



## Newsletter

With spring just around the corner, it is appropriate to discuss some considerations for lambing and calving. In this edition Amy talks about the costs associated with veterinary intervention at lambing and Andy highlights the importance of cleanliness in the lambing and calving areas.

We currently have a locum working in the practice, Marissa Robson. Marissa has been working in dedicated farm animal practice for a number of years and has an interest in ruminant nutrition. She's assisting us while we await a replacement for Martin and to cover for Kim while she recuperates from breaking her leg.

## Costings of lambing

With lambing and calving approaching Ali is making sure that the surgery kits are all piled up and ready to go for caesarean season. We all hope that ewes and cows lamb and calve themselves unassisted, but inevitably sometimes things go wrong. **Early veterinary intervention** for dystocia in ewes and gimmers will improve both ewe and lamb survival, and apart from maximising welfare for both the ewe and the lambs, is likely to be a good choice economically. Many cases of dystocia presented to us greatly benefit from the use of an epidural. However, many animals also require a caesarean. If we are involved early this will greatly improve the success of this procedure.



The following table outlines the approximate costs associated with caesareans, lambings and vaginal prolapses in sheep for Spring 2017. All prices are for straightforward procedures and include drugs.

Caesarean	Inc.VAT	Ex.VAT
Day Visit	£126	£106
Night Visit	£151	£126
Hospital	£75	£67
Lambing	Inc. VAT	Ex. VAT
Day Visit	£85	£71
Night Visit	£110	£91
Hospital	£45	£37
Vaginal prolapse	Inc.VAT	Ex.VAT
Day Visit	£66	£53
Night Visit	£88	£74
Hospital	£30	£24

With prompt intervention, there is an increased likelihood of retrieving live lambs by caesarean section. When the costs of a live lamb and live ewe are considered, caesarean sections are economical.

We are happy to treat ewes with vaginal prolapses at the hospital. The costs include an epidural which can reduce straining for up to 48 hours and makes a big difference to the success of the replacement. You can leave the ewe with us and pick her up later.



## Clean accommodation during calving and lambing season

It is important to get off to a good start in life. We all know the importance of new born calves and lambs receiving adequate colostrum in order to receive antibodies essential for survival, but as well as getting goodness in, we need to keep badness out, and hygienic calving or lambing accommodation is essential. When calves and lambs are born there are microscopic gaps between the cells of the intestine, these gaps, which are closed by 24 hours old, allow antibodies in colostrum to go directly into the animals, so they can receive immunity. Unfortunately bacteria can also pass through the same gaps, putting newborns at a very high risk of septicaemia. Treatment of septicaemia can be costly, requiring IV fluids and drugs, must be undertaken immediately, and does not carry a good prognosis. Diarrhoea, navel ill and joint ill are all spread in unhygienic conditions and have a significant impact on profitability and welfare.



Purple or red gums, as seen in the picture above, may be a sign of life threatening septicaemia



Clean accommodation reduces the risk of a newborn's first meal being a mouthful of dung. Calving accommodation should be thoroughly cleaned prior to the start of the calving period, bedded frequently (between each occupant), and if practical, cleaned out during the calving period or changed to a different area. Pathogens build up during the calving period and later born calves are much more likely to become ill or die than those born at the start. Lambing accommodation should be cleaned out after every ewe and can be disinfected by sprayer or using paraformaldehyde powder. Cows and ewes also need to be kept in clean conditions prior to giving birth so that udders are clean and free from pathogens that could enter the calf with the first suck.



These measures may increase labour and bedding costs but you will be repaid through reduced losses and medicine bills.