

# PEAK VETERINARY NEWS

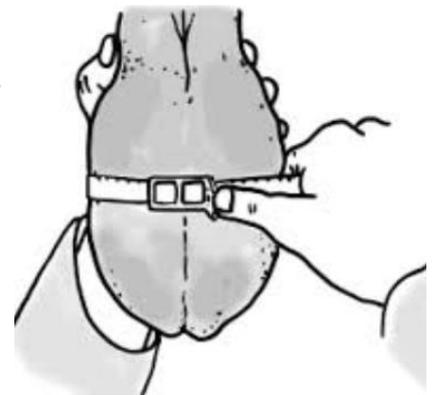
September 2019

## Tupping Time - Preparing Your Rams

The tupping season is fast approaching again, so it is time to ensure your rams are prepared for the job! Pre-tupping exams should be carried out at least 6 weeks before.

Here are a few key points:

- **Feet** – are there any signs of lameness? Sound feet are important when serving, so it important to fully assess all 4 feet of each ram. Ensure there are no signs of diseases such as footrot or scald.
- **Teeth** – check for any missing teeth, abscesses or misalignment.
- **Testicles** – should feel firm with no lumps or bumps, the circumference of the scrotum should measure approx 34cm, less than 30cm is too small.  
The testicles should not be hot or painful on palpation and should both be of equal size.
- **Body condition** – your ram should be BCS 3.5-4 at the start of breeding season. If they are underweight this should be resolved now to reach ideal BCS.
- **Health** – ensure that they are up to date with vaccinations and treated for worms if necessary (bring a fresh faecal sample into the practice for a faecal egg count if needed).
- **Supplements** – it is useful to assess your flock's trace element status prior to the start of the breeding system. Selenium in particular can affect fertility levels.
- Other things to check include the **brisket**, the **penis/sheath** and **head/neck/shoulders**. These should all be checked for signs of any wounds or infection.



## Teasers

Vasectomies should be performed **at least 8 weeks before** teasers are needed. A ratio of one teaser ram to 100-150 ewes is recommended. Teasers are a very good way of condensing the lambing period and should be run with the ewes for up to 20 days before the tups are due to go in. Make sure your rams are at full health as a good tease can result in up to 90% of group being served in 5 days.

We do perform vasectomies, and can do them either at the practice or on farm. If you would like one doing, please give us plenty of notice!

## Vaccinations

Vaccinations against Chlamydia and Toxoplasma must be given at least 4 weeks before tupping as a single injection. Make sure you leave enough time for any delay in ordering.

## Body Condition Scoring Sheep

### How to Condition Score

Score 1



The vertical and horizontal processes are prominent and sharp. The fingers can be pushed easily below the transverse and each process can be felt. The loin is thin with no fat cover.

Score 2



The vertical processes are prominent but smooth; individual processes being felt only as corrugations. The horizontal processes are smooth and rounded, but it is still possible to press fingers under. The loin muscle is a moderate depth but with little fat cover.

Score 3



The vertical processes are smooth and rounded; the bone is only felt with pressure. The horizontal processes are also smooth and well covered; hard pressure is required with the fingers to find the ends. The loin muscle is full and with a moderate fat cover.

Score 4



The vertical processes are only detectable as a line. The ends of the horizontal processes cannot be felt. The loin muscles are full and rounded, and have a thick covering of fat.

Score 5



The vertical and transverse processes cannot be detected even with pressure; there is a dimple in the fat layers where the processes should be. The loin muscles are very full and covered with very thick fat.

Below is a guide for body condition scores of sheep at different times in the year:

	Hill	Upland	Lowland	Rams
<b>Weaning</b>	2	2	2.5	
<b>Tupping</b>	2.5	3	3.5	3.5-4
<b>Mid Preg</b>	2	2.5	3	
<b>Lambing</b>	2	2.5	3	

Scores above or below these can lead to a variety of problems including poor fertility, difficulty lambing, poor milk production and predisposition to different diseases. Ewe condition score can affect lamb birth weights also so low condition score at lambing can produce small sickly lambs.

Flushing can be performed in ewes early in the breeding season. This is when ewes are put onto a rising plane of nutrition after mating to help increase the number of eggs produced.



We are just re-iterating information provided last year regarding the TB Advisory Service.

The process includes an in-depth discussion on your farm management and health status to evaluate any high TB risk areas. It then progresses to finding areas around your farm for any evidence of TB risk. You will finally be given 4 areas of improvement to reduce your risk. The people who run this service are extremely experienced in TB advisement.

This is run and, most importantly, funded by DEFRA through the Rural Development Programme for England and is available to all farmers in high risk or edge areas.

You will be eligible for a **FREE** on-farm advisory visit or phone call by an experienced farm consultant. We also have the opportunity to come to this visit so we can be included within the procedure and help you to get the most out of the service.

For more information, contact us and we can advise you on how to proceed.

Further information can be found at [tbas.org.uk](http://tbas.org.uk)

As always, any issues you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact us,

*Warm Regards:  
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