

RUMENCO



INNOVATIVE SUPPLEMENT STREAMLINES EWE AND LAMB FEEDING

Powys sheep producer Brian Davies has come to expect a far easier lambing season and crop of good, strong lambs from a variety of breeds since taking decisive steps a few years ago to streamline his supplementary feeding system.

Renown in Welsh breeding circles, Brian Davies of Dan yr Eglwys, Garthbrenny near Brecon had to restock totally after the catastrophic loss of all seven of his different breeds during the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001. After supplying rams for three to four generations the loss was heartbreaking, but fortunately he was able to restore the different bloodlines by tracking down previous sheep sales and has built the flock back up meticulously. His 450 half pedigree, half commercial flock now comprises Texel, Beltex, Charollais and Clun Forest ewes and he's even running a small additional flock of Rylands.

Ewes lamb in batches, with the Charollais starting in December and the Texel and Beltex animals starting at the end of February.

“We want lambing to be as straightforward as possible with minimal interference from us, but at the same time maximise the number of viable lambs. Thankfully, since we introduced a supplementary feeding approach that focuses on the nutritional needs of both the ewe and the lamb at the same time, lambing has never been easier. We also have no need to tube lambs with colostrum,” Brian comments.

Before introducing Rumenco's Lifeline Lamb & Ewe, lambing difficulties were not unusual at Dan yr Eglwys. “On a number of occasions we'd have to physically break dry skin covering the head of the lamb before the ewe would lamb, but Lifeline has solved that problem – healthy, viable lambs just now appear in a pool of water,” he says.

“Ewes are quick to lamb, show less incidence of retained placenta and body reserves are boosted to promote high milk yield in early lactation. Lambs are quick to stand and show a strong desire to suckle.”

According to Ian Davies from Hay & Brecon Farmers, independent trial work has proven the value of Lifeline. An SAC study with 200 ewes fed grass silage and grazed grass has shown that feeding a well balanced, energy and quality protein bucket including minerals, vitamins and trace elements during the six week pre-lambing period can significantly increase immuno-globulin levels in the colostrum.

“The research conducted in conjunction with Rumenco showed that it is as possible to achieve a 25% increase in the IgG content of ewe colostrum if you substitute a standard

high energy bucket with an innovatively balanced energy plus protein lick including minerals, vitamins and trace elements,” he says.

“The immuno-protein IgG is an important measure of colostrum quality that infers passive immunity to disease in young lambs. As all shepherds know, healthier lambs have increased feed intake and growth rate, show improved early vigour and general health, thrive and are less likely to suffer from conditions such as coccidiosis, hypothermia and mis-mothering. Losses due to predators may also be reduced when lambs are livelier if born outside.”

Brian Davies introduces Lifeline to his ewes a month before lambing. For ewes carrying singles this is all they get. Twin bearing ewes also receive some cake from two weeks before lambing with triplet carriers given the compound feed from eight weeks before.

“Lifeline is aptly named as it really has extended us one; streamlining and making lambing a less stressful time. We hardly had to intervene last year and only lost one lamb. Lambs also got away to a flying start and most were gone by July with almost 95% grading as 2 a 3Ls.”

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