

NEWSLETTER

The latest from the South Moor Farm team



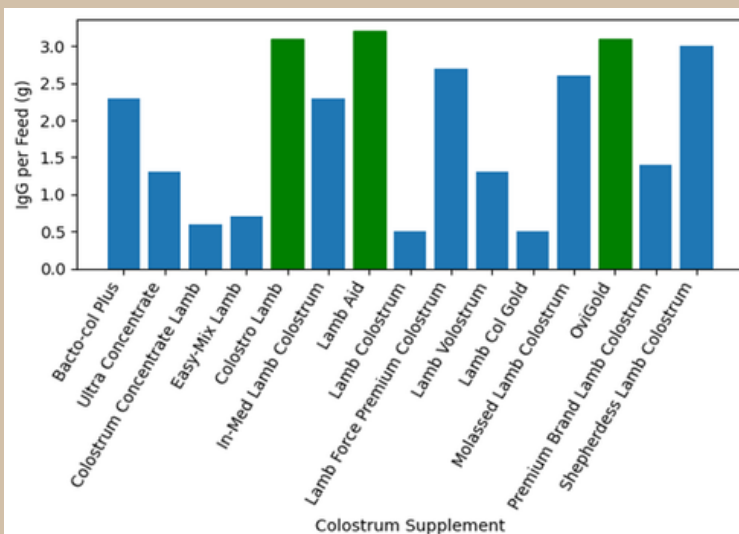
THE RISK OF GRASS STAGGERS

With rapid growth of spring grass fast approaching on well-watered pastures cases of staggers may start to rise.

Grass staggers or hypomagnesemia is a life threatening metabolic condition caused by low magnesium. Magnesium is essential to maintain nerve function, muscle contraction and energy metabolism. Lush fast growing grass is often low in magnesium and high in potassium (which further reduces magnesium absorption). Risk factors for this condition include using fertilisers high in potassium, older animals, high yielding or animals early in lactation.

Although commonly associated with dairy cows, beef cattle and sheep can also be affected. Early signs can be subtle: nervous signs, twitching, reduced appetite and a drop in milk. Animals may then become unsteady, go down, off their feet and convulse. They can even die if untreated so spotting them promptly is really important. Treatment is supplementation with a bottle of Magniject, which must be given under the skin, if given into the vein it is lethal. Prevention is far better than treatment; provide high magnesium mineral buckets or powders prior to turnout. Soil analysis can provide an insight into potassium and magnesium levels on pasture. Consider offering some concentrates or forage alongside lush grass. For sheep, ensure adequate access to magnesium supplementation in high risk groups. If you have any concerns in your herd or flock then do let us know.

NOT ALL COLOSTRUM IS THE SAME!



When supplementing colostrum for lambs they should be receiving 50ml/kg within the first 2 hours of life. The colostrum should be made up fresh with clean equipment, and be kept in the fridge for a maximum of 24 hours. It should be heated to be lukewarm, slowly in a water-bath, never a microwave!

However not all colostrum products are the same. A recent independent study into the quality of colostrum available to buy revealed that only 3 out of the 15 studied reached the ideal threshold of over 3.0g/ feed of IgG. The following graph shows the results, and the green bars show which ones are best! (Colostro Lamb, Lamb Aid and OviGold)

WELCOME TO THE TEAM SASHA & WELCOME BACK BEN

We would like to welcome Sasha to the South Moor Farm Team! She has experience in all areas of farm vetting so will be an asset to our current amazing team.

We are also welcoming Ben Odbert back this month after 4 months travelling and volunteering around South America. Hopefully he will bring back some of that sunshine with him, we sure could do with it!

NEW OFFICE HOURS AND PRICE CHANGES

Hours change - we are pleased to announce that from the 1st of May South Moor Farm will be changing our operating hours to 8am - 5pm. This is in response to feedback we have received and increasing requests for pre 9am starts. Our OOH service will start at 5pm and will run until 8am. We would ask that any late afternoon drug orders are received by 4:50pm at the latest for same day collection from a lockbox at any of our practices.

AI price change - from the 1st of April we are applying a **20% reduction** on our First Cow AI Fee- please call for further details.

BEEF HEALTH CLUB MEETING

We had a great BHC meeting thanks to The Lethbridges @ Holsome Park for hosting! We had a tour of their farm and chat about what their system is like and what they do. Before going inside out of the rain for some



tea and cake and a good chat about pneumonia, blue tongue and vaccines with our MSD rep Daisy.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Udder Health Day

- Tuesday 17th March
- Gooseford Farm, Whiddon Down, EX20 2QQ
- 10:45 for 11am start
- Lunch and refreshments provided
- Interactive day covering all aspects of mastitis prevention

Dairy Health Club Meeting

- Monday 30th March
- Cali Inn, California Cross, PL21 0SG
- 7pm start
- Covering all aspects of pre-turnout and worming

Please let us know if you would like to attend!

AHWP FUNDING REMINDER

Remember until Summer 2027 the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway funding is available to help support proactive health planning and help improve performance and welfare on farms. Please give us a call to book in.



SPOTTING AND STOPPING NAVEL ILL

Navel ill, also known as joint ill is a common bacterial infection of the umbilicus in new-born calves and lambs. It typically occurs within the first few days to weeks of life and is usually associated with poor hygiene at birth or inadequate colostrum intake.

At birth, the umbilical cord is a moist, open structure that provides an easy entry point for bacteria from the environment. If bedding, pens, or lambing/calving areas are dirty, bacteria such as *Escherichia coli*, *Trueperella pyogenes*, or various *Streptococcus* and *Staphylococcus* species can invade the navel. Failure of passive transfer due to insufficient colostrum intake further increases susceptibility, as the newborn's immune system is not yet fully developed.

Clinically, affected calves and lambs may show a swollen, painful, and moist navel, sometimes with a discharge of pus. The area may feel thickened or firm on palpation. In more severe cases, infection can spread internally to the umbilical vessels, liver, or bloodstream, leading to joint ill (septic arthritis), lameness, fever, depression, pneumonia or even death.

Treatment is best when dealt with quickly. Systemic antibiotics and anti-inflammatories are advised. Severely infected navels may even require surgical drainage. However, prevention is far more effective than treatment. Key preventive measures include ensuring a clean birthing environment, dipping the navel (rather than spraying) in iodine or 'nobac navel' as soon as possible and keep dipping multiple times until the navel has completely dried up. Good overall hygiene and management significantly reduce the incidence of navel ill in both calves and lambs.

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Farm Vets**

**MAR
2026**