Do you have confidence in your sheep feed?

Graham Jameson

Adequate nutrition of the ewe during pregnancy is of paramount importance to the survival and viability of all lambs conceived. 75% of foetal lamb growth occurs in the last 6 weeks of pregnancy. At this time a ewe’s appetite declines by as much as 30%, therefore only the highest quality sources of energy and protein should be fed.

Great improvements in lamb survival due to increased birth-weight and colostrum uptake, and resistance to disease and hypothermia can be achieved by raising the levels of Selenium alongside vitamin E and zinc fed to pre-lambing ewes, in a diet with adequate supplies of quality protein and energy.

Waxed EASE (with Propylene Glycol) has all the attributes of Ewedale Gold but with the addition of propylene glycol, providing the ewe with 10-15ml per day of propylene glycol. If glucose is fed to boost energy, it is used by the rumen bugs, not the ewe, and back fat is still mobilised. Propylene glycol bypasses the rumen, is converted by the liver to glyco-site and is ready for immediate use by the ewe. This glucose stimulates insulin production which actively reduces back fat mobilisation. This stops the liver getting clogged with fat and more body reserves are available to minimise pregnancy toxaemia (twin lamb) and boost milk production.

Ask us for details and for a quote on 01765 689666.
Bare stubble options  David Lewis

The wet weather in November and December has resulted in very little late sowing of winter cereals. Most land following maize, potatoes and fodder beet remains unsown and some of the poorer sown crops may need re-drilling. So, what are the options?

Spring cereals could be considered. Wheat, oats and barley seed is available. Although they might not yield as highly as spring sown crops they need fewer inputs and are cheaper to grow. Spring wheat and, in particular, spring oats are later to harvest and this may be a consideration on some sites.

Alternatively, Spring beans. Although they may not be appealing at first thought, the fact that they fix their own nitrogen and lead to a good subsequent crop needs to be considered. Greening regulations may be a consideration in deciding on beans.

2015 wasn’t the best year for maize growing, but it’s worth bearing in mind that the resultant slages are feeding better than expected. On the correct soil types this should be considered again as it does have the potential for big crops. Where winter crops are doing poorly and re sowing is a consideration, the later sowing date allows more time before a decision is made whether to go ahead.

Westervolds grass could also be sown. This 1 year ley gives exceptionally high yields and can be cropped up to 4 times giving a big pile of slage. However, it is not suitable for grazing. On the other hand, Italian Ryegrass is a 2 year ley and yields nearly as well as the Westervolds. Also, the 2 year growth habit effectively halves the establishment cost and gives some autumn / winter grazing. A longer term ley will give various options for cutting or grazing depending on the individual mix selected. Adding 2-3kg of Westervolds or Italian will boost the yield in the short term.

If a root crop is preferred, fodder beet can give very high yields of an energy rich feed. But this root crop needs light ground to give a clean sample for feeding.

To discuss your options please give us a ring on 01765 689666.

Stop the loss

Kathryn Henry

As lambing time approaches now is the time to be thinking about vaccinating in-lamb ewes to protect lambs when they are born. All replacement ewes and rams should be introduced into the Heptavac P Plus system on arrival into the flock with two 2ml doses 4-6 weeks apart. Once they are in the Heptavac P Plus system an annual booster is required to continue the protection against Pasteurella pneumonia as well as Ovine Respiratory diseases. The booster vaccination MUST be given to the ewe 4-6 weeks prior to lambing as this is when she is making colostrum. The ewe produces antibodies in response to the vaccination thus increasing the concentration of the protective antibodies to pass onto the new-born lamb when it suckles.

This provides it with passive protection until the lamb can be vaccinated itself from three weeks old with Ovivac P Plus. Studies show that lambs that took in higher levels of immunoglobulins from the colostrum were healthier, faster growing, with fewer losses in the critical weeks after birth. Both Pasteurella pneumonia and ovidriasis diseases can be fatal and often strike without prior warning.

Special offer for February only, receive a FREE 1L sheep conditioning drench worth £17 with every sale of Heptavac P Plus (while stocks last). For advice on animal health please call into the trade centre.

Ration Check

Peter Harland

At this time of year it is worth reviewing your winter rations. Getting an up-to-date forage analysis is a good place to start. Forages in the silage pit can change in terms of energy, protein and pH as we move through the winter and through the pit.

Feeds that seemed to “work” at the start of winter may no longer be suitable or cost effective. A ration that’s not quite right can be indicated through all sorts of signals. Excessive lameness, poor fertility, crust balls, high or low milk urea levels, inconsistent milk the list goes on. If you’re unsure, or just want peace of mind, speak to your rep and Dr Ruth Lawson. They can go through your ration with you and make sure your cows are milking as efficiently as possible.

Get ‘em chipped

Micro chipping will be a legal requirement from the 6th April 2016, when all dogs will need to be microchipped and registered to an approved database by the time they are 8 weeks old. For every dog that is currently not microchipped, you will have until 6th April to get them microchipped and registered on an approved database. Jamesons is pleased to announce that we will be providing this service to all our customers in store from the 3rd February. Sally Conforth and Emma Backhouse will be fully qualified with PeddyMark in association with Petlog and offering a great introductory price of £10 per dog.

Please phone ahead to book an appointment: 01765 680215.

RESEED OR REPAIR?

Sue Sutcliffe

Following the recent heavy rainfall that has affected many parts of the country, flooding and waterlogged fields are a common sight, in which the true damage will eventually need to be assessed. New leys in particular will suffer long periods being submerged under standing water (10-14 days), whereas older deep rooted grasses have a better chance of survival than other species. Also be aware of sediment deposited on the sward, above 5cm and it is unlikely that ryegrass will push through. So think about chain harrowing first to break up deposits, if ground conditions allow.

If small areas are damaged over seeding may be a better solution, take advantage of the opportunity to introduce new grass species and clover into an existing sward. The chance to introduce or increase clover offers a wide range of benefits from fixing much needed nitrogen to boosting protein levels for grazing. Over-seeding will also create an opportunity to prevent unproductive species and weeds coming back. Grants to help restore flooded areas are available from the RPA ‘Farming Recovery Fund’ to help with reseeding.

In spring, it’s a good idea to soil test flooded fields, sediments carried by floodwater can be a lucky dip: it can be rich in nutrients but can also carry trace elements and heavy metals. Mobile nutrients, such as nitrogen and sulphur, will have leached away from the soil profile, leaving plants lacking nutrients for the coming growing season. Flood water can introduce a whole new set of weeds, especially on thin pastures and bare soils.

The new 2016 Jameson’s Premium Seed catalogue offers a full range of different grass mixtures to best suit your production needs. Whether it’s for a full reseed, patching or over seeding just give us a call on 01765 689666 to go through what will be most suitable for you.