

### IN THIS ISSUE

Camelid Blood  
Drive Success

Reduce Lamb  
Losses With  
Clostridial  
Vaccines

Zolvix Wormer  
Reclassification

Update on BVD  
Free

Compact  
Calving periods

SCOP's updates

Post Mortems  
for herd & flock  
health

## Sick Cria? Blood Donors to the rescue!

The Farm Team are thrilled to announce another successful Camelid Blood Drive! Six healthy adult alpacas were welcomed to Towcester Veterinary Centre's Equine Clinic, providing 12 units / doses of plasma to treat crias with Failure of Passive Transfer (FPT), should the donor's herd require it. As many of you know, FPT happens when a cria fails to ingest enough colostrum (the mother's first milk, rich in nutrients and antibodies) soon after birth. Crias are born without any antibodies of their own, and are totally reliant on those in colostrum for their immunity in the first few months of life. FPT crias are therefore very vulnerable to potentially fatal infections, and plasma (which is not commercially available in the UK) is the only treatment. This is why the TVC Farm Team are so keen to offer the opportunity for breeders to come to the Blood Drives, to allow them to have plasma in stock to ready to provide life-saving treatment to FPT crias.



The 2017 birthing season has already seen a cria come into the surgery for successful FPT treatment; she left after her plasma transfusion looking a lot healthier and happier than when she arrived!

With many more births still to come this year, we hope for lots of strong, healthy alpaca and llama crias, but please do keep an eye out for the following signs, suspicious of FPT:

- Failure to gain weight after birth
- Crias that are abnormally quiet / sleepy
  - Crias not suckling well

Premature / dysmature crias are particularly prone to FPT, so need particular monitoring. If you have any concerns about a new arrival in the herd, please do not hesitate to contact us.



## Benefits of Compact Calving

The joys of a compact calving period...

If you have yet to be convinced by a shorter calving period, consider the benefits:

- A more even batch of calves
- Increased weaning weights
- Reduced production costs
- Less labour requirements at calving
- Fewer calf health problems

Luckily this is one thing that is very easily achieved by simply removing the bull from the cows!

12 weeks, or if you're brave, less, is the ideal length. Before the bull goes in it is well worth fertility testing, as waiting until none of the cows are in calf is not very efficient or profitable.

Watching the bull at work gives a good clue that the bull is serving efficiently and can also help avoid unpleasant surprises.

## Clostridial Vaccine Preventing lamb losses

While most farmers are used to giving a clostridial vaccine to ewes before lambing, not everyone thinks to vaccinate their lambs! Considering all the hard work taken to get them to the field it is devastating to see losses, usually of the best lambs, due to clostridial diseases when a very cost-effective vaccine is available.

Vaccinations given to the ewes before lambing provide essential protection for lambs through the colostrum but this protection usually only lasts 4 weeks. Lambs are then at risk from several types of clostridial bacteria causing a range of problems including; blackleg, lamb dysentery, pulpy kidney, struck, braxy and tetanus.

Clostridial bacteria are commonly found in the soil and within the gut. Soil borne clostridial bacteria invade tissues through wounds often due to ringing lambs and produce toxins which quickly lead to death. Changes in diet can cause an overgrowth of clostridial bacteria within the gut with the same effects. Pasteurella is also a risk and most commonly causes pneumonia but can also cause a systemic septicaemia causing sudden deaths. The use of the combined clostridial and pasteurella vaccines is very useful in addressing both these issues.

The most common protocol for lamb vaccinations are two doses 4-6 weeks apart for all lambs over 3 weeks old. Batch lambs over this age to ensure effective use of bottle sizes. Clostridial vaccines are some of the cheapest you can buy – well worth the cost to keep lamb losses down!





## Update on BVD Free

A massive WELL DONE from all at Towcester Farm Vets on the brilliant response to the BVDFree scheme!! We currently have 50 herds (nearly half of all our breeding herds!) signed up and your enthusiasm has been noted by the team at BVDFree – so much so we’ve made it into their newsletter and been commended on Twitter! What’s even better is the vast majority of farms that have completed testing are BVDFree making any animals sold from these farms healthier and a better investment be it as a store or breeding animal!

It’s now essential to make sure BVD stays out of all of these herds – only buy from herds who know their BVD status and ensure you quarantine and test ANY animals you are not confident about....with costs estimated between £13 and £31 per breeding cow per year when BVD enters a herd, quarantining and testing bought in animals becomes very cost effective!! We also urge everyone to vaccinate their herds – accidents happen with biosecurity – look at the Archers! Being free is fantastic but don’t leave your herd totally vulnerable in these situations!!

So let’s keep up the excellent work - we will continue to offer check tests to assess BVD status to all our breeding herds and to discuss BVD control at TB tests. BVD free herds ARE more profitable herds! For more information on BVDFree or to sign up please go to [www.bvdfree.org.uk](http://www.bvdfree.org.uk) or to discuss BVD control please call the team!

### FINAL WINTER MEETING 23<sup>rd</sup> May TB IN CAMELIDS

for more information or to book your place please contact the surgery

## Post Mortems for Herd & Flock Health

We have noticed a trend in the last few months of clients being worried about disturbing us at weekends for dead stock. Thank you for worrying about us but please do bear in mind that post mortem examination is a very useful tool to find out cause of death and whether action in the remainder of the group may be beneficial. Small carcasses can be bought into the surgery, (but nothing bigger than your average ewe thanks) and we can do others on farm without making too much mess.

The other option we have is post mortem provision at the Royal Vet College with free collection for most NN post code areas (you essentially need to be more than 1 hour

away from the college to qualify). As the college are not quite as dedicated as us they only operate Monday to Friday but do have provision and trained pathologists to provide a cause of death. So if you do lose an animal and would like to investigate please do call us for advice sooner rather than later, a weekend post mortem that yields an answer is preferable to a Monday morning one that smells pretty awful!



## ZOLVIX Reclassification of wormers

Zolvix, one of the new classes of wormers for sheep, has been reclassified and from the 1<sup>st</sup> July will be available from farm suppliers as well as vets. Up until this point Zolvix, and the other worming product in a new class, Startect have only been available from vets. This is because these new classes of wormers are vital in the fight against wormer resistance and should only be used in specific situations. These situations are as follows:

### As a quarantine drench.

All bought in animals should be treated on arrival to the farm and then yarded for 24-48 hours before being turned out onto pasture that has held sheep this season.

### As a knockout drench

For use in lambs in late summer/early Autumn.

We urge all farmers to continue to use Zolvix ONLY at these times. Use of Zolvix at other times will hasten the onset of resistance in this class leaving us few options in the fight against production losses due to parasites. The future of the national flock is dependent on the responsible use of wormers now for it’s long term health and welfare. We will hopefully now be able to split bottles of Zolvix to allow farmers to buy only what’s needed for their flock in order to help everyone have access to these products. To discuss parasite control on your farm please contact us.



## SCOPs Nematodirus Updates

The wonderful people at SCOPs have once again produced the Nematodirus forecast to help reduce losses due to this parasite. Nematodirus is the one parasite where worm egg counts are not useful as it is the larvae not the adults that do the damage and farmers are advised to treat based on forecasting and the risk to their farm instead. The peak period of risk has passed though significant levels of larvae will remain on pasture. Colder, north facing slopes and farms at higher altitudes will have had a later hatch so the risk will vary from farm to farm. High risk lambs should be treated with a white drench and ideally a faecal egg count done 10 days later to check the treatment is effective. High risk lambs are grazing fields grazed by lambs last year and also fall into at least one of the following categories : are also eating significant amount of grass (usually 6-12 weeks old) likely to also be challenged by coccidiosis or lambs under other stresses eg triplets, fostered on lambs or lambs on older or younger ewes. Updates are available at [www.scops.org.uk/nematodirus-forecast.html](http://www.scops.org.uk/nematodirus-forecast.html) and we have also been updating people via Facebook and our mailing list. If are not already part of our mailing list and wish to join then please inform us of your preferred email address or sign up via our website.

