

# April 2026 NEWSLETTER Welcome



## Colostrum supplements - know the IgG levels in your supplement

Using a good colostrum supplement can make a difference to your lamb survival rates and future productivity – after all, half of UK lamb mortality occurs within the first 24 hours of life. Getting this right is key, but there are lots of different options on the market. Ahead of lambing, we wanted to look again at a study done in 2020 by Cherry Bond which compared supplements on the market and their associated immunoglobulin levels (antibody /IgG levels).

It's suggested that when looking at effective colostrum supplementation for successful passive transfer of antibodies in lambs, 3g of IgG should be absorbed shortly after birth. In an ideal scenario if maternal colostrum is of low quality or quantity, this should be split across the lambs and supplemented. Ewe colostrum from your flock will provide better antibodies compared to supplements, however, this won't always be available and therefore, it's best to have a high quality, supplement on hand.

In this study, two batches were tested per product based on a 25g minimum feed. We've highlighted the results in the table along with those that meet the 3g threshold.

| Product Name                            | IgG g/Feed |         |         |
|---|------------|---------|---------|
|   | Batch 1    | Batch 2 | Average |
| Bacto-col Plus (Carrs Billington)       | 2.5        | 2.1     | 2.3     |
| Ultra Concentrate (Nettex)              | 1.2        | 1.4     | 1.3     |
| Colostrum Concentrate Lamb (Provita)    | 0.8        | 0.5     | 0.7     |
| Easymix Lamb (Roxan)                    | 0.8        | 0.8     | 0.8     |
| Colostro+ Lamb (Greencoat)              | 3.1        | 3.1     | 3.1     |
| Immucol Lamb Colostrum (Vetsonic)       | 2.0        | 2.6     | 2.3     |
| Lamaid (VetPlus)                        | 3.3        | 3.1     | 3.2     |
| Lamb Colostrum (Nettex)                 | 0.6        | 0.4     | 0.5     |
| Lamb Force Premium Colostrum (Downland) | 2.7        | 2.7     | 2.7     |
| Lamb Volostrum (Volac)                  | 1.3        | 1.3     | 1.3     |
| Lam Col Gold (Wynnstay)                 | 0.6        | 0.5     | 0.6     |
| Molecare Lamb Colostrum (Mole Valley)   | 3.1        | 2.2     | 2.7     |
| Ovicol (Farmsense)                      | 2.7        | 3.5     | 3.1     |
| Premium Brand Lamb Colostrum (Osmonds)  | 1.1        | 1.7     | 1.4     |
| Shepherdess Lamb Colostrum (Provimi)    | 3.1        | 3.0     | 3.1     |

Of course, this study was done six years ago now and some new products have come to market. The key things to look for on the label - colostrum powder should be at the top / near the top of the ingredients list.

Another tip – Download the Alta Colostrum calculator, or another type of colostrum calculator. It's very handy to work out how much supplement is required based on colostrum quality.

Bond C. Evaluation of lamb colostrum supplements. Vet Rec. 2020 Nov 28;187(11):e100. doi: 10.1136/vr.105763. Epub 2020 Sep 29. PMID: 32994358; PMCID: PMC7786255.



Why do cows have hooves and not feet?

## Goodbye for now!

We bid Alex farewell for now as she embarks on a six month secondment elsewhere within VetPartners. She will be missed around the office and on farm. We wish her the best of luck in her new role and will keep you updated on her progress.

## Lambing Open Day



Jessica and James spent the day talking to some of the 1000+ members of the public that came to see what goes on during lambing and calving time at Binley's Bridge Farm in Smeeton Westerby on Saturday the 21<sup>st</sup> of March. There were plenty of lambs born during the day and it really was an eye opener for lots of the attendees. We have supported this annual event for many years now; it's aim being to provide insights into responsible farming practices and to promote high animal welfare standards. Please do let us know if you are running events that could benefit from veterinary presence. We are so grateful for our wonderful client base and are always willing to assist where possible.

**Flock Club – on 11<sup>th</sup> May KRKA will be coming to speak to the flock club about coccidiosis in sheep. Please do not hesitate to contact the practice if you would like to know more about our Flock Club.**

## Spring Priorities for Cattle Health and Productivity

As we move into spring, the shift in weather, forage availability, and management routines brings both opportunities and risks for cattle enterprises. Whether you're running a spring-calving herd or managing growing stock heading out to pasture, this is a critical period to set animals up for a productive season.

### Transition to Grass: Managing Nutritional Change

Turnout is one of the most significant dietary transitions cattle experience. Spring grass is highly digestible and rich in protein but often low in fibre and certain minerals such as magnesium. Rapid introduction can predispose animals to digestive upset and metabolic issues. Gradual turnout, where possible, helps rumen microbes adapt. Offering fibre (such as silage or hay) during the early grazing period can stabilise rumen function. Monitoring body condition is also key—lush grass can lead to rapid changes, particularly in younger stock.

### Grass Staggers (Hypomagnesaemia)

Spring-calving cows are especially vulnerable to grass staggers as requirements increase with milk production. Dietary magnesium levels can be influenced by the soil and grass content, lush pastures are often low in fibre which results in rapid transit through the rumen, reducing the time available for magnesium absorption. Additionally high levels of potassium and ammonia in fertilisers can impact absorption increasing the risk of grass staggers.

Preventative strategies include:

- Providing high-magnesium mineral supplements (licks, boluses, or in-feed/water), it is important to bear in mind that magnesium is not palatable to cows so using these supplements correctly is essential.
- Supplementing with forage to increase dietary fibre.

Early signs—such as excitability, twitching, or unsteadiness—require immediate veterinary attention, as cases can progress rapidly.

### Parasite Control at Turnout

Key considerations:

- Strategic use of anthelmintics, this will vary based on the animal's age. Adult cattle often don't require any treatments. Targeted use in first-season grazers based on testing/monitoring. Leaving a percentage of animals per group untreated can additionally aid with delaying resistance.
- Using faecal egg counting, body condition scores and growth rates to guide treatment decisions.
- Awareness of lungworm risk later in the season, especially in naïve animals

Discussing a targeted parasite control plan with your vet can help optimise timing and product choice.

### Breeding Preparation

For herds aiming for tight calving patterns, preparation for the breeding season begins now. Key steps include:

- Body condition scoring cows (targeting BCS 2.5–3.0 at service)
- Reviewing mineral status, particularly trace elements like selenium and copper
- Conducting pre-breeding fertility checks in bulls

Identifying and addressing issues early helps improve conception rates and maintain a compact calving block.

### Lameness and Mobility

As cattle move onto harder tracks and cover more ground, lameness can become more apparent. Spring is a good time to:

- Inspect feet and address overgrowth or lesions
- Improve track surfaces where feasible
- Monitor for infectious causes such as digital dermatitis

Prompt treatment reduces long-term impact on productivity and welfare.

### In Summary

Spring is a period of transition that requires proactive management. Attention to nutrition, mineral balance, parasite control, and early disease detection can significantly influence herd performance for the rest of the year. If you'd like to review your herd health plan or discuss any of the points above, don't hesitate to get in touch with the practice.

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