

October 2009



DAMORY VETERINARY CLINIC

Sheep Newsletter

NEWSLETTER TOPICS

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Abortion vaccines

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Synchronizing ewes

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Staff news

We are delighted to welcome Alice Wilkinson to the team. Alice qualified from Bristol this summer after gaining experience seeing practice with vets in several continents. She replaces Drew who left us in August and is very keen in the practical as well as the herd health aspect of farm animal practice.

Abortion vaccines

Toxoplasmosis

As Toxoplasma infects the sheep from the environment (cat faeces), vaccination is the most effective way to prevent it causing abortions and poor lambing percentages. A single injection 3 weeks before tuppung is sufficient. In following years only replacement ewes have to be vaccinated as a single injection will give protection for at least 4 years.

Enzootic Abortion

There have been production problems with Enzovax this year but it is now available again. Unfortunately, it has to be given at least 4 weeks before tuppung so it may be too late from many of you.

Worms and fluke

We have had our third consecutive wet summer so be aware of problems in the autumn and winter especially regarding liver fluke.

Top tips for tugging

- Carry out ram MOT (teeth, toes and testicles) or ask us to do it. If fertility is questionable we have a kit to collect and assess semen.
- Make sure rams and ewes are in good condition. After weaning, ewes should first be kept on tight grazing and then put on weight on high quality pasture before and during tugging
- Don't worm unless a problem has been identified
- Do use trace element supplements if your soil is deficient. Blood /forage test if in doubt.
- Do ensure good energy intake for ewes and rams to achieve good lambing percentages.
- Consider an abortion vaccine (Toxovax/Enzovax).

We can scan ewes for pregnancy, which may be of interest for small flocks. The probe we are using gives an accurate Yes or No, but is not proficient in identifying twins or triplets.

Synchronising ewes

Sponging ewes at a cost of £2/ewe can achieve a more compact lambing with most of the lambing being carried out within a week (outside the normal breeding season an additional hormone injection of £3/ewe is required). Also, use of vasectomised rams can be of benefit in tightening the lambing period. Please ask for more details if you are interested.

Foot bathing

A new(ish) footbath is available, called Kling-On Blue, which can be successfully applied in sheep (we have had excellent feedback). As the name suggests it sticks to the feet, giving it a long-acting activity. Please ring for further details