



THRUMS VETERINARY GROUP

Thrum's News

August 2019

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Practice News

Thanks to those of you who dropped by the stand at Kirrie show last month. The stand, like the show, was busier this year. Good news all round.

After 9 years at Thrum's Helen is sadly leaving to raise her family in her home village of Shieldaig. She will be sorely missed by many and we wish her all the very best for the future. We hope that she will continue to visit us and possibly do a little locum cover in years to come.

Findlay Williamson has joined the team having graduated from Edinburgh vet school earlier this year. Findlay is keen on all aspects of mixed practice and looks forward to meeting you all out on farm at some point in the near future.

Teaser tups for a compact lambing

Using a teaser tup is an increasingly popular, cheap and effective way to tighten up the lambing period in all flock types. By using a vasectomised tup in advance of the "entire" boys going in, the ewes will cycle sooner and in some degree of synchronicity. This in turn will result in a tighter lambing period, which is important for disease and cost reduction at lambing time.

Creating teaser tups is relatively inexpensive, but needs to be done in advance of the breeding season, so now is the ideal time to do it.

The ideal candidates for surgery are young, good on their feet and full of energy! To discuss how best to use a teaser or to book some tups in, please just give us a shout.

Sheep Health Meeting - Tup Fertility

All are invited to an open Flock Health Club meeting to discuss tup fertility, get "hands on" with some pre-tupping checks and see a live demo of full fertility assessment.

The meeting will start early to allow all to get on with harvest or other jobs later in the day if the weather is good. Breakfast will be provided!

9am Tuesday 24th September - East Saucher Farm, Kinrossie, PH2 6HY

Please book your place with Ed at the Kirriemuir practice.

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Slow Calving Syndrome

Every year we see increasing numbers of this syndrome, most commonly in the summer and autumn calving herds but sometimes in the spring as well. Part of the problem can be put down to overfat cows or certain deficiencies but much can be done to avoid it using management and minerals.

Having a correctly balanced mineral intake in the run up to calving can make a significant difference. To expel the calf repeated contractions of the womb and muscles are required and this process requires calcium. If there is insufficient calcium the cow may start showing signs of labour but fail to progress, which increases the risk of stillbirth. When these cows are examined there is no obvious reason for them not getting on with it. Giving them a bottle of calcium at this stage can help them start again but if there is any doubt as to the cause then it is best to give us a call.

In the weeks before calving the mineral should have a relatively low level of calcium otherwise it can interfere with the cow's ability to mobilise calcium at calving when there is a sudden demand. This can be difficult in grazing cows as the pasture is usually high in Calcium.

However an adequate daily intake of magnesium is essential to help mobilise calcium so if a cow is not taking in enough minerals it can result in low blood magnesium which then leads to low calcium at the point of calving. To check if magnesium levels are adequate blood samples can be collected from half a dozen cows that are within a few weeks of calving. Other signs that calcium levels may be too low are downer cows, retained placentas and also prolapses of the calf bed.

Pre-calving minerals, as well as containing extra magnesium, also tend to contain higher levels of selenium, vitamins A & E and iodine. Selenium crosses the placenta into the calf and can be important for calf vigour. Vitamin E doesn't cross the placenta to much extent so the main source of it for the calf is the colostrum. If the cow's diet contains a high level of vitamin E it should result in colostrum which is rich in it. Both vitamin E and selenium are important for a healthy immune system. Iodine deficiency can result in stillbirths or weak calves.

So, to avoid slow calving syndrome

1. Ensure cows are in optimum condition score 3
2. Ensure Iodine/Se levels are adequate
3. Feed high magnesium mineral that is low in calcium
4. Call us if you wish to discuss further or arrange some blood sampling