

# Newsletter

# February 2022

Winter so far has been very kind, lets hope we don't pay for that as we get closer to lambing/calving season. This month we are focusing on lambing and trying to ease many of your fears surrounding the lack of a well loved product. Also looking forward to our selective rotation teaching and hoping to boost our on farm offerings for these farm focused students.

## Product Updates

### Spectam

With the discontinuation of Spectam a number of clients are understandably concerned about the options for the upcoming lambing season. Prophylactic antibiotics can have a place in the prevention of some neonatal diseases in lambs, when used alongside other management practices. Within the practice we have some options to replace Spectam use. **Give us a call to discuss your individual farm requirements.**

### Scabivax

Scabivax will soon be undergoing a change in manufacturers. Although it is not expected that this will impact supply we would encourage all of our clients who currently use this product to contact Ali as soon as possible to let her know how many doses you will need this year, and the date you expect to need them. This will mean we can plan in advance our orders in case there is a problem with supply during the transition period.

## Blood testing prelambing to assess nutritional status

Getting ewe nutrition right in late pregnancy is key to a successful lambing. The aim is for ewes to produce vigorous healthy lambs, with plenty of good quality colostrum to get the lambs off to the best possible start. Problems with nutrition can also result in twin-lamb disease, hypocalcaemia and other conditions that take up precious time during lambing.

With one chance to get it right, checking that ewe nutrition is working as planned in late pregnancy is critical. Body condition scoring remains a key tool, and getting your hands on to check ewe BCS when the ewes are handled (for their Clostridial vaccine booster or at housing for example) is important. However blood sampling ewes in late pregnancy is also valuable to check on energy, protein and major mineral status,

and can help assess that all is going according to plan as lambing approaches. Any problems can be swiftly identified and corrected before they impact on ewe and lamb health at lambing time.

The ideal time to blood sample to check on nutritional status is 3-4 weeks off the start of lambing, which leaves enough time to get the results back and make any changes in nutrition before lambing starts. If the ewes are scanned and being fed according to lamb number, then a minimum of five ewes should be sampled from each group (singles, twins, triplets and gimmers). If the ewes are unscanned, then blood sampling twenty sheep is needed to get an accurate picture of the group nutritional status. The ewes should be settled on the diet for 10-14 days prior to the blood samples being taken, as any recent changes in diet or housing may upset the blood test results.

Please ring the FAP to speak to one of the vets about the benefits of pre-lambing blood testing of your ewes, or book a time for one of the vets to come out and take the blood samples.





## Changes to Red Tractor Standards Requirements.

Red Tractor have recently updated their standards so that all farming enterprises must now have at least one member of staff who has attended an approved training course on the Responsible Use of Medicines.

The Farm Animal Practice have had their training course approved so we are now able to provide training to any of our clients that require it. Even if you are not Red Tractor assured we believe that this is an important aspect of staff training and that QMS will soon make this a requirement for their farms too.

Although we are able to provide this training on a one to one, on farm basis this would incur a visit and vet time charge. We are therefore planning to hold group training sessions in the near future for a significantly reduced cost. Approximate costs will be £25 for the first person and £15 for each additional person from the same farm. Food and drink will also be provided.

If you or other members of your farm team would be interested in attending one of these sessions then please give us a call at the practice, 0131 445 4468 and we will start making a list and looking for suitable dates. If you can also indicate your 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> preference for either a morning, lunchtime or afternoon session then that would allow to accommodate those requirements too.

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## Update on final year vet student teaching

**A big thank you to you from all of us in the farm animal team for supporting the next generation of vets.** We couldn't have had 2 (nearly 3) cohorts of vet students graduate without your support through bringing cases to the farm animal hospital and receiving students back on farm visits as part of their veterinary education. Students gain a lot from applying their clinical knowledge in the real world, but some have found it difficult to gain additional work experience on farm or in farm clinical practice.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, our vet students have been very adaptable to making the most of developing their farm animal clinical skills. In addition to live animal classes, students have been using new clinical simulators to support development of essential skills for clinical practice. For example; rubber cow backsides(!) for replacing a prolapse, virtual farm health planning on iPads and practical classes led by experienced students mentoring earlier year students.

Of course, there is no substitute for get their hands dirty on farm. As hopefully the Omicron situation continues to improve, we aim to get final year vet students out more on farm. All students will continue to wear masks and have signed a student contract to do everything they can to minimise contracting COVID-19 (e.g. regular (2 weekly) testing and being fully vaccinated). Where feasible, we aim to continue to take between 1-2 students per farm call. For students interested in going into farm animal practice, over spring we hope to bring larger groups of students (6-8 students) out in the minibus for herd or flock investigations. If you are interested in hosting these larger students for specific investigations, such as metabolic profiling or disease control audits, please get in touch with Rob or Ali at the practice to arrange.

