WEANING - LAMBS

Our aim at weaning is to minimise liveweight loss and promote animal health to produce strong healthy lambs. Well weaned lambs will be noted for their health and vigour, and may attract a premium at sale.

Four to six weeks post-marking:
Clostridial diseases can cause many deaths pre-weaning. Often lambs receive the primer (1st) dose at marking. However it is critical the booster (2nd dose) occurs 4-6 weeks later for complete protection. Often, the time between lambing and marking is longer than this, and we have seen lambs die due to pulpy kidney as the spring or autumn break gets away.

To provide the booster vaccination means the lambs will need to be yarded again. However, we can take this opportunity to better prepare the lambs for weaning with strategic health treatments.

Weaning is one of the most stressful times in an animal’s life, so we need to prepare the lambs prior to weaning to lessen the impact that stress can cause. Stress depresses the immune system, which in turn leads to poor growth rates. We can manage the effects of stress prior to weaning to lessen the effects it has on lamb health and growth.

- Clostridial booster vaccinations
  - Glanvac 3 in 1 or 6 in 1
  - We recommend using a vaccine that includes B12.

- Gudair vaccine
- For control of Ovine Johne’s Disease (OJD)
- Vaccinate lambs from 4-16 weeks of age to qualify as ‘Approved Vaccinates’
- 1ml vaccination for life.

- Conduct a worm egg count
- To determine numbers and types of worms present. This will assist with a strategic drenching program at weaning.

At weaning:
- Drench:
  - Use an effective drench as per WEC and larval differentiation results.
  - Do not put lambs back into the lambing paddock after drenching.

- Minerals and Vitamins:
  - Magnesium has a calming effect on animals and can assist to reduce the affect of stress at weaning
  - Salt is essential for lambs to ensure water intake and is also required for magnesium absorption.
  - Supplamins Mid-Mag contains a range of minerals with extra magnesium. Provide as free choice.
  - Vitamin B12 stimulates appetite & feed intake to reduce liveweight loss and give lambs a boost.

Post weaning:
- Suitable, balanced ration
  - Aim for a crude protein level of 15%.
  - Energy to be at least 11.5 MJ/ME per kg/DM.
  - Supplement fibre (hay, straw or dry feed) to slow the rate of passage and improve feed utilisation if the feed is very green and lush. This includes grazing forage crops or lucerne.

Pre-Sale:
- Electrolytes & hay
  - Add electrolytes to water supply at least 24 hours before sale day to keep muscles hydrated and reduce weight loss, particularly in hot weather.
  - Make sure lambs are fed hay or straw the day before transport to the sale. This will reduce the risk of injury to themselves and other lambs, and also keep them cleaner for presentation at the sale.

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