



AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2012

Dear Client

Welcome to the autumn edition of the practice newsletter which is also available on the website www.afonvets.co.uk.

The unsettled weather has remained a persistent feature over the last few months frustrating many clients' attempts to bring in the silage on time. First cuts have been delayed with no hope of second cut on many farms. Silage analysis will be vital to help you plan your winter feeding program.

We have attached a parasite forecast update for the coming autumn with fluke unsurprisingly coming high on the agenda, but be aware of lungworm in calves although it is late in the season.

During the Autumn we will be very busy on pre-movement testing in suckled calves so please book your visit in plenty of time!

We have continued over the summer to work in conjunction with a number of farms on the farming connect Faecal egg counting program and will report our findings at a meeting to be held later in the autumn.

AFON VETS STOCK CLUB AUTUMN MEETING

'PREVENTING PNEUMONIA IN HOUSED AUTUMN CALVES'
SPONSORED BY FARMING CONNECT
GLYNCLYDACH COACH HOUSE
WEDNESDAY SEPT 26TH 7.30 PM
LIGHT REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE

Hybu Cig Cymru has produced a series of **free** booklets which are easy to read on a whole range of practical issues including flock/herd health planning, nutrition, winter feeding, grassland management and specific disease control.

For more details please contact us at the surgery or HCC on tel 01970 625050 or visit www.hccmpw.org.uk to download the guides.

SHEEP NEWS

Remember you do not need to blanket worm all you ewes pre tugging. Be selective in your approach and worm drench only ewes in below target condition and immature ewes. Fit, well fed ewes have good immune control of worms and will only require a fluke drench.

This autumn all sheep clients would be well advised to review their fluke control program in the light of increasing cases of resistance to fasinex (triclabendazole) now proven to occur in flocks in the UK when in doubt we would always advise test dosing for resistance if sheep fail to respond to a fluke dose and pick up in condition within a few weeks. **All flocks in the practice should be treated for fluke in September.** Traditionally triclabendazole (fasinex) is the drug of choice at this time of the year as it is effective against very young immature fluke. Over the last 2 years we have found increasing evidence of resistance to triclabendazole on sheep units and a number of clients have switched to using closantel (flukiver). This product is not as effective in dealing with immature flukes so we would advise a further treatment six weeks after the first.

The pattern in recent years for the Autumn has been mild and damp this has continued to catch clients out with lambs still out grazing being exposed to significant pasture parasite burdens. Whether you do need to worm late lambs or not can be easily determined from Faecal egg counting available at the practice.

IDEAL CONDITION SCORE FOR TUPPING

HILL EWE	3
HILL TUP	3-3.5
LOWLAND EWE	3.5
LOWLAND TUP	3-3.5

AMS

Testicles -2 of course, equal in size, firm to squeeze and freely moving in the scrotum

Scrotal circumference 30-40 cm in hill tups

Check the penis for signs of damage or scarring

Check the feet for excessive paring and signs of foot lesions especially CODD which we are seeing more frequently (for images visit www.footrotinsheep.org)

Check the mouth -incisors and molars

Condition score the tup: Remember it takes 4 weeks to increase condition score by 0.5

Check brisket for sores and ulcers

Check around head and neck area for evidence of abscess scarring which may be indicative of Caseous lymphadenitis –DO NOT BUY

Rams attain peak fertility between 2-5 years of age and most semen used to fertilise ewes in the first 3 weeks of tugging is produced around 3weeks before tugging commences so keep your rams in peak condition.

All sheep returning home from sales should be fluke dosed, wormed according to the **SCOPS** guidelines, treated for lice and scab, foot bathed and isolated for at least 21days prior to entry into the flock. Remember to check on vaccine status of all bought in replacements.

Now is also the time to your ewes for trace element levels to allow supplementation if needed before the tugging season commences - don't waste your money on needless drenches - test the ewes!

Remember that it is important to maintain ewes in steady condition in the 6 weeks post tugging period to prevent embryonic loss.

If you are purchasing store lambs ensure they are wormed on arrival and checked for scab and lice.All should receive oral cobalt and selenium doses for 2/3 doses at 3/4 week intervals post arrival .Vaccinal status for clostridial diseases should also be checked if in doubt repeat the vaccination program.

CATTLE NEWS

Grass growth has been rapid over the last few weeks but with the very wet grass cows need to eat nearly twice as much just to consume their required dry matter intake.

Maintaining your Spring calvers condition at grass this autumn will be difficult to achieve up till housing but if you can do it, this will allow you to manage them more economically over the winter period. Ideally spring calvers should

calve down condition score 2.5-3 which ensures they calve down with less calving problems like assisted calvings and retained afterbirth. If you let your cows go too far back now then it will cost you dear in terms of additional feeding to pick them back up over the winter housing period. Just adding one condition score (approx 80 kilos) on to a cow will take up to **3 tonnes** of silage.

If you have Autumn calvers with calves at foot and limited forage this autumn then creep feeding is advisable for the calves, as it will ensure cows lose less condition and prepare the calves for their winter ration including a reduction in stress at weaning which is often a significant stressor in terms of development of calf pneumonia at housing.

I have never been convinced of the efficacy of high magnesium lick buckets due to the variation in intake and would certainly recommend the use of magnesium boluses on any farm with a history of grass staggers at risky times of the year

In order to be profitable you will need to function at maximum efficiency and the key of this is reproductive efficiency. Too many farmers rely on extended breeding and extended calving seasons and this can hide real problems of poor conception rates and prolonged periods of no cycling. For **maximum efficiency** cows must produce a calf per year at an interval calving interval of close to 365 days with a **restricted breeding season**(10 weeks is the ideal)

Last year we carried out several caesarean sections on heifers that were just under **13**months of age, heifer calves it would seem are starting to cycle at a lower age, this autumn we would **strongly advise all clients to inject heifer calves at weaning with prostaglandin** and to keep them separate from all entire bull calves or bull! Until sold

Lungworm may still be about in youngstock given the mild and wet conditions we have seen so far in the Autumn period. We are seeing increased uptake of calf vaccines against pneumonia prior to winter housing and in the practice it seems that pasturella is the main culprit of pneumonia cases we see particularly in Autumn born calves after housing.

A return to wet conditions later in the Autumn will increase the risk of type 2 Ostertagiasis next spring-so remember to treat all calves at housing with an anthelmintic dose from Group 3 (ie ivermectin type). Fluke doses to cattle should be given at least 2 weeks after housing if using triclabendazole (fasinex) to ensure all immature fluke are killed off.

That brings this edition of the newsletter to a close, we hope to see you at our program of talks over the coming autumn season.

The farm vet team at Afon vets

Farming Connect will be holding an Open Event on 2nd October 11-2pm at Marcross Farm, Llantwit Major CF61 1ZG with Jamie Robertson, a highly regarded livestock housing specialist from Aberdeen. Jamie believes that around half of all naturally ventilated cattle buildings, old and new, are not fit for purpose, and the day will aim to provide a better understanding of the design issues that impact positively and negatively on animal health, as well as providing practical solutions to typical problems. Jamie will present design guidelines for a new build young stock shed at Marcross and there will be an opportunity to view and discuss the functioning of the existing livestock sheds. A warm welcome to all