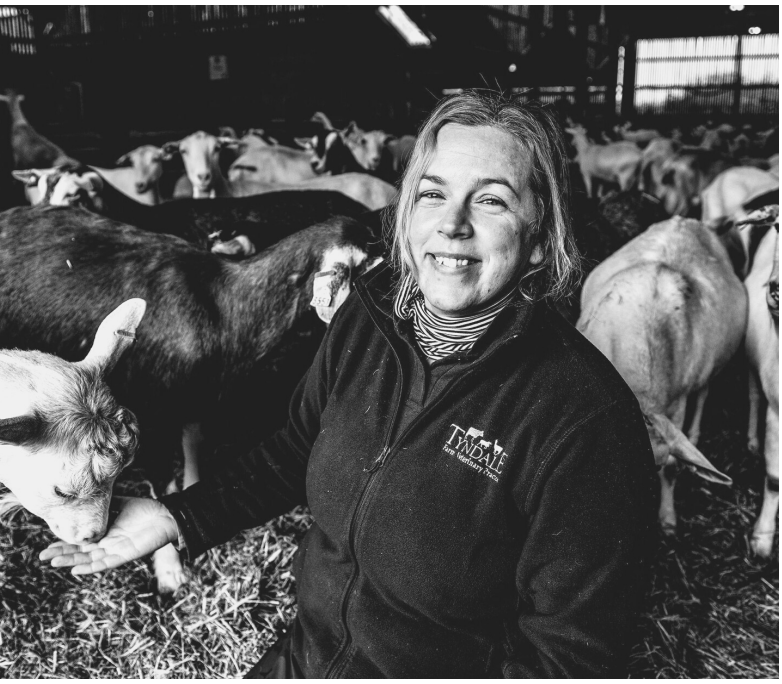
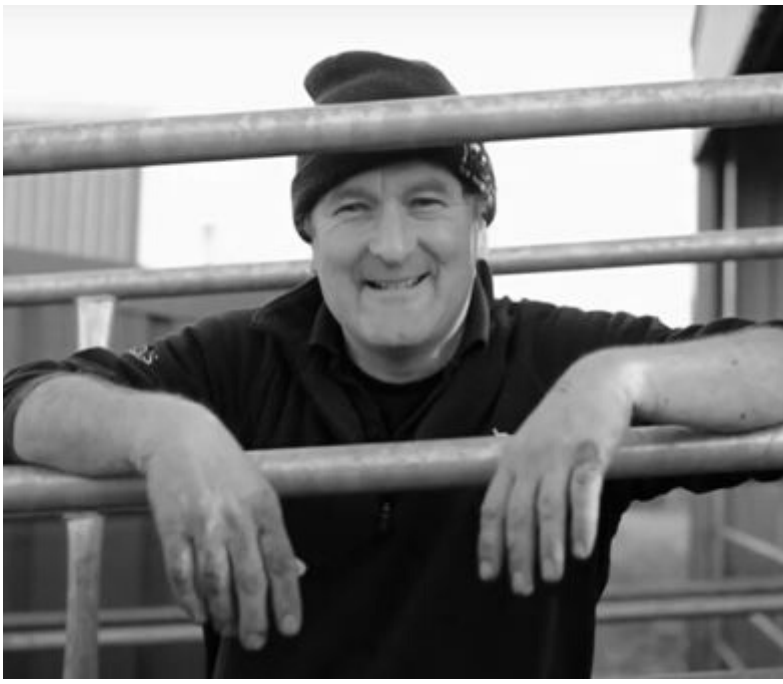
JANUARY 2021, ISSUE 09

TYNDALE NEWS

SEASONAL TOPICS FOR OUR FARMERS





TYNDALE
Farm Veterinary Practice

This issue's informative reads:

AVIAN INFLUENZA & EWE NUTRITION PRE-LAMBING

Welcome 2021. Still a funny year but at least its not 2020 any longer.

We wanted to start off by reassuring you that we are taking all the necessary precautions here at Tyndale to reduce the spread of COVID. Along with all the usual PPE and social distancing, we are testing all our staff twice a week. You may have noticed that we are now sending a text 24hrs before all prearranged visits as a small reminder that if you are experiencing COVID like symptoms to let us know so we can work out a plan. It may be that we bring another pair of hands to help the vet and ensure the animal in need still gets care whilst avoiding any contact OR in some scenarios it may be better to re-arrange the visit. Each case is different and we are determined to maintain the best possible farm care and communication despite these trying times.

We've made the tough decision not to run any Lambing or Mastering Medicines courses until we are able to do it safely. We felt running them on Zoom just wasn't a good enough experience to make it worth while.

But we are trying our very best to keep the information and positivity flowing on social media. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram for daily updates.

Ewe Nutrition Pre-lambing

AN ARTICLE FROM XL VETS

The wrong nutrition in the last 4-6 weeks of pregnancy can lead to the following problems:

Ewes:

- Twin lamb disease
- Hypocalcaemia
- Mastitis

Lambs:

- Hypothermia of lamb
- Watery mouth/rattle belly
- Joint ill (navel ill)
- Pneumonia
- Scour

The ewe must have enough to eat and the means to be able to eat and drink enough so consider:

- Grazing - how much grass is there and stocking density
- Housing - stocking density
- Trough space - 45cm per ewe
- Water availability - clean water and not frozen!
- Ewe health - treat lameness promptly with injectable antibiotics and try not to turn over the ewe in late pregnancy
- Lamb numbers - scanning is an important tool

<u>Physical constraints:</u>

A ewe can only consume 2-2.5% of her body weight in dry matter (DM), therefore all the requirements for this period of intense growth must be contained in this volume.
For an 80kg ewe this equates to 1.6 to 2.0kg DM. This is complicated by a 10% reduction in dry matter intake (DMI) during the final two weeks of pregnancy because of space taken up by the lambs.

<u>Condition scoring</u>

The ideal Body Condition Score (BCS) at lambing is 3.0-3.5 for lowland breeds and 2.5-3.0 for hill breeds. If ewes are in poorer condition then supplementary feeding needs to start earlier. If in good condition, then some energy deficits can be overcome by relying on the ewe's own reserves.

EWE NUTRITION PRE-LAMBING CONTINUED...

Scanning

Scanning is a very cost effective procedure that can make a huge difference to ewe feeding for the following reasons:

- Barren ewes are identified early, so do not receive supplementary feeding
- Single bearing ewes can be identified and fed accordingly, they may get sufficient energy from forage alone, reducing supplementary feed costs
- Twin and triplet ewes are identified so that they can be fed and monitored separately

As well as being beneficial for nutrition, identifying foetal numbers can help as part of your worming plan, if wormers are to be used at lambing.

Nutritional planning:

Assuming all other factors listed before are correct, the make-up of the diet becomes the most important factor. The majority of farms will use a combination of grazing, forage (hay or silage) and commercial concentrates. By knowing the forage analysis, the analysis of the concentrate the energy content of the ration can be determined. By comparing this to the known requirements, the energy excess or deficiency can be seen and any corrections made. We can help you with this.

Fine tuning and metabolic profiles

The only way to assess the diet is to test the ewes to find out how they are responding through blood samples. This is best done approximately six weeks before lambing, ideally with a minimum of ten ewes.

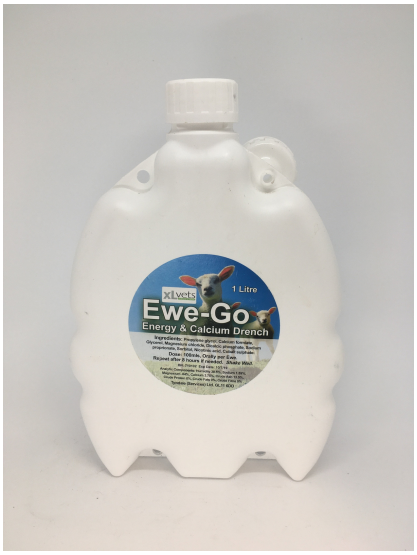
Results from the analysis above will show if the energy or protein content of the diet needs adjusting.

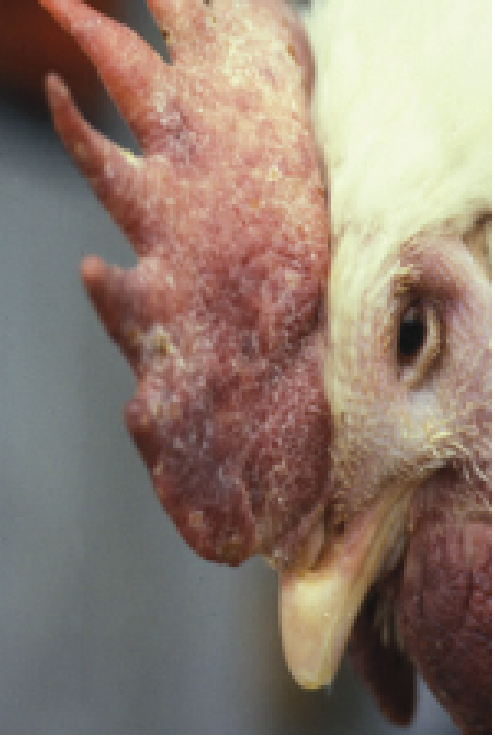
Twin lamb disease

Twin lamb disease should be considered as a warning that the flock is under nutritional stress. It is caused by not enough energy in the diet to support a pregnancy of twins (or more) but it looks very similar to low calcium which is also common pre-lambing. Survival rates of ewes with twin lamb disease can be poor if the disease is not spotted in its early stages. Early signs include not coming up for feed, seperation from the flock and sitting down.

If twin lamb disease is caught early, treatment with our oral drench 'Ewe-Go' in combination with a non steriodal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) such as Metacam or Kelaprofen is the best course of action. Ewe-Go contains both an energy source and calcium so will address both causes of pre-lambing metabolic disease.

If the disease is advanced or severe, inducing the ewe so that she lambs earlier is often the best means of a cure. If you have any questions or are concerned about twin lamb disease in your flock, give us a call at the practice.





Birds affected by HPAI could show swelling of the head, wattles, combs and face.

Puple discoloration of the comb could indicate HPAI

Nasal discharge (runny nose) could be a sign of HPAI

Avian Influenza

WRITTEN BY INES CRUZ

You might have recently heard about Avian Influenza (AI) and probably even had a visit of a vet on behalf of the Animal and Plant Health Association (APHA) to check your chickens, ducks or other birds, especially if you live in the surroundings of the Slimbridge Wetlands Centre. This was due to an AI outbreak that started in November 2020. It's believed the virus reached the UK through the thousands of wild birds that migrate here every winter to escape the harsh winter in the most Nordic countries and the North of Russia. Influenza viruses are constantly mutating and every so often a different strain appears.

Different strains of AI can be highly pathogenic or low pathogenic to birds. The meaning of "highly pathogenic" or "low pathogenic" refers to the potential of these viruses to kill chickens and not how infectious there are to humans and other mammals. Some strains can in fact infect humans, like H1N1, but the vast majority does not seem to be of any serious harm to us.

This strain, H5N8, first appeared in 1983, again in 2016/2017 and recently in 2020. It's highly pathogenic in birds, reports showing that animals die shortly after developing symptoms.

It affects wild and domestic bird species, in which turkeys seem to be more susceptible, whilst others, like ducks and geese, show minimal clinical signs.

The common symptoms are swelling of the head with cyanosis (blue-purple colour) of the comb and wattles. Sneezing, coughing and nasal discharge and less typical symptoms include illness, diarrhoea, egg drop or discoloured, deformed, shell-eggs

If any of your birds ever shows symptoms like the above, or dies suddenly, please contact the office or the APHA directly, as Ai is a notifiable disease.

Although the outbreak is under control at the moment at Slimbridge WWT and surrounding areas, we ask you to stay vigilant and to work with us in cases where one of your birds gets suddenly ill or if you spot any wild birds in your garden that might display some of the symptoms mentioned.