



# Highgate Veterinary Clinic

## Farmers Newsletter - March 2009

### Lambing Matters

Buoyant lamb prices at the moment will have given many shepherds a reason to feel optimistic this year. Up to now lambing conditions have been good and ewes generally have kept fit over the winter. The main exception to this has been where fluke have caused severe liver damage and it would be wise to treat sheep again if you haven't already done so recently. As for the choice of treatment, we recommend that you use an alternative drug to triclabendazole (Fasinex) at this time of year. Flukiver or Trodax are two products which would be suitable.

A new worming product will soon be released called Cydectin LA for sheep. Like oral Cydectin it gives a prolonged action against worms. It may be given to ewes around lambing as it reduces worm egg shedding and reduces the need to worm lambs later. In addition it is a treatment for scab, giving a 60 day protection against infection, but only if all in-contact sheep are treated at the same time. However, over use in all ewes can lead to development of resistance. Consider treating twin/ triplet ewes and leaving single ewes untreated. Worming and fluke programmes need tailoring to specific farm requirements so please speak to us.



### Difficult Lambings

However good the fat price is, you won't receive anything for dead lambs. Difficult lambings can be very expensive. Firstly there is the time you spend trying to lamb them yourself, then the time you spend bringing them to the surgery, followed by our bill. What do you have to show for it? If our help has been sought too late, there's a dead lamb and perhaps a sick dying ewe.

Making the decision early to get our help is the cheaper option. If the lambs are too big a caesarean in a sheep is quick and safe. The cost difference between a lambing and a caesarean is £30.00 and you are more likely to end up with live lambs and a healthy ewe.

Many of you bring lambings into the surgery. This saves a visit charge and is often more convenient for us, but if you're in the thick of lambing it takes you away from the rest of the flock for at least an hour. The price of a visit charge in this situation may be worth it – less stress for you, less stress for the ewe and a better chance of a happy outcome. In addition, you are sure to find one or two 'while you're here' jobs for us!



### Bluetongue Vaccination

Many people are now buying bluetongue vaccine for their stock. Fitting that extra jab (or jabs in the case of cattle) into the rest of the management regime can be difficult and some may wonder if it is worthwhile.

The manufacturers of Bovilis BVT and Heptavac / Heptavac P have said that they are happy for these products to be used at the same time which will make things easier. If you still have doubts a meeting held by Intervet Schering Plough Animal Health on 11th March at the Castle Green Hotel will introduce a Dutch vet who will discuss her experiences on bluetongue in the Netherlands. If you don't receive an invitation through the post, please contact the surgery for further details.

### Bovine Viral Diarrhoea

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea in cattle is very common. In a recent and ongoing screening of our beef clients 50% have been found to have active BVD infections in their herd. Half of our dairy clients already vaccinate.

Despite its name, diarrhoea is not a major sign of the disease. Abortion, infertility or weak abnormal calves can be the most obvious signs. Due to its ability to damage the immune system and so allow other infection in, pneumonia and calf scour can be the result of BVD infection. Free blood testing and bulk milk testing for BVD is still available. Please contact the surgery for further details.

### This Month: March



If the weather warms up, keep vigilant for blue tongue.  
We have a presentation on the website which will help you identify the symptoms.



Consider using fly repellents such as Spot on or Swish to help protect your stock



Husk vaccination is due this month.