



HIGHGATE VETERINARY CLINIC— Farmer Newsletter

January 2010

173 Highgate
Kendal
LA9 4EN
Tel. 01539 721344
www.highgate-vets.co.uk

Clinic opening times

Monday—Friday

8.30am—7.30pm

Saturday

9.00am—12.30am

Sunday

emergencies only

Highgate
Veterinary
Clinic
wishes you
a healthy
and
prosperous
2010

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Open Farmer Meeting on Dry Cow Transition

Tuesday 12th January

1.30pm – 3.30pm

Crooklands Hotel

This free meeting will help dairy farmers understand the importance of correct dry cow management, both whilst dry and the transitional period prior to and directly after calving.

The speaker will be Richard Vecqueray from Evidence Based Veterinary Consultancy. The company was founded in 2006 by Richard Vecqueray and James Husband, they are both veterinary surgeons who have specialised in the nutrition of dairy cows, they each have over eight years experience in clinical veterinary practice before focusing solely on consultancy and training.

They now use their unique position as veterinary surgeons with nutritional expertise to take a 'whole

farm' overview of your enterprise; concentrating on not just the outputs and the inputs but also the losses and the missed opportunities.

This free meeting is part of the **Northwest Livestock Programme**, being organised by Cumbria Farmer Network, so please come along, for what we hope will be a useful and lively discussion about dry cow management.

To book a place or for further information please contact Robert Burrow on 01524 822454 or email robertburrow04@btinternet.com

To find out more about how the Northwest Livestock Programme could benefit your business, including attracting a grant of up to £12,000, please contact Mark Stott.

New vet — Marcelle Cassar

We are delighted to announce that Marcelle Cassar is joining the veterinary team at Highgate on a permanent basis, following a period of locuming to cover Liz's maternity leave in 2009.

Marcelle is an experienced vet and has worked in both small animal and mixed practices in and around Kendal and the South Lakes for the past 20 years, venturing abroad for a spell working for the MSPCA in

Mauritius in the mid-90's.

Marcelle has plenty of experience in large animal medicine but will mostly be working with our small animals; so you are most likely to meet her on out of hours and weekend call outs.

Liz Dodd has returned from maternity leave, so along with Marcelle's arrival we now have a 7-strong veterinary team.

Lambing preparation

Many of you will be in the most important period of the sheep breeding calendar - the weeks leading up to lambing time. Nationally, 15-25% of the lamb crop is lost around lambing and according to SAC figures, the biggest influence you have on your income is how many lambs you sell. So how are you going to reduce your lambing losses to a target of lets say 5%?

Here are a few points to think about:

Ewe nutrition

In the last 6 weeks of pregnancy, the ewe's demand for energy increases and her appetite decreases as the lambs inside her grow. Poor feeding can lead to twin lamb disease, low lamb birth weights, weakly lambs unable to suck, poor milk production and poor quality colostrum. Therefore lots of dead lambs or at least lots of extra work!

The presentation of feed has a strong influence on nutrition. If you're feeding the ewes with cake, allow at least 18" of trough space per ewe. If this isn't possible in housed ewes, feed them on clean bedding. Outside snackers are better than troughs as you don't limit trough space and the feeding area can be changed easily each day so improving hygiene.

Condition scoring ewes six weeks before the start of lambing helps to identify ewes with poor body reserves but it doesn't identify how adequate your feeding will be leading up to lambing.

Forage qualities vary from year to year, and with this year's harsh weather your ewes are likely to require more hay and cake than last year. Blood sampling 3 weeks before lambing is a useful but underused tool to check that the sheep are getting enough before it's too late.

Twin lamb disease

Ewes carrying twins and triplets have greater energy demands and less appetite than those carrying singles. They use their body fat but this can soon run out. Poisons called ketones appear in the blood leading to the usual clinical signs. Often the lambs die due to starvation and their rotting bodies add to the toxins.

Treatment is often unrewarding but includes oral propalin glycol, vitamin and steroid injections. You'll get the odd ewe who develops the disease but if you get several, this may indicate the flock as a whole is low in energy. A simple a reasonably safe emergency measure is to feed treacle ad lib to all the ewes.

This Month:

- Calf scour is common at the moment. Ensure that all calves receive at least 6 pints of colostrum in the first 6 hours of life.
- Look out for calf pneumonia.
- If sway back occurs on your farm, give copper supplementation to sheep in mid pregnancy.