FriarsMoor Livestock Health

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2025

LAMBING - PREPARATION IS KEY

Article by Celeste Spinks

With lambing season round the corner (if it hasn't started already!), it's never too soon to get organised and make sure you have everything you need to ensure this busy period goes as smoothly as possible and your lambs get the best start possible.

Check your ewes:

- Ensure vaccinations (e.g., clostridial vaccines) are up to date.
- Body condition score your ewes (aim for 2.5-3.5 at lambing).

Keep an eye out for common pre-lambing issues such as twin lamb disease (stock up on twin lamb drenches and injectable calcium) and prolapses (ideally use a harness rather than a spoon/retainer) and seek veterinary advice if necessary.

Stock up on supplies:
Ensure your lambing kit includes:

Disposable gloves (arm length and short) lubricant (you can never have enough!),lambing ropes and/or head snare, iodine for navel dipping, colostrum (fresh, frozen, or good quality powdered eg.), milk replacer, jugs, whisks and bottles/teats/tubes/large syringe, syringes and needles, eartags, eartagger, castration rings and applicator and marker spray. Metacam for pain relief.

Have plenty of clean dry straw for bedding, pens with hay racks and water (at least 1 per 10 ewes), an infrared lamp/warming box and lime/disinfectant if lambing indoors.

Recognising the signs of lambing
Early signs that a ewe is close to lambing include:

- Behaviour: restlessness, loss of appetite separating from the flock, stargazing, pawing at the ground/nesting
- Anatomy: swelling of the vulva, milk drop (swollen teats), vaginal discharge

What to do during lambing
Most ewes lamb without complications and intervening too early can do more harm than good however you may need to assist if necessary.

Observe:

- Allow the ewe to progress naturally but monitor for prolonged or difficult labour (>30 minutes of active straining without any progress – better to call sooner rather than later if you're concerned!)

Assist only when necessary:

- Make sure you're clean! Wash your hands before and after and wear gloves.
- Lubricate well before examining the ewe.
- Check whether the lamb is correctly positioned (ideally front legs and head first as if the lamb were diving out of the ewe) and the cervix is dilated enough for the lamb to be delivered. If concerned give us a call!

Post-lambing care:

- Check the ewe has milk and ensure lambs receive 200ml of colostrum within 2hrs of birth – if needed top the lamb up with colostrum milked from the ewe or a quality powdered replacement (eg. Immucol).
- Dip the lamb's navel in iodine to prevent infection.
- Check lambs for hypothermia, watery mouth, joint ill and ewes for mastitis.
- Have a plan for triplets/quadruplets and orphan lambs.

If you encounter any issues or are unsure how to proceed, don't hesitate to call us for advice or assistance.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

BOOK NOW

11th February - Closworth Anniversary Drinks at Cerne Abbas Brewery

13th February - Calving Course

18th February - Calf Rearing Level 1 Course - on farm location.

20th February - Kids Lambing/Calving Course

5th March - Lambing Course

18th-20th March - A I Course

All of our courses are held at our West Stour Headquarters, unless stated otherwise. To book a place or for more information, call the office on 01258 472314

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Spring Update

Thursday 6th March - 7pm
Udder Farm Shop, East Stour, Gillingham. SP8 5LQ

You are invited to an informative evening with supper and the opportunity to enjoy a spring update on topics including:

Symonds & Sampson
Farms & Land market update.
Agricultural rents and tenancies

Friars Moor Livestock Health
Efficiencies through technology

Old Mill
Post-budget farm IHT planning

Scan me to book your place.

Staff News

We sadly say goodbye to Marianna who is leaving for a new adventure. We would like to thank her for all her hard work & commitment and we wish her every success for the future.