

Professional Veterinary Services for all Livestock Species

CVP Large Animal News

Maximise your RAM POWER!

It is important to check your rams 8-10 weeks prior to tupping to ensure that they are both sound and fertile. 5 important things that should be checked: Feet, Teeth, Body Condition, Testes/Semen, and general health of the rams.

○ Lameness

- Check for any signs of lameness, and examine the feet for any abnormalities. Remember routine trimming of feet is not considered necessary. Diagnose the cause of lameness and treat appropriately.

○ Teeth

- Check the mouth for any over/under shot teeth, gaps or abscesses. Any problems in the mouth can affect the body condition of your ram and therefore affect its mating ability. Jaw abnormalities are hereditary and can be passed on to the lambs.

○ Body Condition

- The body condition of your rams can be checked along the back of the spine. An ideal condition of 3.5-4.0 for mating. Rams may benefit from a high protein (18-20%) ration.

○ Breeding Soundness Examination

- Checking the testes
 - size (>36cm scrotal circumference)
 - firmness (that of a human tensed bicep)
 - absence of lumps
- Shear off any excess wool on the scrotum.
- Semen examination can be done on any rams with abnormal testes.

○ Vaccinate

- Any vaccines that you may need to use including Clostridia, Pasturella, Louping Ill, Blue Tongue should be done 10 weeks prior to tupping.



Ram breeding exams and semen collection and evaluation can be carried out on farm or tups can be brought to the practice.

Each breeding exam will cost £15 (ex vat) with any exam requiring a semen test costing £25(ex vat).

Making sure you have enough RAM POWER to cover the number of ewes is vitally important to ensure a tight lambing pattern, and so getting your rams checked before tupping is essential.

Call the practice for book an appointment on 01508 530686.



Pneumonia

Without wanting to be a doom-monger, thoughts and discussions about winter housing of cattle and calves to prevent pneumonia, should start to take place from now.



Pneumonia is the term used for inflammation of the lung tissue and airways, reducing the ability of the animal to breathe adequately. Although symptoms are obvious in more severely affected animals, often the whole group is affected to varying degrees, reducing feed intake and feed conversion.

Symptoms of Pneumonia Include

1. Coughing
2. Discoloured nasal discharge
3. Increased breathing rate and effort
4. Heads down and depressed
5. Reduced feeding
6. Death

The costs of pneumonia arise from cost of treatments, reduced weight gain, labour costs and calf deaths.

Pneumonia or Bovine Respiratory Disease (BRD) is a multi-factorial disease, and solutions to problems vary greatly between farms, but the main causes of pneumonia are:

1. Disease challenge (bacterial/viral or parasitic)
2. Ventilation (both inlet and outlet)
3. Stocking densities
4. Immunity of cattle to respiratory diseases
5. Environment - dust, damp, draughts
6. Stress - castration, dehorning, mixing/movement of cattle
7. Inadequate nutrition

Reducing the risk from any of these factors should hopefully reduce disease incidence and maximise growth rates.

Costs of Pneumonia

The immediate expense of drugs and vet bills are very tangible to the farmer, but the impact on growth rates and carcass quality are less obvious losses which are easily overlooked.

Costs include:

1. Treatment – labour, drugs, vet fees
Reduced live weight gain:
2. The scarring and reduced capacity of the lungs following a case of pneumonia will significantly reduce daily live weight gain
 - a. Up to 200g/day could be lost
 - b. Increased time taken to finish beef calves, resulting in additional feed and bedding costs
 - c. Increased time to reach bulling weight in dairy and replacement heifers
3. Reduced carcass quality
 - a. Moderate to severe lung damage will result in lower grading of the carcass; this could cost as much as £10/head
4. Death

If pneumonia has been an issue on your farm or there have been changes to your set-up that may increase the risks, please phone Steve, Suzanne or Becky to discuss potential control methods.

Long Stratton Surgery: 01508 558228



Sufficient air outlet ensures adequate ventilation.

We are happy to offer advice on practical improvements you can make to improve the health of your cattle.