

## Vet's Viewpoint - Claerwen



Spring has sprung with the oak tree leaves finally coming out and I was discussing with Liz the differential diagnosis table we

made for sheep years ago which made the differentiation between twin lamb disease, milk fever (hypocalcaemia) and staggers (hypomagnesaemia) in sheep really clear, and also clarifies which of each of the different injectable calcium and magnesium products to use and how. I thought I would share it with you. If you have sheep cut it out and stick it in the back of your medicines book or in the medicine cupboard. If you need a larger print version, please contact the office.

|                                | Hypocalcaemia  | Hypomagnesaemia (grass staggers)  | Pregnancy toxemia (ketosis)   | Other notes              |
|--------------------------------|--|---|---|--------------------------|
| <b>Timing</b>                  | Mainly pre-lambing, often seen just after moving or change in diet.  | Mainly seen in lactation, can see in late pregnancy   | In late pregnancy only  |                          |
| <b>Risk factors</b>            | Stress, late pregnancy or high milk yield, interruption to food intake   | Stress, lush grass (esp. if recently fertilised with potash), high calcium soils, interruption to food intake   | Very fat or thin ewes more at risk, multiple lambs carried, other diseases (e.g. fluke, haemonchosis), diet not providing enough energy   |                          |
| <b>Recognising the disease</b> | Ewe weak, lies down on front, legs out behind, neck outstretched, increased shallow breathing, rumen contents at the nostrils, bloated appearance, ears feel cold, hypothermic, pupils dilated. Death occurs within hours. | Jerky gait, excitable, twitchy, becomes recumbent on side, convulsions. Death can occur within minutes.   | Ewe separates herself from group, fine tremors of face, appears blind, goes off food (off hard feed first), becomes recumbent on front, bloated abdomen. Worsens over days, will eventually die.  |                          |
| <b>Treatment:</b>              |  |   |   |                          |
| Calciject 6                    | 60-80 ml   | 60-80 ml  | 60-80 ml  | Never give into the vein |
| Calciject 5                    | 40-50 ml   | N/A   | 40-50 ml  |                          |
| Magniject                      | N/A  | 40-50 ml  | N/A   | Never give into the vein |
| Calcibel                       | 60-100 ml  | 60-100 ml   | 60-80 ml  |                          |
| <b>Other treatment tips</b>    | Warm before injecting, split subcutaneous injection over several sites, should respond within 4 hrs if diagnosis correct.  | Warm before injecting, split subcutaneous injection over several sites, should respond within 2 hrs if diagnosis correct. Minimise disturbance to reduce fitting (and so reduce risk of death before treatment kicks in). | House, give a single injection of Metacam, offer many different feeds to encourage to eat, ensure water within easy reach, give 120ml Ewe Go orally twice a day on day 1, 60-80 ml twice a day after that for 3 days. Can take days to recover. |                          |

## Sheep and Goats

- Clients have reported to us they are already seeing flystrike cases, so be aware! There is evidence that if you are in a high flystrike risk area, and are shearing in June/July, that it is beneficial to apply a pour-on product after lambing to protect your adult sheep until shearing.
- Remember that lambs can be vaccinated against clostridial disease (e.g. using Heptavac P Plus) from 3 weeks of age. If you vaccinate at 4 weeks and 8 weeks then there is no "gap" in protection between maternally derived antibodies fading and the lamb's own levels becoming protective.
- Do you have sheep in the "staggers band"? We have a strip of ground in the practice, that lies just to the north of the North Wessex Downs (i.e. running from west of Wantage across to Cholsey), that seems to be particularly high-risk for hypomagnesaemia. Make sure you recognise the signs as prompt treatment is life-saving. Order your Magniject from us, and find out more about it here: [bit.ly/Farm-Health-Online](http://bit.ly/Farm-Health-Online)
- More ewes than expected empty at the end of lambing? This may be due to infectious causes of abortion, some of which we can detect by blood sampling these empty ewes. Ring us to discuss it.
- With the weather warming up, the period of low midge activity is drawing to an end, which means we are likely to see the return of Bluetongue-3 this summer. Vaccination of sheep prior to the period of greatest risk is the best way (currently) of reducing potential losses due to BTV-3 infection. There is information here: [bit.ly/SVS-BTV3-guidance](http://bit.ly/SVS-BTV3-guidance) and a good way of assessing your BTV-3 risk here: [bit.ly/BTV3-Vaccination-Options](http://bit.ly/BTV3-Vaccination-Options).



## Cattle - Clostridial Disease in Spring

As we head into the spring months, it's important to keep an eye on the increased risk of clostridial disease outbreaks in livestock. Spring brings with it a change in environmental conditions, such as rising temperatures and abundant fresh pasture, which can trigger the proliferation of Clostridium bacteria. With this warmer, dry weather and poorer grass growth, animals will be grazing closer to the ground which could further increase likelihood of exposure. This can lead to potentially fatal conditions like Blackleg, Tetanus, and Pulpy Kidney in cattle. Clostridial bacteria thrive in the gut and tissues of livestock, often lying dormant until conditions are right for them to multiply rapidly. The stress of transport, changes in diet, or the sudden switch to lush spring grass can all predispose animals to these infections.

Unfortunately, the onset of clinical signs can be rapid and severe, leaving little time for intervention. The best defence against clostridial diseases is vaccination. Spring is an ideal time to ensure that your animals are up-to-date with their clostridial vaccination schedules, especially young stock that may not have received boosters.

For cattle, a two-dose vaccination program followed by annual boosters is typically recommended with Bravoxin.

For more guidance on clostridial disease and vaccination protocols or any questions, please get in touch with us.





## Dairy - Johnes Disease Update

As you may have seen, a new phase of the National Johnes Management Plan (NJMP) has been launched recently. These changes will apply to almost all dairies as the plan is a requirement of Red Tractor as well as most other milk buyer schemes. Key changes can be seen below:

- All herds must obtain an Average Test Value (ATV) for their herd to help assess the level of disease present and allow progress to be tracked over time.
- If all cows are tested for Johnes disease through milk recording, an ATV can be calculated automatically from these results.

- The minimum requirement to generate an ATV will be a 60 cow random screen. The 30 cow targeted screen is no longer an acceptable option. Guidance on how to conduct a random 60 cow screen can be found on the Action Johnes website: [bit.ly/Johnes-Protocol](https://bit.ly/Johnes-Protocol)
- The creation of a national Johnes Control Index (JCI) target of ATV 5.5 with a goal to achieve this by 2030.
- The ability, through the creation of a national Johnes Tracker database, to track progress nationally using ATV, % incidence and other drivers of infection within herds.

If you have questions about Johnes disease and its management on your farm, speak to your routine vet.



## Pigs

- Pigs thrive within a specific temperature range called the thermal comfort zone
- Maintaining proper temperature improves growth, feed efficiency, and animal welfare
- Temperature requirements change as the pig grows with smaller pigs being more susceptible to chilling and larger pigs being less tolerant of the heat
- Newborn piglets need 30–34°C, while finishing pigs prefer 18–21°C
- Too hot? Pigs reduce feed intake and grow slower

- Too cold? They eat more but use energy for warmth, not growth
- Air temperature requirements are affected by environmental factors such as flooring (straw bedding provides good insulation compared to a slatted floor), air speed (draughts can cause chilling), stocking density etc.
- Observing the lying behaviour of pigs within their pen is important. If lying heaped or huddled, they are too cold. Temperature checks should be daily and fans, heaters, ventilation adjusted accordingly.
- Comfortable pigs = healthier pigs = better growth!

## Mastering Medicines

## Workshops

Farm Assurance Guidelines recommend that at least one member of each farm team has undertaken training (within the last 5 years) and holds a certificate in administering medicines. This workshop will:

- Improve knowledge of different medicines available on farm and improve decision making
- Allow you to safely administer medicines to animals under your care
- Record medicine use in accordance with legislation
- Store and maintain medicines on farm in accordance with legislation and farm assurance requirements.
- Describe the difference between vaccines and treatments and the different legislative classes including antibiotics
- Describe the basic classes of anthelmintics and the need for veterinary or SQP guidance on their use
- Understand the actions of an NSAID and when they should be used
- Understand the responsibility of those administering medicines to farm animals

Certificate of attendance provided (£75 per person). Available to all dairy, beef and sheep farmers. Please register interest with the office: [farm@larkmead.co.uk](mailto:farm@larkmead.co.uk).

## Medicine Updates

- Betamox RTU 100ml- very limited stock
- Closamectin Pour On 500ml - OOS
- Gletvax 10d- OOS, 20d available
- Heptavac 50ml- No date (let us know if you are waiting for this)
- Heptavac 100ml- Very limited stock
- Heptavac 250ml- OOS no date
- Heptavac 500ml- OOS no date
- Ovivac P Plus (100ml/500ml) – OOS no date
- Spotinor 250ml- Not due back this season
- Suvaxyn MH One – Limited stock available
- Synulox 100ml Inj- OOS until end of 2025
- Spirovac (all sizes) - OOS till July
- Syvazul 80ml/200ml - Limited stock

*Please note that all bit.ly links are case sensitive*

