



Autumn has arrived! As the day length gets shorter many will have tups out with ewes. It is important to focus on ewe body condition score with a rising plane of nutrition during the mating period and for a few weeks after to aid conception rates. The lovely warm September sunshine may have affected the autumn flush of grass after a fairly dry August. This may have consequences on 'flushing' ewes and ovulation rates with less lush grass around. Try to not over work the tups and a stocking rate of 1:50 ewes should be sufficient if no synchronisation programmes have been used and 1:20 if a ram lamb/shearling in first breeding season. Use of Raddle markers or paint will enable you to identify which tups are working and if ewes are not holding. Stress, changes in diet around the mating period, high worm or fluke burden, trace element deficiency, infectious diseases and lameness may affect the ewes ability to successfully conceive.



Worms will still be causing issues so regular worm egg counts are important to see where burdens are and which groups are still at risk. Alongside the vets we have our SQP/Vet tech Flick qualified to assist with any questions regarding worming of your livestock as well as getting you the best price for anthelmintics and vaccines you may require.

New Grad Update

Many of you would have seen Beth out about on calls now over the past few months and when she isn't vetting she is farming! Here is a quick diary entry of what she has been up to with some great information on selecting and tugging of ewe lambs.

Selection criteria and tugging of ewe lambs

October is the month when we are going through our replacement ewe lambs for the final time with a fine-tooth comb. We start the selection process right from birth, tracking them all the way through, with the aim of picking out the best performing ewe lambs to use as replacements. They are March born and are bred from Texel X Mule ewes and Lleyn X ewes using high index maternal sires. We put approximately 120 to the tups in mid-October. I've always found that the ewe lambs we've bred are very mothering compared to some yearlings we lamb as first timers, and with careful management they grow on to become fantastic yearlings, with more mammary development and a strong maternal instinct.

A key benefit of lambing ewe lambs for us is that they produce a lamb in their first year of life, which means that they pay for themselves that year. Ewe lambs have lower ovulation rates when compared to adult ewes, therefore more should have singles than twins. Furthermore, with the growing pressure on our industry to be farming more sustainably, an extra lamb produced in the first year of life reduces the overall greenhouse gas emissions of a flock (AHDB, 2021).

Criteria we use when selecting replacement ewe lambs to tup are:

- Ensuring that they exceed 60% of their adult body weight at tugging (i.e. our average adult ewe weight is approximately 75-80kg, therefore we only select ewe lambs at >45kg to breed from). We shear our ewe lambs in August each year, this improves their daily live weight gain, likely due to increased feed intakes (and reduces the time you end up having to remove them from hedges!).

- Chosen from pre-selected well proven twin bearing adult ewes
- Not knowingly had a bout of lameness.
- Do not have overshot jaws, poor dentition or those that grade <3 on the 1-5 body condition scoring system.

Advice for breeding from ewe lambs:

- Use a tup:ewe lamb ratio of ideally 1:30
- We use older, experienced Beltex tups, which may come as a bit of a surprise, but they actually have one of the lowest birthweights when compared to other continental breeds like Charollais or Suffolk. The majority of our Beltex sired lambs from ewe lambs this year graded at E's or U's
- Mate ewe lambs separately to mature ewes as they tend to be more shy when hunting out the tup compared to adult ewes
- AHDB advise to run ewe lambs with teasers for 15-30 days immediately before putting in the rams

If you have any questions regarding the management and breeding of replacement ewe lambs, do ring the practice to speak to one of our vets or have a look on the AHDB website.

Flock Health Training

Following on from the article in the August newsletter, we will be running a refresher/training course on the use and administration of medicines on **Tuesday 19th October**. There will be a focus specifically on injection site and minimising reactions as this seems to have caused some abattoir losses in the past few months. It would also count as medicines training for Red Tractor compliance. The cost of the course will be £50 per farm and bring as many team members as you like! We are delighted to be hosted by one of our clients and it will be good to see clients face to face at meetings again. Please email or call the office to show your interest and an invite will follow this week.

Farm Team on Social Media

That's right you will be seeing our faces and what we have been up to as well as farm updates, information on courses and meetings when our new Instagram and Facebook pages which will be launching this month. We will be looking for photos from our clients of you and your livestock so get snapping! There may even be some prizes for the best photos. We will post details of once we are up and running!



Future Farming Resilience Fund - With the Brexit transition still ongoing and the many uncertainties that will come with the process, the Common Agricultural Policy no longer applies to us as we are out of the EU.

There are plans over a 7-year period which aim to transition to a new system and will look to reward farmers for not only production but also environmental improvements.

The Future Farming Resilience Fund is aimed to provide business support to farmers to assist with changes during this period.

The support is available to Dairy, beef and sheep sectors, it will be available free of charge now until March 2022. You are encouraged to use the scheme and will offer support on;

- helping to understand what changes to expect with the agricultural transition
- identifying how, what and when you need to adapt your business model
- access to tailored support to address these changes.