



[info@northparkvets.co.uk](mailto:info@northparkvets.co.uk)

**NORTH TAWTON**  
Tel: 01837 82327  
**OKEHAMPTON**  
Tel: 01837 658777  
**HATHERLEIGH**  
Tel: 01837 810455



## JANUARY 2020 NEWSLETTER

### FARMER MEETING – MAXIMISING EFFICIENCY ON BEEF SUCKLER FARMS

Agriculture in the UK is changing. With Brexit, Single Farm Payments from the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) will end and future subsidies – if provided – are likely to be linked to environmental policies. The dairy industry is increasingly using sexed semen on their best animals to produce enough replacement heifers, with all other cows being bred to beef. As a result, there is an increasing supply of dairy x beef calves entering the market. All of this is putting pressure onto beef suckler farms – before we even consider rising costs of production and often decreasing prices paid for your cattle. As a result of these pressures it is absolutely essential to improve and maximize efficiencies on beef suckler farms to ensure viability. The good news is that there is plenty of room to do this on most farms!

Join us at **7pm on TUESDAY 11<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY at Okehampton Rugby Club** to discuss this topic and learn about ways to seek efficiencies. We will discuss:

- improving and maximising fertility, including the importance of a tight calving block and how to achieve this;
- reducing calf losses at birth through pelvic measuring heifers and using EBVs for bull selection;
- reducing neonatal disease;
- ...and much more!

**“Pie and Pint” will be provided so booking is ESSENTIAL** – please book through any of the branch surgeries.

### REMINDER – LAMBING COURSE 21st JANUARY 2020

Join us at the North Tawton surgery on Tuesday 21st January 2020 at 10:30 for our hands-on practical lambing course. Topics covered include:

- Getting prepared for lambing
  - What equipment and drugs should you have at hand?
  - The importance of correctly feeding the pregnant ewe.
- The theory of correcting difficult presentations before putting this into action with our practical lambing simulator.
- Maximising lamb survival – preventing and treating neonatal disease.



All of this is available at £40+VAT per person. Booking is ESSENTIAL – please contact any of the branches to book your space. Pasty and refreshments provided (let us know of any dietary requirements when booking). The course usually finishes around 3pm. Please remember to bring clean wellies and overalls for the practical session.

**REMINDER – JON HERROD-TAYLOR** has a party for his retirement which is open to all his current and previous clients. The party will be held on **Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> January at 19.30 at Hatherleigh Community Centre**. Please RSVP to [info@equusvets.co.uk](mailto:info@equusvets.co.uk) / 01837 214004 / 01837 82327 if you would like to attend.

## SHOULD WE WORM EWES AT LAMBING TIME?

Previous advice has been to worm all ewes at lambing/turn out to prevent the ewes contaminating the pasture which would otherwise result in infecting the lambs. However, the current advice from SCOPS (sustainable control of parasites in sheep) is now to only **target treat ewes**. This follows the research “An observational study of ewe treatments at lambing on early infection in lambs on UK sheep farms” – *Learmount and others, 2017*. This is summarised below:

- The study was performed on 16 UK commercial sheep farms ranging in flock size of 80-1200 ewes.
- Ewes were either treated or not treated, with a mixture of short and long acting treatments being used in the treated group. This was done for three consecutive years (2012, 2013 and 2014).
- There was no difference in lamb worm egg counts at 10-16 weeks of age based on whether the ewe had been treated or not.
- There was an effect of year (lower counts 2014 vs. 2012).
- There was no difference between the type of wormer used, the region within the UK or farm type on the subsequent lamb worm egg counts.

This research has since been repeated on several farms with similar outcomes. Ewes should be target treated based on body condition score (thin ewes treated), dag score (dirtiness around hind quarters), and age (ewe lambs treated as they have less immunity). For more information please speak to any of the farm team.

## PROTECT YOUR LAMBS – CLOSTRIDIAL & PASTEURELLA VACCINES

**Clostridia** are a type of bacteria, found in soil, which release toxins that are almost always **fatal**. Diseases include Pulpy Kidney, Black Leg, Black's Disease, Tetanus and many others. Of main concern in lambs is **Pulpy Kidney** which causes sudden death and usually affects the best growing lambs. **Pasteurella** is another type of bacteria which typically causes **pneumonia**, but also **septicaemia** (blood poisoning). It is carried on nearly all sheep's tonsils, yet is the biggest killer of sheep; animals succumb to infection when stressed or if their immunity is compromised.

Lambs can be protected by **vaccinating ewes 4-6 weeks before lambing**. The ewe produces antibodies in response to vaccination which are passed to newborn lambs through **colostrum**. This is known as 'passive' protection and lasts until the lamb can itself be vaccinated from three weeks of age. There are many different vaccines available for these diseases – speak to any of the vets for more information as to which will be best for your farm.

**THE CURRENT TB SITUATION** – we are regularly asked about this and Sophie has had a look at the most recent figures:

- On 60 day testing = 8.5% of our farms
- Recently gone clear, awaiting a 6 month check test = 7.5% of our farms
- Clear and on annual testing = 84% of our farms



This is around the same as last year, maybe just a little bit better. It is too early to determine whether badger culling is having any impact – we will need 3-4 years worth of data as there have always been some years better than others.

**Remember** – advice surrounding TB can be found on the TBAS website ([www.tbas.org.uk](http://www.tbas.org.uk)) and Elske is approved to perform a free farm visit to discuss your situation and provide recommendations to try and improve the situation.



“Like” North Park Veterinary Farm and follow us Instagram [@northparkfarmvets](https://www.instagram.com/northparkfarmvets) for regular updates

