**FFIS Grants Announcement**

The long awaited 3rd round of the Farming and Forestry Improvement Scheme is finally here!

DEFRA have made available the handbook for the 3rd round of the FFIS Grant detailing what will be grant funded under the scheme (pages 20-27). The scheme will open to applications on Feb 4th and close on April 4th. The handbook is available for download from the DEFRA website, see below:


It is no longer a requirement that farms in the North West will have to have a Livestock NW health and welfare action plan from SAC to apply - but justification that the grant is necessary - so a health plan from your vet will still be needed to stand a chance of being successful.

The maximum grant per business for FFIS Round 3 is now £35,000 and the minimum grant is £2,500. Applicants who have received grant funding in previous FFIS rounds are eligible to apply and can apply for the full £35,000. However, in the event that the round is oversubscribed, priority will be given to applicants that have not previously been awarded grant.

For more information call Darrell on 07974928051.

**Preparing for Lambing**

Many of you will now be preparing for the upcoming lambing season, if you haven’t already started! You might think that it has come round sooner than you expect, but it is never too late to do some preparation in advance as it could. The last six weeks of pregnancy is when 75% of a lamb’s growth occurs in the womb, therefore appropriate nutrition during period is essential, to ensure an appropriate lamb birth weight and good quality colostrum.

Ultrasound scanning to determine how many lambs your sheep carry around 12-14 weeks after the rams are introduced will aid in deciding how much to feed your ewes and will also be an early indication of how successful your breeding season has been.

The nutrient demand will depend on:
- Length of the feeding period
- Ewe size
- Expected number of lambs
- Current body condition score.

Depending on the size of the ewe, nutrient demand can more than double as lambing approaches. A useful tool to perform is Body Condition Scoring (BCS) to assess the amount of muscle and fat the ewes are carrying pre-lambing. Aim for a BCS of 3-3.5 at lambing with 90% of your flock between 2 and 3.5 should be done as soon as possible after scanning, to allow changes to be made and to have separate groups.

4-6 weeks pre-lambing

A four to six week pre lambing check will allow you to identify lean or over fat ewes and feed accordingly, although care is needed not to underfeed ewes. Some people like to house ewes at point as it allows total control over their feed intake, and ewes are not affected by adverse weather etc.

This would also tie in with your 8 in 1 Clostridial Vaccination (Heptavac-P Plus, Covaxin 8/10) which also occurs during this period and is essential to protect the newborn lambs against diseases such as puffy kidney, lamb dystocia etc. It is advisable that your late lambing ewes are vaccinated some 7-10 days later to allow sufficient antibodies in the colostrum. You also need to consider worming your ewes to prevent the Periparturient Rise (PPR) in worm eggs that occurs at lambing. Please speak to a vet or our SQP Mark Pass.

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Preparing for Laming

2-3 weeks before lambing

Ensure your drug cupboard is fully stocked with all your requirements. The equipment needed may include:
- Arm length disposable plastic gloves
- Clean bucket, warm water, soap, approved surgical scrub solution (e.g. Hibiscrub), towel
- A lambing snare (various designs are available)
- Lambing ropes
- Obstetrical lubricant
- Disposable syringes, needles, antibiotics, analgesics, Calcium/Magnesium/Glucose bottle
- Ketosis (twin lamb) drench
- Harmenes/retainers/turture material for vaginal prolapses
- Respiratory stimulants/ revivers e.g. Dopram V

We have put together the essentials in a handy lambing tool box so you can have all your gear in one place and move it around easily. Call Mark Pass at Beeston to order your lambing survival kit!

Monitor ewes for signs of prolapses, twin lamb disease and calcium deficiency which may indicate that things are not going as planned.

Clinical Signs . . .

Clinical signs of pregnancy toxemia (listed as the disease progresses)
- Does not come to feed trough
- Solated
- Dunn and depressed
- Blind
- Head pressing
- Fine muscle tremors of the head
- Weakness and recumency
- Death

German cows cause methane blast in Rasdorf!!

Methane gas released by dairy cows has caused an explosion in a cow shed in Germany, police said. The roof was damaged and one of the cows was injured in the blast in the central German town of Rasdorf. Thanks to the belches and flatulence of the 90 dairy cows in the shed, high levels of the gas had built up. Then "a static electric charge caused the gas to explode with flashes of flames" the force said in a statement quoted by Reuters news agency.

Emergency services attended the farm and took gas readings to test for the risk of further blasts, said local media. Cows are believed to emit up to 500 litres of methane - a potent greenhouse gas - each per day.

Please note that Embryonics now offer additional farm services at competitive costs such as: Freeze branding, foot trimming, body condition scoring, show clipping and mobility scoring.

We are considering offering a sheep shearing service in the future dependant on need so please contact us if this may be a service you would be interested in using.