

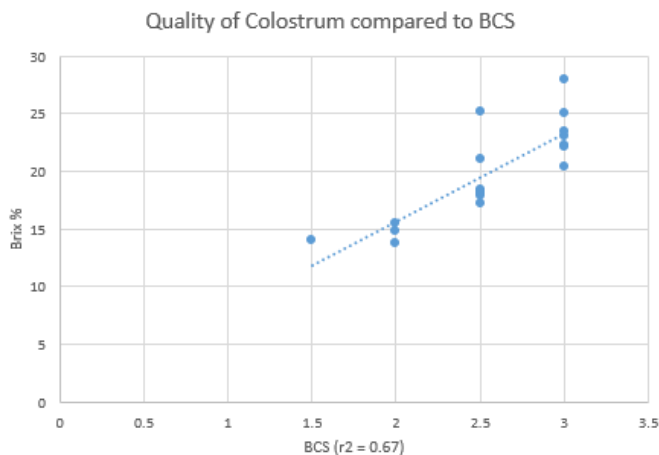
## Lamb Care, Colostrum and Recording

### Lamb Care and Colostrum

As lambing gets underway, measures to ensure lambs have a good start in life are essential. This will both help to minimise losses and lead to stronger lambs that grow well.

The main points to consider are ewe condition, colostrum and hygiene.

Ewe condition pre-lambing is vitally important. A body condition of 3/5 is the aim. Maintaining ewe's body condition pre-lambing is important to prevent twin lamb disease. Ewes in the optimum condition (3/5) have also been shown to produce better quality colostrum, as shown by the graph below.



*This graph, created from data collected by Kat Hart, shows the quality (Brix %) of the colostrum produced against the body condition of the ewe*

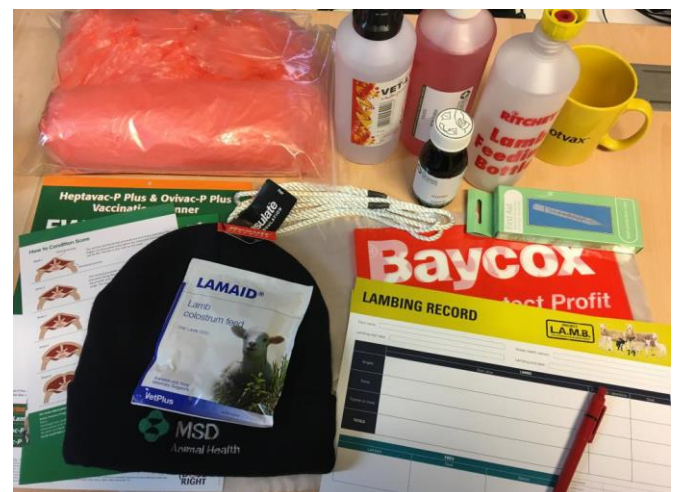
As well as quality, quantity is also very important when thinking about colostrum. A typical 5kg lamb's colostrum requirements are 50 ml/kg (~250ml) in the first 4 – 6 hours, and 200ml/kg (~1litre) in the first 24hrs of life. Freezing and storing excess colostrum from a ewe is a good idea to help supplement any lambs which are

short of colostrum for whatever reason. This needs to be collected and stored hygienically and defrosted gently (maximum water temperature of 50 C) when preparing it for use. In an emergency, powdered colostrum may be used. We stock Lamaid colostrum which is one of the better powdered colostrum products and can be purchased in individual sachets if required.

The lambing environment needs to be kept clean, with a daily bedding of fresh straw in group pens. It is recommended that individual pens are fully cleaned and disinfected between successive litters. Navels should be thoroughly dipped with 10% iodine, ideally within the first 15 mins of life.

Steps such as these to ensure good colostrum management and hygiene within the lambing environment will help in preventing navel ill, joint ill and watery mouth. This, in turn, will reduce antibiotic use on farm, a hot topic at the moment!

Always make sure you have the kit you need during lambing; lambing kits (pictured below) are available in dispensary.



## Recording

Roughly guessing the number of ewes and lambs lost in a season will generally lead to an underestimation. Accurately recording any ewe and lamb losses allows us to get a good picture for what is going on, and to better focus on what needs to be improved.

Simple recording sheets, like the ones enclosed, will aid you in working out the percentage of ewes and lambs lost. With this you can compare to previous years figures and against flock targets. Overall losses should be between 5-10%.

With ewe losses, if you include the ewes found barren at scanning you can then work out Barren rates. The aim is for less than 2% of the ewes to be barren. High Barren rates can be investigated by assessing ram fertility, tupping management and addressing any underlying health issues in the ewes (trace elements, infectious causes, etc). High ewe losses pre lambing could indicate nutritional issues, veterinary involvement can help investigate and put measures in place to prevent such losses going forward.

Recording the number and reasons for lamb losses can help identify simple and cost effective management changes. For example, as mentioned earlier, hygiene and colostrum management will aid in preventing navel ill, joint ill and watery mouth.



Abortions should also be recorded as lamb losses, the aim is to have an abortion rate of less than 2%. Without accurate recording it would be very

easy to be well above this target and not perceive there to be a problem. If your rate is over 2% veterinary investigation at that time can help to reduce further abortions later in the season and a plan can be put in place for preventing future problems.

Recording takes discipline and practice, it can be very difficult to maintain accurate records in situations when you're shattered and lambs are flying at you from all directions. However, if this can be achieved and continued, recording can enable improvements to be made year on year.

Here's to a successful, and well recorded, lambing season!

**Will**



*(2018 Tetbury Woolsack Men's Team Champions)*

## Beef and Sheep medicine course

**16<sup>th</sup> April 2019 (with New improved Practical element).**

**Meet at the practice for a discussion over lunch followed by a visit to Hyams Farm.**

**£50 per person or £75 for 2 people from the same farm.**

**Book early to avoid disappointment**



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