



It certainly feels like we are in to autumn now with the high levels of rainfall recently and dipping temperatures. However hopefully you are all on the way to a successful tupping season.

## Successful Tupping Tips

### Ewe Nutrition

- Providing good quality feed pre-tupping and during the first few weeks of the breeding season for ewes still in poorer body condition (less than 3-3.5) may help rescue ovulation and twinning rates.
- All ewes should remain on a rising plane of nutrition throughout tupping and for at least 4 weeks after mating to aid conception and embryo survival.

### Ram to ewe ratio

- Where teasers or other synchronisation has been used, use experienced rams at a 1:30 ratio
- Where no manipulation has been used, experienced rams should go in at a 1:50 ratio
- Young inexperienced ram lambs need to be eased into their first breeding season, at a ratio of 1:20 serving adult ewes, not ewe lambs



### Fertility Monitoring

- Using raddle markers or chest paint will help highlight any ewe or ram fertility/libido issues e.g. ewes returning due to fertilisation failures
- Repeat raddle marked ewes will also help spot ram fertility issues. Different colours will allow ID of specific rams. Any suspicious rams can be semen tested so we know if he is the issue or not. He may need replacing or we can investigate other causes of poor fertility
- Remember to check rams regularly for harness sores
- Final raddled ewe numbers can help plan key management tasks such as vaccination as well as labour requirements throughout the lambing period



### Implantation Care

Implantation of the embryo in the uterus occurs 19 days after mating. Failure of implantation presents as delayed returns to oestrus (longer than 17 days), high barren rates at scanning and reduced lamb numbers.

#### Implantation failure can be due to:

- Stress from handling/gathering in the immediate post mating period. Be selective for 30-40 days after tupping
- Abrupt changes to diet/quality of nutrition
- Prolonged physical stress e.g. excessive transport
- Inflammatory diseases around mating e.g. acute/sub-acute liver fluke, sheep scab, lameness
- Trace element deficiencies e.g. selenium or iodine deficiency – blood test are needed to confirm
- Reproductive infections e.g. Toxoplasmosis

## Mating Targets

- All ewes should be mated during the first 17 day period, all ewes are covered in raddle marker
- 98% of the flock should be pregnant within 2 cycles (34 days).
- Less than 8% of ewes returning after their 1st serve (during second 17 day cycle) hence the focus on good nutrition in this window

## Fluke Update

Currently the regional risk for Autumn is low however if you have had fluke in the past or are in a particular wet area then bear in mind that your individual farm risk may be higher.

Signs to look out for:

- Acute fluke infection is associated with sudden deaths – with the main risk period being from September through to December. Be vigilant and have post mortems performed on any dead stock.
- Sub-acute – general dullness, anaemia, shortness of breath
- Chronic – rapid weight loss, fluid accumulation e.g. bottle jaw

Testing can be used to gain an understanding of your flock's status:

Test name	Immature Fluke	Mature Fluke	Fluke Exposure
Copro-antigen ELISA <b>FAECAL SAMPLE</b>	✓ Can detect active immature fluke from <b>6 weeks</b> old	✓ Will detect active fluke infection	–
Egg count <b>FAECAL SAMPLE</b>	X Immature fluke will <b>not</b> be producing eggs yet	✓ Will detect active fluke infection from <b>12 weeks</b> old	–
Antibody <b>BLOOD SAMPLE</b>	X A positive antibody response does <b>NOT</b> confirm active infection	X A positive antibody response does <b>NOT</b> confirm active infection	✓ Test uses antibodies to assess <b>fluke exposure</b> . Antibodies can stay high even following successful treatment. Useful as fluke exposure screen for new animals or to assess pasture risk.

Treatments:

- Where acute infections are present then only Triclabendazole is effective against early immature and adult stages
- However there is a significant level of resistance present against this active ingredient therefore it is important to know if it is required and then to use it properly with follow up testing performed when treatment failure is suspected in conjunction with a vet
- If buying in any stock it is best to assume they are carrying triclabendazole resistant fluke unless there is strong evidence to the contrary

Quarantine treatments:

- 2 doses of closantel, 6 weeks apart
- 2 doses of nitroxynil, 7 weeks apart
- Keep purchased animals away from pasture until at least 4 weeks after the second treatment to prevent picking up further fluke

**\*\*Discuss any concerns about fluke or quarantine treatments with a vet\*\***