

August Newsletter

Weaning time-reducing the risk of post weaning mastitis.



With current weather conditions leading to reduced quality and quantity of grass available for livestock, early weaning lambs is a consideration. This will reduce the competition for the best grazing for lambs and allow selection and preparation of ewes for the upcoming breeding season.

Weaning is a period of stress for both ewe and lamb. For the lamb, a small check in growth rates may be observed but should quickly recover with good management.

For the ewes there is a risk of post weaning mastitis due to the sudden halt in suckling.

What causes mastitis in sheep

The principal bacteria is Staph aureus, but there are also environmental causes, such as E coli.



What are the risk factors of mastitis

- Ewes in poor body condition and older animals with weakened immune systems
- Rearing multiple lambs or illness.
- Ewes with poor udder conformation
- Stock in close proximity due to seeking shade in the hot weather
- Increased fly activity due to the hot weather
- Maedi Visna (autoimmune disease becoming more prevalent in the UK)
- Orf on lambs mouths leading to damaged or swollen teats
- **Weaning**

Early weaning or extended lactation

There is currently no evidence on the effect or impact of early or late weaning on mastitis. However, it is important to pay attention to ewe and lamb nutrition as part of an effective weaning strategy.

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New In Stock

Livestock Eye Care

Any eyes that are irritated or showing signs of fly worry there is a new livestock eye care spray. This spray



can be used directly onto the eye and surrounding area to prevent spread to other sheep in the flock. Pink eye can be very contagious and if left untreated can become very severe, sometimes leading to loss of sight.

Mastitis cont;

Managing the risk factors.

Following the weaning of lambs ewes should immediately be moved to low quality pasture for approximately 2 weeks. This will aid in reducing milk production, easing pressure on the udder.

With no lambs present to remove milk, the udder will be swollen for a few days before regressing to a flaccid state.

Ewes udders should be palpated for any lumps or hardness. Those with lumps should be selected for cull as this demonstrates evidence of previous or possibly chronic mastitis issues.

Prevention

There is a vaccine available to help manage mastitis in sheep. It specially targets Staph aureus. For more information please ask one of our vets.

Treatment of mastitis

Affected ewes should be isolated from the rest of the flock as there is a high risk of spread, especially with increased fly activity in the hot weather.

The recommended course of treatment for ewes with mastitis is systemic antibiotics and anti-inflammatories.

Should I use cow intramammary tubes- It is NOT recommended to use intramammary tubes in sheep as the nozzle on the tubes may cause damage to the teat canal which is narrower in sheep than cattle.

For severe cases of mastitis veterinary advice should be sought and may involve amputation of the teat to save

Our flock health club is going really well and if you are a member you now get 50% discount on all telephone consultations and advice.

Don't forget to send in a pooled faecal sample from your flock before you reach for a wormer as a lot of our recent worm egg counts have shown that worming treatments have not been necessary saving a lot of money and time.

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