



**CASTLE  
VETERINARY  
GROUP**

# Farm newsletter

Tel: 01566 772371 [www.castleveterinarygroup.co.uk](http://www.castleveterinarygroup.co.uk)



## February 2023

In March, vet Sarah is hosting a charity farm open day, in support of the Cornwall Stroke Rehabilitation Team. It would be fantastic to see some familiar faces so do please pop along – and tell anyone who might be interested about it!

**FOR CORNWALLS STROKE REHABILITATION TEAM.**

**OPEN FARM**

WE LOOK FORWARD TO MEETING EWE!

**FERRY FARM**  
HAREWOOD, CALSTOCK  
PL18 9SQ  
SIGNS FROM ST.ANDREWS CHURCH

**SATURDAY**  
**18 MARCH**  
10AM - 4PM

**£5 per person, under 3's go free**  
Refreshments Included

VISIT OUR SHEEP MATERNITY BARN -  
YOU MAY BE LUCKY ENOUGH TO SEE A LAMB BORN!

11AM AND 2PM, FARM WALK AND TALK

**FAMILY ACTIVITIES AND RAFFLE**

All funds and donations raised will go to the  
**Stroke Rehabilitation Team of the Cornwall Partnership Foundation Trust,**  
in recognition and thanks of their support to us.

PLEASE WEAR CLEAN WELLIES AND USE DISINFECTANT FOOT DIP PROVIDED  
NO DOGS | FIELD PARKING (SHORT WALK)

## Cash Sales

When you order meds from surgery & they are booked to your cash sale account you have **3 DAYS TO PAY** in order to qualify for the discount. If payment is not received in that time the meds will automatically be transferred to your main account at the full monthly rate. You will no longer receive a phone call reminding you that payment needs to be made before this happens.

## Colostrum – more important now than ever

Everyone wants thriving lambs this time of year, and colostrum is a key component in that! In addition, the withdrawal of Spectam from the market and a shortage of strong iodine is putting more pressure than ever on ensuring lambing environments are optimised, to minimize losses due to watery mouth, or joint ill.

**At least 250ml per 5kg lamb of Colostrum, consumed within 4hours of birth**, acts as an immune boosting, energy giving, kick-start. Without it, your lambs have no immunoglobulins (antibodies) in their blood stream. Unlike humans and many other mammals, cows and sheep are born with no ‘tailored’ immune system, meaning they are very vulnerable in the first 24hours of life to infection. A ‘tailored’ immune system involves Immunoglobulins (in particular IgGs). These proteins are the eyes and ears of the immune system and are specific to what the mother has been exposed to.



These IgGs are secreted into the mother’s colostrum (rather than directly across the placenta, which is what happens in humans). They must be absorbed into the blood stream by the gut. Once in the blood they recognize and latch onto invading bugs and allow them to be destroyed by other immune cells (mainly white blood cells).

A lamb's gut starts to become less permeable to IgGs from the moment it has its first drink. There is evidence, for example, that lambs drenched with water will still start to 'close off' their gut to IgGs. It is the physical process of digesting any fluid that starts the 'shutting off'.

Therefore, it is crucial that the lambs' first drink is colostrum, and colostrum of the highest quality. If there is a choice between stomach tubing replacement colostrum, and waiting an hour to allow some frozen colostrum to defrost, or another ewe to lamb, then giving better colostrum a little later on is the way to go.



Our flock club members are currently benefiting from a free colostrum quality check and training, carried out by our farm vet nurse Hayley. A refractometer (pictured above) can be used to check how 'dense' your ewes' colostrum is. This is a good proxy for how much total protein and IgG it contains.

Knowing how good the colostrum is can help in deciding whether it is worth freezing, but also acts as an early indicator of the ewe's health and nutritional status. Changes in feed and management can impact the quality of your colostrum in just seven days – which could help tens to hundreds of lambs in your flock.

For further information on the potential shortage of strong iodine for navel dipping, please see the Sheep Veterinary Society advice at: <https://sheepvetsoc.org.uk/news/supply-of-strong-iodine-10-for-navel-dressing-of-neonatal-lambs/>

### **Small holders: Sheep Lameness Meeting**

As a follow up to our recent on farm event, we are planning on running an evening on managing lameness in your flock. This event will be taking place in the late spring/summer of 2023 – so keep your eyes on our Newsletter for further details!

### **TB Advisory Service Badger Set Surveys**

Several of our vets are now trained and qualified in performing Badger Set surveys. This can comprise part of a fully funded consultation on your farms' TB risk. The Government has released a new wave of funding for free vet visits out to farms to advise on ways to minimize the likelihood of TB breakdowns. We will also come up with plans on how to limit their impact if they do occur. Just give the surgery a call to enquire and book your free visit.



# TB Advisory Service

The TB advisory service offers free visits to discuss TB risk on farm, and offers four simple cost effective, practical recommendations based on the risks identified.

The TB Advisory Service has been running for 4 years, funded by the rural development program for England (RDPE) 98% of Farmers that had a free farm visit said the recommendations at the end were useful and 90% rated the service as excellent.

Defra is now funding the TB Advisory Service for the whole of England, previously it was only available for farmers in the high risk and edge areas. This new funding also allows those farming other TB susceptible species (camelids, deer, goats, pigs and sheep) to have visits not just cattle keepers.

The top 5 recommendations from previous visits include using badger proof water and feed troughs, fencing off badger setts from cattle, using the website [www.ibTB.co.uk](http://www.ibTB.co.uk) to look up a sellers TB history prior to purchase and putting up wildlife cameras to identify what badger activity is in the farm yard and where to prioritise badger proofing measures.

If you would like to access the service either call the practice or contact TBAS directly.

**For hints and tips on TB biosecurity you can follow them on social media:**



W	<a href="http://tbas.org.uk">tbas.org.uk</a>
T	01306 779410
E	<a href="mailto:info@tbas.org.uk">info@tbas.org.uk</a>
f	@TBAdvisoryService
t	@TB_Advisory
i	@tbadvisoryservice



## Our Beef + Sheep Discussion Groups

Eighteen months on from launching, and both our flock and beef discussion groups are running successfully. Members benefit from spreading the cost of their annual health planning over 12 months, whilst also swapping opinions with fellow farmers, accessing the most up-to-date veterinary advice and seeing how others operate.

Membership to either club is £22.50 ex VAT / month, with joint membership available for just £30 ex VAT / month.



### **What do I get for my money?**

- Your annual herd health plan, medicines review and any other necessary annual veterinary reviews (for all the stock on your farm – not just sheep or cattle!)
- A vet visit to your farm to complete the health planning, allowing you to make the most of the opportunity
- Access to at least three discussion groups yearly, including visits to other member's farms (these will be chargeable to non-members)
- Three in-house dung worm egg counts
- Membership of your whole farm to the group, meaning all staff and family can benefit
- 20% off our Red Tractor medicines handling course and discounted access to other in-practice training

Please pop in or give us a call to express your interest in joining, we're happy to give you more details.

### **Beef Discussion Club:**

The club is led by Roger Serres and Andy Eve.

Recent meetings have included a tour of Crediton Mill, and a farm walk focusing on the potential for Carbon sinking and improving soil health. Look out for our next meeting: Calving – when and how we can intervene!



### **Flock Discussion Club:**

This is run by Tim Bebbington and Lucy Giles.

Recent meetings have included talks on optimising ewe nutrition during pregnancy, a farm tour to discuss different lambing systems, and a talk involving national experts in footrot from Birmingham university. Members are currently involved in lamb mortality benchmarking and colostrum monitoring, with great discussions (and food!) at each meeting.

