



## Case Study: Using Rehydion Gel as part of a protocol for supporting lambs with watery mouth

'Using Rehydion, as part of our protocol for lambs with watery mouth, has dramatically improved lamb survival rate and reduced lamb deaths from this common neonatal disease.'

Pauhla and Martin Whitaker, Overtown Farm



### Case summary

Pauhla and Martin have struggled with a recurring history of watery mouth (an endotoxemia caused by an E.Coli bacterial infection) in newborn lambs. In a difficult year, case levels have varied from 8-12% of all lambs born, with total lamb mortality of around 10-15%. This has been despite careful attention to detail, improved hygiene, and close attention to ewe factors.

### flockhealthltd

The farm has been flock health planning with Phillipa Page from Flock Health Ltd for many years during which they have actively discussed ways to reduce and prevent disease.

**To reduce the losses of lambs affected by watery mouth they have together developed a protocol of which oral rehydration therapy forms an integral part.**

**A focus on ewe nutrition and body condition score has significantly reduced the numbers of watery mouth cases by improving the quality of colostrum and quantity supplied to the lambs.**

The use of a pen side Brix refractometer to check colostrum quality identifies ewes with lower quality colostrum and helps to determine which lambs are more likely to be at risk from E. Coli infection. It also helps to make decisions around which ewes to harvest spare colostrum from based upon adequate quality.

### Investigation of watery mouth outbreak

During an outbreak of watery mouth in 2023, Phillipa and Pauhla embarked upon an investigation which involved taking a blood sample from lambs aged 24-48 hours old to assess which lambs had received adequate passive transfer from their mother's colostrum. Their dam's colostrum was also assessed along with the pre lambing diet, body condition score, age, and breed.





**Preliminary results from this investigation show that most lambs with a failure of passive transfer of immunity were born to dams with a body condition score of less than three out of five.**

### **Treatment of watery mouth cases**

Pauhla has refined her protocol for watery mouth cases over numerous lambing periods and is satisfied with how she is now able to save many affected lambs.

**Rehydion, for oral rehydration, formed a critical part of the plan and enabled the lambs to be quickly rehydrated.**

Lamb deaths occur resulting from a bacteraemia and endotoxemia due to toxin release from the rapid growth and death of E.coli bacteria in the gut and circulatory system. This can result in rapid dehydration and organ failure due to an overwhelming systemic inflammatory response.

**'Catching lambs with watery mouth as soon as clinical signs appear and using supportive therapy to correct dehydration is crucial to the future survival of the lamb'.**

**'Using Rehydion is really easy', remarks Pauhla. A 2ml pea sized drop of Rehydion into a 50ml syringe of warmed water forms an effective rehydration solution. Pauhla acts immediately on detection of a case of watery mouth, giving antibiotic therapy and injecting NSAIDs at this first treatment, alongside giving the Rehydion solution to the lamb via a sterile stomach tube. The Rehydion solution is then repeated 4 hours later.**

By this time in most cases the lambs are responding, and a suck reflex is usually returning or improving. They can then accept a small amount of their mother's milk and are soon fully recovered and up and sucking normally.

Of course, there are cases where lambs don't respond. Pauhla comments that these cases are fortunately now few and far between following the development of a solid protocol watery mouth.

**The focus on prevention remains key. Ewe nutrition and body condition score are carefully monitored throughout the year, with colostrum quality and hygiene assessed each lambing time. A vet-farmer developed treatment protocol adds to a successful lambing.**



**It is very important to discuss with your vet the use of antibiotic and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory treatments alongside oral rehydration therapies as a protocol for watery mouth in lambs.**

**For further information on Rehydion Gel please scan:**



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