



THRUM'S VETERINARY GROUP
DEDICATED PROFESSIONAL CARE

Thrum's Farm News

MAY 2020

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Practice News

The month of April has seen changed working practices at Thrum's! Mercifully we have remained free of Covid and have social distancing policies in place to protect both ourselves and our clients. Most tasks are possible to carry out reasonably distanced but there are a few scenarios where during caesarean sections, prolapses and the like, this has been very challenging to maintain whilst protecting the immediate animal welfare. With this in mind please let us know before we come out if there are either any high-risk personnel on the farm or if there have been any suspected or confirmed infections. Your cooperation here is greatly appreciated. Within the surgery we have split into teams and endeavour to minimise contact. Consequently, we are rarely in the building but we are usually only a phone call away.

As the weeks roll by we are getting more guidance about what we are and are not permitted to do. The PCHS labs are back working and so annual Johne's testing is back online along with BVD and TB which never stopped, additionally routine castration and dehorning is now acceptable, provided we are able to keep a distance, which is usually possible. Otherwise, anything linked to health, welfare or production is all fine with social distancing the key factor always. We appreciate there will be a backlog of testing and dehorning to undertake but we will endeavour to get this done prior to turnout where appropriate.

Pre-Breeding Checks

Getting the cows in calf successfully is the foundation for any good performance. For many farms, it is now routine to fertility test the bull before breeding. Such checks can help identify a number of problems before they arise and prevent the disappointment that comes with a poor scanning result. In almost all the herds where we have investigated poor fertility the under-performance of the bull has played a significant part.



We have analysed our reports from last year and found that 22% of bulls tested failed to meet the standards accepted for full fertility, this is consistent with national statistics which suggest that 1 in 6 bulls are sub-fertile.

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Bull testing can also help identify the star performers in the bull stud! Some bulls are able to happily cope with up to 50 cows over a normal 10 week bulling period but it is important to differentiate ambition from ability!

That's not to say we should forget the cow though! Individual factors affecting the cows can also add up and contribute to poorer results so gathering together the cows that have had twins, a bad calving, retained cleansing, Caesar etc and having them checked, and if necessary washed out, can help these individuals to conceive.

Time for a pedicure!



Prior to turn out is the ideal time to attend to any lame cattle or those with overgrown feet. This is especially true of the bull who needs to be fit on his feet over the coming months.

Our mobile, hydraulic crush makes this job quick and safe and often for the bull we can combine a trim and semen analysis for the full MOT and bill of health prior to work.

Nematodirus and Coccidiosis warning in lambs

For many this has been a successful lambing, helped by the very favourable weather. This coupled with the good scanning results means there will likely be a substantial lamb crop on the ground. The challenge now is to keep them growing and get them to market efficiently and at a profit.

The next hurdles we're likely to encounter are Nematodirus and Coccidiosis. The forecasts indicate that lambs over 6 weeks of age, on pastures grazed by lambs the previous year are now at risk of nematodirus. Indeed, we have seen our first nematodirus eggs in lamb worm egg counts already. The appropriate treatment is a white wormer followed by a worm egg count 10-14 days later to ensure follow up treatment is not required.

There are a number of treatments available for coccidiosis but Tolracol is likely to be the most cost-effective option and offer the easiest dosing regime. Ideally this should be given 1 week before the period of expected challenge.



Nematodirus and cocci are both very farm specific problems and each farm's unique set of circumstances will lead to a different optimum risk avoidance and treatment strategy. For the best guidance please speak to one of us or refer back to your health plans.