

### Watery Mouth & Spectam Availability

As most of you are now aware, CEVA have had a batch failure so the supplies of Spectam for lambing season have been limited. Oroject has been discontinued by Zoetis so there is no equivalent antibiotic alternative available. We have had a reduced amount of stock allocated to us and have tried to allocate it as fairly as possible based on previous usage but have recently received a small order so do have a few bottles left available if anyone's needing it.

It has however, possibly a good opportunity to look at the need for spectam on farm as there is a growing demand to reduce antibiotic use where possible. We have supplied an alternative product called "Sustain" which is a probiotic combined with energy and vitamins which when given ASAP after birth encourages the lamb to get up and take a decent feed of colostrum whilst also providing some good bacteria and toxin binders for the gut. The time to use it is at the beginning of lambing before there has been a build up of bugs in the lambing pens and then once you start to see watery mouth, switch to Spectam for all lambs.

We would be interested to get feedback on using Sustain for future reference.



### The Importance of Colostrum

The importance of timely administration of good quality colostrum cannot be underestimated. It is the first milk produced by cows and ewes after birth and is essential. Colostrum provides important nutrients and antibodies needed to kickstart the immune system and newborn calves and lambs rely on this source as they have no innate protective antibodies to resist disease challenges. The gut however is only able to absorb these antibodies in the first 24hrs of life. If adequate colostrum is not provided within the first 24hrs, the likely consequences are ill health, poor growth rates and increased mortality in calves.

The principles of good colostrum management are condensed into "the 5 Qs":

**Quantity** - newborns need 10% of their body weight in colostrum within 12 hrs of birth; ideally 50ml/kg for a lamb in an initial dose or 2-3L per calf within the first 2-4hrs followed by the same again within 12hrs. This equates to 20min continuous suckling for calves per feed.

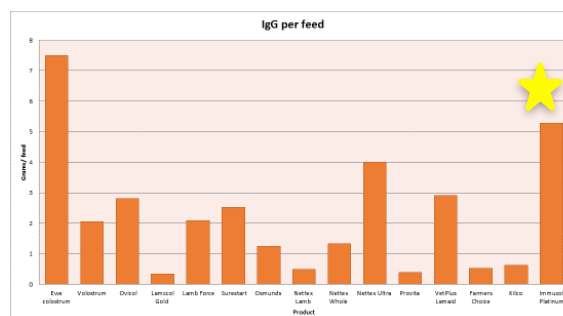
**Quality** - this can vary greatly between animals, first time dams and cows/ewes that are producing a lot of milk, or those that have had inadequate protein in the winter ration will produce poorer quality colostrum with fewer antibodies in it. If colostrum is not available from the dam, **it is important to use good quality powdered colostrum replacer, not a colostrum supplement.** A replacer is made from pure powdered colostrum rather than colostrum whey. Also beware, you get what you pay for in terms of quality which is why we supply Immucol (starred on graphs) as it has the highest levels of antibody (IgG) on the market.

**Quickly** - gut closure starts from the moment a calf/lamb first suckles so getting a feed of good quality colostrum within 2-4hrs of birth is essential.

**Quietly** - If calves/lambs are stressed while being fed colostrum, then they won't absorb the antibodies as efficiently as those that are calm. This means a stressed newborn will require more colostrum in order to achieve the same level of immunity.

**sQueaky Clean** - good hygiene is essential when feeding colostrum. Feeding bottles should be cleaned and disinfected between use so that harmful bacteria can't build up in feeding equipment. Having separate feeding tubes/bottles for sick animals is also important so that bugs are not spread from sick animal to newborn animals. Keeping cows/ewes well bedded is also important so that it is less likely that calves will pick up infections from dirty teats.

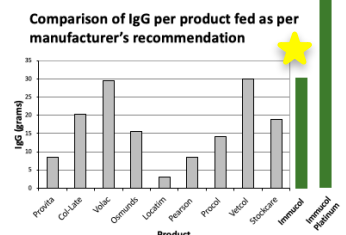
### Lamb Colostrum Comparison



### Comparison

### Calf Colostrum

- ✓ High IgG content
- ✓ EBL, IBR & Johne's free
- ✓ Complete feed with high fat and protein content plus essential vitamins and minerals
- ✓ Convenient and easy to mix



# Common Ailment Treatments

At this time year, we routinely get asked what the best treatments are for various conditions so here is a quick guide to the common diseases we see:

**Scour:** The mainstay of treatment for scour is to replace fluids lost and supporting the calf. Most causes of scour are actually viral in newborn animals so antibiotics are often not needed and treatment should include an anti-inflammatory painkiller (Metacam™ or Kelaprogen™) and electrolytes. The suckle reflex is an important signal as to how serious the scour is. If present and the calf is relatively bright and up on its feet, this is a good sign and oral fluids are indicated. Aim to supply 4-8L of fluids to calves and 500ml to lambs throughout the day with 2-4 hours between feeds. Calves will still require energy so alternate rehydration products (Lifeaid™, Effydral™ or Recofast™) and milk feeds – try to avoid tube feeding milk as this can sour in the rumen and cause further problems. Strengthening of the suckle reflex indicates improvement – if there is no improvement over 12 hours intravenous fluids may be necessary.

If the suckle reflex is absent, the calf/lamb has sunken eyes, has shown no improvement with oral fluids or the calf is unable to stand, this suggests the calf/lamb is suffering from acidosis and will need intra-venous bicarbonate and intravenous fluids. Although IV fluids can be given on farm, hospitalisation at the practice allows on going treatment and some much needed TLC in our new calf warming box!



**Navel ill/Joint ill:** this is often quite a painful condition so it is common for affected animals to spend a lot of time lying down. Anti-inflammatory pain killers are important (Metacam™ every 2 days) along with long-acting penicillin (Vetrimoxin LA™) every 2 days until the navel feels back to normal or there is no sign of lameness for 48hrs.

**Coccidiosis:** often seen in calves/lambs at grass when 3-6 weeks old. Once you have one clinical case of dark/bloody scour, all the animals in the group will be infected so group treatment is necessary with an anti-coccidial (we have Tolracol™, which a cheaper equivalent to Vecoxan™ available at the practice). For sick animals, treatment with a specific antibiotic, Diatrim™, daily for 3-5 days, pain relief (Metacam™ or Kelaprogen™) and supportive fluids as per scour are required.

**Mastitis:** there can be a couple of different presentations of mastitis;

1. e-coli infection causes a toxic mastitis typically within 72hrs of birth and can be potentially life-threatening. Treatment is based on flushing the toxins out of the body with copious oral fluids (20L twice a day) along with Kelaprogen™ daily for its painkiller and anti-endotoxic properties. Stripping the contents of the udder daily and using intra-mammary tubes (Ubrolexin™) also help control infection.
2. Milder cases of mastitis seen within the first few weeks of lactation, characterised by a tender udder and clots in the milk. This presentation should be treated by daily stripping of the affected quarters, intra-mammary antibiotics (Ubrolexin™) if less than 2 quarters affected or Pen/Strep™ if multiple quarters affected and an anti-inflammatory painkiller to make the cow/ewe more comfortable and allow its offspring to suckle for 3-5 days.

