

March 2016

Professional Veterinary Services for all Livestock Species

CVP Large Animal News

Cattle News



**'MOO CALL' – Available from Chapelfield Vets!**

Receive a text message from the 'Moo Call' calving sensor when your pedigree heifer is about to calve.



This early alert system gives the farmer time to organise themselves to be present during calving, thus reducing chances of fatalities. 'Moo Call' can even operate on weak mobile signal as the unit has the ability to use whatever GSM network has the strongest signal at any given time. The 'Moo Call' unit has 60 days battery life and is rechargeable. Simply attach the device to the cows tail and await a text message alert on average

1 hour before calving!



MooCall clips on and off the tail with ease so moving it from cow to cow is simple. Once a calf is born, move MooCall to the next cow. Each device will cover up to 40 cattle on average.

For more information contact Jenna or Steve.

**BVD**

BVD continues to be the most important economical viral disease of cattle in the UK but it can be eradicated. Knowing your herd's BVD status, reviewing your buying-in and biosecurity policies, testing cattle and vaccination are all important tools in eradicating this disease.



**Come along on the 15th March to listen to Kath Aplin from Boehringer discuss options for beating this disease, while eating pizza and having a beer!**

To book a place please email [tiff@chapelfieldvets.co.uk](mailto:tiff@chapelfieldvets.co.uk) or telephone 01508 558228

**GRASS STAGGERS**

Spring is around the corner and while the weather improves it brings fresh dangers for your cattle.

Grass Staggers can affect cattle and sheep on lush grass. In the coming months the likelihood of dairy cattle suffering grass staggers may increase as farmers seek to counter low milk prices by reducing expensive purchased feed. However, prevention of grass staggers is possible via assessing magnesium blood levels in a group of grazing cattle, this information can then be used to provide advice on mineral supplementation.

Rapid progression of the disease can cause 'sudden death', thus urgent treatment in the early stages of grass staggers in the animal is vital. Symptoms may include: drop in milk, dullness, hypersalivation, muscle tremors and twitching, followed by collapse with tetanic spasms. Should these symptoms be present, consider Grass staggers or hypomagnesaemia.



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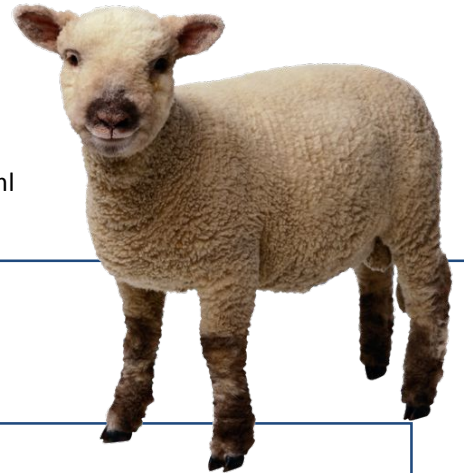
## Pre-Lambing Checks

With lambing in full swing on some farms, others may just be thinking about the months ahead. Body condition scoring your ewes is an important management tool to assess whether your ewes are fit enough for their task ahead, namely lambing fit healthy lambs and being able to feed them enough.

Making sure the nutrition is correct, is vital to ensure adequate growth of the lambs as it has been shown that the bodyweight of lambs born is very important in the survival rate of lambs. Blood sampling sheep 5-3 weeks before lambing is a good way of ensuring that they are receiving enough energy, but with enough time to adjust the diet accordingly. This will also help to reduce the incidence of twin lamb disease/pregnancy toxaemia.

Make sure ewes have had their booster of Heptavac-P in the 4-6 weeks before lambing to increase the amount of antibodies in the colostrum.

Heptavac-P Plus and Ovivac P Plus can be ordered for next day delivery.  
Heptavac prices start from £19.85 for 50ml, Ovivac prices start from £28.90 for 100ml



## Sheep Abortion

Toxoplasma and Enzootic Abortion in ewes are still the two most common causes of abortion in sheep. Getting an infection in a naïve flock can be devastating, leading to increase barren rates, abortions and weak, live lambs.

If you have a high number of barren ewes or experience a higher percentage of abortions (>2%) then please call Steve to discuss the problem. Submitting samples of abortion and/or blood sampling ewes helps aid in the diagnosis.

Remember that some causes of abortion can be zoonotic (affect people) and pregnant women should not handle any ewe or dead lambs/placenta that comes out.

## Top Tips for Aborted Ewes

1. Isolate ewe from rest of flock
2. Remove all lambs/placenta and any contaminated bedding
3. If possible disinfect area where abortion took place
4. Ideally, no lambs should be fostered onto an aborted ewe, and do not keep fostered lambs as replacement stock

## Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis is an important disease that can affect cattle, unfortunately symptoms often go undetected.

This spirochete bacteria more formerly known as Leptospirosis hardjo, can cause infertility, abortions and reduced milk yields known as "flabby bag", all of which lead to large economic impacts.

Leptospirosis is spread via urine and water courses or through contact with aborted material, sharing bulls and co-grazing with sheep. It spreads more prolifically through spring and summer months while cattle are at pasture as the conditions are optimal for its survival. It's also important to note that leptospirosis can cause nasty flu-like symptoms in people after contact with urine.

When leptospirosis is suspected cows can be blood sampled, or bulk milk ELISA testing can be used. Additionally, samples may be taken from aborted dams and foetal material, however this is not always conclusive.

Leptospirosis is best controlled by vaccination, (which is often done in spring) this reduces the shedding of bacteria via urine and helps to reduce its spread. However disease transmission should also be targeted. To improve your herd health you should operate a closed herd (no sharing of bulls), fence off watercourses, isolate aborted animals and correctly dispose of aborted material.

**Contact our farm vets for more information.**

**Jenna Annison BVSc MRCVS**