



In This Issue

- Practice News
- TB Testing
- Investigate Ewe Deaths
- Trace Element Boluses
- Contagious Ovine Digital Dermatitis
- Pre Calving Planning

Practice News

We are delighted to announce the arrival of two new vets to the practice, Louise Soutar and Jordan McCracken. Louise hails from farming stock near Forfar and has spent a few years in mixed practice in Yorkshire. Jordan, who graduated 2 years ago, has been in mostly farm animal practice near her home in Northern Ireland. We expect both of them to be valuable additions to the Thrums team.

December has seen more pneumonia than in recent years with a number of farms that have historically not seen many problems being affected. As ever early diagnosis and treatment leads to better outcomes. We have now confirmed another local outbreak.

TB Testing

Although we do much less testing these days, there are a number of tests due over the next few months. Clients are reminded that we now have to test not only the breeding cattle but also all replacement and potential replacement stock as well. Wherever possible testing should be completed on a single day.

Investigate Ewe Deaths

We often see an increase in unexplained deaths in ewes at this time of year. The additional stresses of inclement weather, decreasing nutrition and increasing lamb burden all lead to the course of any underlying disease rapidly accelerating, often presenting as a “sudden death”.

These sudden deaths may just be the tip of an iceberg; with many unseen production losses due to reduced body condition, fertility, lamb survival and growth rates occurring unchecked.

As such it makes sense to monitor sudden deaths with a quick and cheap post mortem examination. PM exams can be done at SAC Perth or by one of us on farm or in the practice. Often a quick and definitive answer can be given.

Recently we have diagnosed triclabendazole resistant fluke and OPA (Jaagsiekte) on post mortem and have been able to put in place measures to reduce the impact of these diseases.

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Trace Element Boluses

Last year we took on a new supplier for trace element boluses which enabled us to cut the price of several leading trace element boluses. There is also a new bolus available which, unlike most of the competitors, does not require a 2 bolus treatment for adult animals. There are various specifications available. As always please contact the surgery for details.

Case Report - Contagious Ovine Digital Dermatitis

Every year we diagnose contagious ovine digital dermatitis (C.O.D.D.) on a few more farms and last month was no different. A mixed, upland farm running about 400 ewes reported lameness that was not responding to conventional antibiotic therapy.

On examination, many lame sheep showed signs of C.O.D.D. (see picture, below) rather than conventional footrot.

The best treatment for C.O.D.D. is different from footrot and the potential management strategies may vary also, so this case highlights the importance of getting a correct diagnosis.

In this case, C.O.D.D. was almost certainly brought in with purchased sheep. Biosecurity measures related to incoming stock is essential to stop devastating and expensive disease getting on farm.

Please speak to us about lameness prevention or improving biosecurity on your farm.



Pre Calving Planning

With early calving due to start later this month in a number of herds remember to;

- Carefully manage condition score so heifers/cows are not too thin or fat. Condition score 2 to 2.5 is ideal.
- Vaccinate with Rotavec Corona if appropriate
- Ensure cattle have dry clean beds for calving. This reduces neonatal infections such as navel ill, scour and reduces the transmission of conditions such as Johne's Disease. If a cow's teats are covered in faeces this is likely to be the first feed the calf receives!
- Correct potential trace-element problems. Vit E/Selenium deficiencies as well as Iodine deficiency are common in this area.
- Remove non pregnant cows from pens. These often come bulling, cause disruption and increase the stocking density.
- Report any early calves/abortions. With the cessation of annual Brucella testing it is more important to screen these animals. This is free of charge and allows other testing to be done at the same time.
- Remove from the calving pens any animals known or suspected to be carrying Johne's disease.

