



Spring 2022

Spring has sprung..

Spring is our busiest time of year, and despite the sleep deprivation, we do enjoy it...mostly! A lot of our clients are just coming to the end of lambing and kidding. For our camelid breeders we are gearing up for the unpacking season. We are looking forward to continuing to work with you in the coming months.

Best wishes,

The team at the Livestock Clinic

New Additions to the Team:

Olivia has recently joined the team as our farm technician and office help. Please ring or email (07912281994, info@thelivestockclinic.co.uk) to book her for:

- sheep catching and sorting
- dagging and crutching
- shearing (sheep)
- fly strike prevention
- drenching/bolusing



FlockCheck Diagnostic Service

This is a subsidised diagnostic scheme run by MSD Animal Health aimed at sheep farmers that experience more than 2% of their flock barren or aborting. Blood is taken by your vet from 6-8 aborted ewes, barren ewes or ewes that have produced weak lambs to look for toxoplasmosis or enzootic abortion (EAE).

EAE and toxoplasmosis are the most common diagnoses of sheep abortion. Annual FlockCheck blood test results consistently show that the majority of aborted ewes tested have been exposed to either toxoplasmosis or (EAE) – and sometimes both.



This year's FlockCheck scheme commenced on 1 February 2021 and runs until 30 June 2021. Please get in touch to find out more.

Plasma Collection and Transfusion for Failure of Passive Transfer in Cria.

Unpacking is upon us and it is important to plan thoroughly for the new arrivals. Although we hope that everything goes smoothly it always pays to be prepared.

Cria need sufficient maternal colostrum (first milk) to give them the antibodies they need to fight off infection, if this doesn't happen they are at very high risk of serious infections. Not getting enough antibodies is known as failure of passive transfer (FPT).

Cria need to drink 5% of bodyweight in the first 12 hours of life (10-15% within the first 24 hours). The first 8-12 hours are critical, after which the gut wall closes to absorption of IgG. Ensuring that cria are up and suckling quickly is vital. Cria should be suckling within 2-4 hours of birth but usually this is much sooner. Colostrum substitutes can be given via bottle or stomach tube, whole goats colostrum is the next best but cow colostrum can be used. Ensuring that any colostrum comes from farms that are free of the main diseases eg BVD and Johnes.

Powdered colostrums are not a suitable alternative and should not be relied upon for passive transfer of antibodies.

Weigh cria at birth and then daily for the first 14 days of life to enable early identification of a problem. Often the only early signs of disease are a slowing or stopping of weight gain. This can occur a few days before other overt clinical signs become apparent and severe illness can be averted if they are seen at this early stage. Normal daily weight gain ranges from 250-500g.

Measuring antibodies at 24-48 hours old (optimum 36 hours) is the only way of ensuring that the cria has adequate immunity for the first few weeks of life. There are various tests available with the most reliable being an RID test (camelid specific DVM rapid test).

Plasma transfusions in cria are carried out relatively frequently and involve us coming out to place an IV catheter and slowly transfusing plasma that has been previously collected and frozen.

Transfusing cria as early as possible after FPT has been identified gives the cria the best chance of survival. If it is left until clinical signs of infection are present then prognosis is much poorer.

Plasma transfusions can only happen if there is plasma available on farm at the time. This takes time to process and requires blood donation from healthy adult alpacas.

The collection process involves taking 450ml blood from a donor alpaca, ideally a calm 2-10 year old castrated male or non-pregnant female. They need to be in good body condition (6/10 and at least 75kg), up to date with vaccinations and have no other health concerns. A vaccine booster 3 weeks pre donation is advisable.

Collection process – We come to you or arrange a blood draw at one site. Donors must be calm and happy to stand with manual restraint for 5-10 minutes. We will clip a patch on their neck and scrub with disinfectant. Using a needle and collection bag we remove 450ml blood and send this away to be spun down, the plasma is removed and returned to you in a frozen unit.

As plasma can only be used on the farm of origin it is worth having a couple of bags available in the freezer (in emergencies plasma can be sourced from the dams farm of origin)

Organise blood collection for plasma now so that if the worst should happen everything is in place to give your cria the best start in life.

