

Uniblock trial on a novel feedblock formulation to maximise colostrum quality in sheep

Introduction

Lamb survival is a key issue on most UK sheep farms and is of increasing importance with recent changes to more prolific breeds and to systems which involve low labour inputs such as outdoor lambing of large flocks.

Colostrum quality and uptake is an important component of lamb survival, providing both nutrients for combating hypothermia and protection against disease. Nutrition of the pregnant ewe has a major effect on the amount and quality of colostrum produced. This trial was designed to study the effect of feedblock formulation on colostrum production and uptake as measured by colostrum IGG content at lambing.

Feedblocks formulated to improve colostrum quality were compared with control blocks in a trial with 200 May lambing twin bearing Lleyn ewes. Blocks were fed for approx 4 weeks pre lambing, initially in a sheep house along with silage in four pens and latterly out at pasture in two fields.

Interim Results (not checked):

Treatment group	IGG rep 1	IGG rep2	Mean
Treated	184	198	191
Control	145	163	154

There was an increase of approx 25% in IGG content of colostrum with the treated blocks. I should be able to give significance levels by Thursday AM, the data was very variable.

If results are significant it should be possible to produce a poster for BSAS although publication would not be guaranteed as the trial lacks adequate replication (not enough farms).

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