

# Newsletter

# May 2018

Following the challenging start to the year hopefully the sunshine is here to stay for a little while, at least until the crops need some rain! This month Paul looks back on a lambing course that was run in the hospital and Andy talks about his recent trip to India.

## Farm Animal Practice: Practical Lambing Training

Despite the problematic weather, a number of intrepid clients managed to make it to the Farm Animal Hospital for the Practice's first (hopefully of many) practical training sessions.

The event started off at midday with a light lunch and refreshments (slightly excess quantities due to reduced numbers – but the out of hours students covering the next few days were very grateful!). This was then followed by a talk discussing both ewe and lamb management as well as common lambing problems and how, and when, to intervene.



With the snow visible through the window getting heavier and heavier we swiftly moved through to our Hospital surgical area for practical training. Attendees spent their time on stations where

they could practice elastrator band placement (tail docking and castration), intraperitoneal injections of glucose, oesophageal tube placement for feeding lambs, lambing rope and head snare placement and

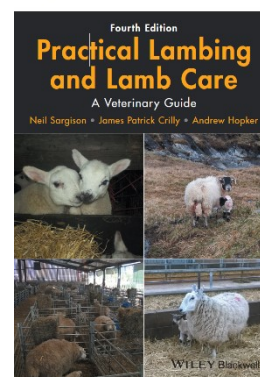
the use of a lambing simulator to attempt to correct common lambing malpresentations.

Many thanks to all our attendees who went home, not only full of new lambing knowledge and skills, but with a goodie bag full of information and gifts from Norbrook and some items to help with their forthcoming lambing period.

We would also like to thank Kim Hamer, who despite having finished her time at the Practice, came back to help Paul deliver the training.



Although lambing will be coming to an end this year, we are pleased to bring to your attention an excellent book which may be of use in the future - **Practical Lambing and Lamb Care, 4th edition.**



The definitive guide for sheep farmers, shepherds and veterinary students written by our own team of the world renowned Professor Neil Sargison together with former sheep resident James Patrick Crilly and practice vet and lecturer Andy Hopker.

## Goatpox vaccination drive in Assam, North East India

During October 2017 a team from The R(D)SVS Farm Animal Practice and The Corbett Foundation unexpectedly identified an outbreak of Goatpox virus spreading in the villages around the Kaziranga National Park in Assam. Goatpox is a highly contagious disease characterised by firm swellings all over the body, erosions of the skin around the nose and mouth, discharges and high temperatures, the virus is related to Lumpy Skin Disease in cattle. Description of Goatpox in textbooks often quote a 10% case fatality rate, however this outbreak appears to be much more serious, with approximately 90% of all goats in affected villages dying. This has had a particularly severe effect on the village inhabitants, as farmers in the region tend to make little use of bank accounts and instead keep money as goats, selling them when they need money for school fees, human medical bills, and other family emergencies.

Initially the team advised the farmers to confine all affected goats to their home premises (goats commonly wander villages, browsing available fodder) and that their keepers should wash their hands and sandals with a disinfectant solution after tending them. This resulted in an immediate reduction in the spread of disease. The team then consulted with farmers on how to proceed to protect productivity and animal welfare in a sustainable manner. It was decided to start a farmer led vaccination drive, with farmers taking ownership of the project. The Forest Department of Kaziranga (a State government ministry responsible for environmental and forestry matters) accepted our invitation to partner us in the programme. Farmers have to arrange for the team to visit their village, present their animals and pay half of the cost of the vaccination, approximately 5 rupees (slight more than 5 UK pence) per animal and remaining half of the cost would come from The Corbett Foundation. The Corbett Foundation and The Forest Department of Kaziranga, working with The Farm Animal Practice would provide the staff to administer the vaccine, the needles and syringes and procure the vaccine. During a Farm Animal Practice visit to the region in February the programme was

rolled out, with the goats of the first village contacted being vaccinated. It is hoped that the project will be a success and be rolled out in many more villages, and repeated year on year.

Farmer- led interventions are important to ensure the sustainability of programmes and engage the benefiting farmers as active participants. Farmer groups who take ownership of the projects will engage their neighbours and ensure the success of the programme in years to come. Farmers paying for their own vaccine is an essential part of the process, as well as helping to make the programme sustainable it gives value to the procedure, and allows farmers to take pride in the results.



Goat suffering from Goat Pox showing classic raised lumps



Hopker family on a vaccination drive in Assam, India



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