Injection
- Life Aid liquid/ sachets



### Lambing Equipment:

- Lambing ropes
- Lambing Snare
- Lambing Jacket
- Lamb resuscitator
- Thermometer
- Heat Lamp and Pads
- Entropion clips
- Rubber lamb rings & applicator
- Arm length gloves
- Lube gel
- Lamb Stomach tube & syringe



## Thank you

Thank you to everyone who attended the lambing meetings at Longthorns Farm in February.

## Blackleg in Cattle

We saw several cases of blackleg last year. This often fatal disease is caused by Clostridial bacterial spores activating in the muscles, often in the legs. The bacteria survive for long periods in the soil, and after initial infection it may lie dormant in the animals' muscles until trauma (such as bulling; or feeding at a congested barrier) leads to activation and disease.

Affected cattle become rapidly dull and depressed, with a high temperature and swollen muscles. However, due to the quick onset, unfortunately in many cases the animal will be found dead. On post-mortem examination there is obvious muscle damage with black, gassy areas under the skin. (See picture of the affected muscle in the rump of a heifer, found dead).



Cases of blackleg often increase when animals are turned out or moved to new pastures. Outbreaks have been reported after earthworks such as field drainage work and new road construction, because the clostridial spores are disturbed and exposed in the soil.

The only way to control blackleg is through **vaccination**. We recommend vaccines that also protect against other clostridial diseases including black disease and tetanus. Two doses are required, 4-6 weeks apart, and an annual booster to maintain immunity. Please contact us if you would like to discuss vaccination or if you suspect blackleg on your farm.



## BVD Surveillance: Selling Calves

BVD is a complex viral disease of cattle. Infection with BVD causes pneumonia in calves and reduced immunity to other infectious diseases. It can also cause abortions; deformed calves, or birth of persistently infected (PI) calves. As well as dying early from mucosal disease (often by 2 years old), PI animals are a constant infection risk to other cattle around them.

**If you can show that your calves are not PIs, then you will be able to sell them at a premium. Buyers will be able to purchase your calves with confidence.**

We would like to remind you that we can perform a PI screen on calves prior to sale - this could be carried out at your pre-movement TB test. The screen involves applying an ear tag that takes a punch of tissue; this can be analysed for the presence of BVD virus. Results would be available in 5 days. If they pass the test and are not PIs, then we will provide certification to say so. A negative (non-PI / BVD free) result is valid for the life of the animal and should **increase the value of the animal.**

The BVD-testing ear tags (made by Nordic Star) are also available as yellow ID tags that you can apply at birth. We know that many of you are already using these. For further information on 'tag and test' for BVD please contact us at the practice.

