



THRUMS VETERINARY GROUP

Thrums News

July 2018

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Practice News

June in the practice continued to be busier than usual with late spring work and a recent spike in Caesars, mostly due to late calving cows putting on too much condition out at grass.

The prolonged period of hot, dry weather has led to reports of some high-quality silage being made, if quantities are down a bit; and unprecedented amounts of hay being made. Stock seem to be coping well with the weather, but we have been hearing plenty reports of flies causing issues for both cattle and sheep, and have seen the occasional case of photosensitization (sunburn).

Bull Issues

We have semen sampled a lot of bulls over the last month or so, with many farms doing this as routine prior to breeding. Latterly we have had a few interesting cases that prove the importance of planning to prevent disappointment at preg testing.

One notable case saw 11 out of 13 bulls failing the test, with some bulls having up to 90% abnormal sperm. The cause of this mass failure is still being investigated, but we have ruled out many of the likely causes such as BVD or IBR. Had we not tested these bulls the fertility results would likely have been disastrous, and it was done in just enough time to source replacement bulls. We will be following up on these bulls to see if they are recovering from whatever has affected their fertility so markedly.

Another case saw a bull that was not keen to serve cows. On closer inspection, a tight ring of hair was identified constricting the end of his penis. No wonder the poor chap wasn't keen on doing his job!



Kirrie Show 2018

We will be again taking a stand and providing vet cover at the Kirriemuir show, this year to be held on Saturday 14th of July. Please drop by for a chat and refreshment and to take part in our quiz on how many Caesars we've done on various animals in the last year!

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How Are Your Lambs Growing?

We have been dealing with a few cases of lambs not growing as well as they should be this summer. Pre-weaning, lambs should be growing at at least 250g/day - but ideally this could be between 300-400g/day. Post weaning, aiming for 200g/day is not unachievable. If they are not hitting these targets there are a few things to consider.

The first thing to consider is nutrition - how well is the grass they are grazing being managed and for lambs that are under 8 weeks of age that are still consuming significant quantities of milk; what body condition are the ewes in? If the answer to both of those questions is “good” then it is likely something else is the cause. If there are problems with grass management or ewe BCS it may be worth working out why this is, to prevent a repeat next year. If ewes are in poor BCS then it may be worth considering weaning early.

Trace Elements, in particular Cobalt and Selenium are crucial for lamb growth. If either of these are lacking, it can have massive effects on growth rates. A cheap and reliable blood test is available to diagnose the issue. Supplementation as a drench for short keep lambs is may be all that’s required, but for longer keep lambs it may be worth considering a bolus that works up to 4 months as a cost-effective option.

Gut Worms will also affect growth rates, lambs do not need to be showing overt signs of being “wormy” for the worms that are there to be affecting them through reduced appetite and poor protein absorption. Monitoring faecal worm egg counts on a regular basis allows a sub-clinical problem to be detected early, and also helps avoid unnecessary treatments which may be costly in terms of labour, drugs and is unsustainable.

Other disease issues such as lameness, pneumonia, coccidiosis and blowfly will also worth considering.

If you have concerns about your lamb growth rates this grazing season, please give us a shout to discuss the problem, and see if there is anything we can do to help!

