

Newsletter January 2020



Management tips for March lambing ewes

by Damien Conboy (Sheep Specialist)

Pregnancy scanning has been taking place on many March lambing flocks over the past few weeks and will continue for the next week or two. The ideal time to scan ewes is approx. **70-85 days** post ram turn out.

This is an important management tool as farmers can split up flocks accordingly and feed ewes based on their scanning results and other factors such as BCS, size of ewe and silage quality.

It is important to **start feeding** ewes carrying **triplets** before you intend to start feeding the rest of the flock. With moderate quality forage farmers should aim to start feeding triplet-bearing ewes a small amount of concentrates (approximately 0.2kg/head/day) from about **10 weeks prior to lambing**.

Offering ewes the correct nutrition during mid and late pregnancy ensures an **adequate supply of colostrum** post lambing and

produces lambs close to **optimum birth weight**, consequently reducing mortality and increasing flock performance and profitability.

In the **last 7 weeks** of pregnancy **75% of foetal growth occurs**. A ewe carrying two lambs with an expected lamb birth weight of 5kg each will see her energy requirements almost double from 7 weeks pre-lambing to lambing time.

In the **last 3-4 weeks** of pregnancy the ewe's **protein requirements** will also almost **double**. For the last 3 weeks of pregnancy the ewe's protein requirement will rise to 200g per day to meet the demands of the rapidly growing foetus.

Once concentrate feeding level goes **above 500g/day**, consider **splitting the feed**. This will reduce the risk of digestive upset such as acidosis and stimulate silage intake.

ONE IN A MILLION CHANCE MIRACLE LAMBS!

As reported on RTE news, This ewe gave birth to 6 healthy lambs over the Christmas period and is owned by Mrs Lydia Hardy and her son Mervyn, a valued member of staff at J Grennan & sons. Pictured is Michael Dolan, Mervyn Hardy and Lydia Hardy.



Crops update

by Paul Mooney (Crop Agronomist)

The mild period over Christmas has transformed cereal crops with many almost at a perfect stage for this time of year. As crops progress, damage from slugs, water-logging and compaction have become visible so take remedial action where practical. Any winter barley crops not already sprayed for weeds need to be done urgently as annual meadow grass won't be controlled when it tillers. Weed control in wheat is not as urgent as Alister does a brilliant job in Spring when temperatures rise. There's no Autumn herbicide for oats so leave until Spring for weed control

SPRING SEED:

Last Autumn, proved most difficult for planting and resulted in approx. 50% of the area planted compared to the previous year. As a result, more spring seed is needed than originally planned for. The bean harvest was difficult throughout Europe in 2019 which means they are very scarce, so talk to us very soon if you need bean seed.

There is high demand for wheat and oats seed, both will be booked up soon. At present there appears to be enough barley seed due to very good harvest yields but orders are coming in early.

The Dept of Ag. have had submissions from some farm bodies on abolishing the 3 crop rule for this year but there is no announcement on it yet. *As soon as you know your cropping plans, talk to us on seed availability.*

BULK FERTILISER SPREADING SERVICE



- All of our bulk spreaders are equipped to offer a very accurate, efficient bulk spreading service across all our retail stores for both tillage and grassland farmers.

- We deliver extremely accurate spread patterns right up to the field boundary with little or no overlapping. Fertiliser wastage & crop lodging will be minimal.

- Auto steering – allowing unmatched accuracy & consistency of spreading widths.

To see our bulk spreaders in action, check out our website & Facebook page or use the following link:

<https://youtu.be/dLSujePom1U>

“What the farmers say”



“ We wanted trouble free calf rearing to ensure the future herd would be given the best start possible. The milk replacer we used was **Wonder Thrive with LungBooster Plus** and we had strong, healthy calves.

The **LungBooster Plus** helps control respiratory and digestive challenges which is a massive aid during the busy calf rearing season. We will only use **Wonder Thrive with LungBooster Plus** on our farm and recommend it to anyone rearing calves. ”

Des & Cathal McHugh,
Strokestown, Co Roscommon

Wonder Thrive Heifer Plus

by Joe Naughton (Calf Specialist)

We would like to introduce our NEW Wonder Thrive Heifer Plus. It's a skim based 22.5% crude protein calf milk replacer (CMR) with 25% Oil – the ideal CMR for your replacement dairy heifer calves. It's new to the Irish Market for 2020 and the formulation has been very successful on the European market to date.

It contains all the added benefits of Wonder Thrive Lungbooster Plus – Pulmo to reduce the risk of pneumonia in calves and the essential oil EMX to prevent and reduce the risk of cryptosporidium and coccidiosis.

Wonder Thrive Heifer Plus is an Energised Calf Milk (ECM) – 25% Oil, therefore making it the same as whole milk. ECM has 10% more metabolisable energy due to the higher level of oil and has the same concentration as whole milk.

Wonder Thrive Heifer Plus is designed for optimal calf development, resistance to disease, high performance, longevity and durability for the dairy herd.

Improving Milk Quality in Transition Cows

by Conor Condron (Ruminant Nutritionist)

The transition period is a challenging time for dairy herds. Set your herd up for success by using Grennans Elite Pre-Calver Mineral, a well-balanced dry cow supplement delivering adequate levels of macro & trace minerals and vitamins. By successfully managing transition period nutrition, there will be improved performance throughout the lactation relating to yield, fertility and herd health. Transition cows that don't receive proper nutrition coming into lactation will often develop metabolic disorders, such as milk fever, retained placentas, ketosis and metritis. These have a massive effect on milk production, health and longevity in the herd.

KEY NUTRITIONAL NEEDS FOR TRANSITION COW SUCCESS:

Trace minerals, particularly Magnesium, Zinc, Iodine & Selenium, reduce the risk of infection/deficiencies. Supplementing your cows with 100-150g/head/day of Grennans Elite Pre-Calver Mineral will leave your herd in a better position to fight off infections during the transition period.



Energy is vital for milk production

After calving, cows will be in negative energy balance due to a reduced feed intake in the days leading up to calving. This means the cow's daily energy requirement is not met by the feed consumed. The cow needs enough energy to calve and still have energy to get up, walk around, eat and produce milk.

Energy is limiting factor in the transition period as feed intakes are low. High-quality forage will help, feeds such as Maize, Barley, Beet Pulp and Soya Bean will help maximise energy intake after calving. Mega Milk 16 will supply high levels of energy when the cow needs it most. The cow's requirements for energy and protein need to be met with high quality feeds for the three weeks post calving, especially when on a predominantly grass silage diet. Chat to our technical team about the transition period to ensure your cows get a good start to the lactation in spring.

Colostrum Management

by Shane Gonoude (Animal Health Specialist)

All calves are born without immunity to infection and common calf diseases such as scour. Calves rely on the antibodies delivered in the colostrum for protection, until they are old enough to produce their own antibodies. Colostrum is rich in antibodies, gets the digestive system functioning and is a good source of vitamins and minerals. Antibodies are proteins built by the immune system to prevent infectious disease.

The quality of colostrum is defined by the concentration of antibodies. It can vary between cows. The second and subsequent milking's of a dairy cow contains less antibodies, it should not be considered as colostrum but as transition milk.

Transition milk is milk that is not saleable from the first eight milking's. Colostrum should not be mixed with transition milk and fed to new born calves.

Colostrum quality can be measured using a Brix Refractometer. The Brix refractometer measures the dry matter levels of dissolved milk. The higher the value of the % dry matter of dissolved colostrum the higher the immunoglobulins (IgG) concentration. The higher the IgG concentration levels the more antibodies present meaning the calf has a better chance of building a healthy immune system to fight against infectious disease.

J Grennan & Sons are offering free colostrum testing using a Brix refractometer in the Rath, Tinnycross, Moate and Moyvore branches.



Brix refractometer