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Practice News

The flush of grass in August has continued but has brought with it a few seasonal cases of staggers along with outbreaks of lungworm. Although easily treated if caught in time they can often have knock on consequences over the winter with regards to pneumonia outbreaks.

The late flush of grass has also seen condition scores in calving cows rise with an accompanying increase in caesarean sections carried out.

SRUC Beef Meeting

With cost and availability of winter forage a hot topic, SRUC are holding a 'Beef It Up' meeting to discuss winter rations for finishing cattle. The meeting is to be held at the Red House Hotel in Coupar Angus on Mon 22nd October. For further details please either contact the practice or SAC consulting.

Liver Fluke Update

For this part of the country we are expecting a reduced liver fluke challenge according to all the forecasts. This does not however mean that it is safe to assume that there is no liver fluke.

Each farm has a different set of risk factors and these should be taken into account when formulating a parasite control protocol this winter. We do continue to see fluke problems although not on the same scale as some previous years.

Pneumonia Vaccination

With autumn housing imminent if you have not already vaccinated your calves then now is the time! To ensure protection is in place in most cases the vaccine course needs to be in place for around 10 days before calves are challenged.

In previous years we have often encountered problems where pneumonia breaks out before the vaccine has had time to work. This is particularly the case where injectable vaccines are used. Please contact the surgery if you wish to discuss vaccination as part of your pneumonia control programme.

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Pre Topping Considerations

For most farmers we are now less than a month away from when the tups go in, whilst hopefully most of the preparatory work has been done it is worth going through a few things to ensure you maximise fertility and lamb numbers for the year ahead.

Hopefully by now all of the appropriate **Toxoplasma and Enzootic abortion vaccinations** have been given. They need to be given at least 3 weeks before the tups go in. Every year we deal with a handful of abortion outbreaks that have occurred due to lapsed vaccination and complacency. Don't let that be you this year!

Ewes should be in fit not fat body condition - aim for BCS 3/5 at this time, ewes thinner than that may benefit from nutritional flushing 3-4 weeks pre topping. **Managing body condition is crucial for profitability** of the flock, so aim to condition score pre-topping and again mid-winter.

We have again diagnosed **iodine and selenium deficiencies** in several flocks this year. Both of these can have a big impact on scanning %, so if in doubt arrange a quick and cost-effective blood test to check levels. Bolusing of ewes pre-topping where deficiencies exist is gold standard.

Despite the good summer, **don't be complacent about fluke**. The risk for our region is currently low but is likely to rise over the coming weeks. **Ewes in good condition don't need wormed pre-topping**. Treat individual thin/dirty ewes if required and treat the tups.

Have you selected more culls than you would like this year? If so it may be worth **screening for the "iceberg" diseases**, to ensure there is not an infectious disease dragging down flock productivity.

So far this year we have fertility tested in excess of 100 tups and **1 in 5 have been sub-fertile or infertile**. Semen sampling tups is quick and cheap and will always be a sound investment in flock productivity, so please arrange this if you want to get the most from your flock this year.

