Pre-lambing Health

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Tim Geraghty

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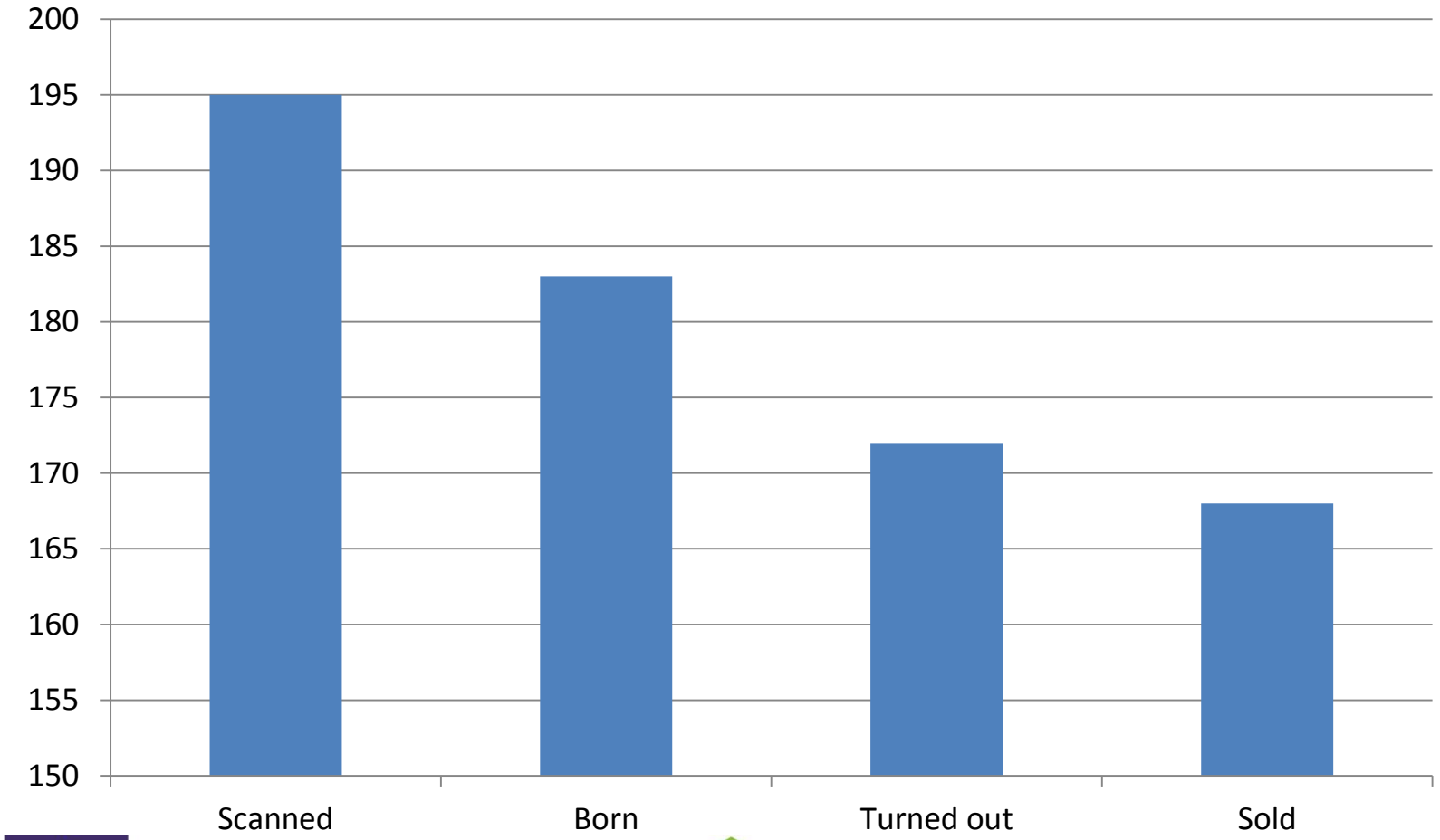
Lambs scanned and surviving



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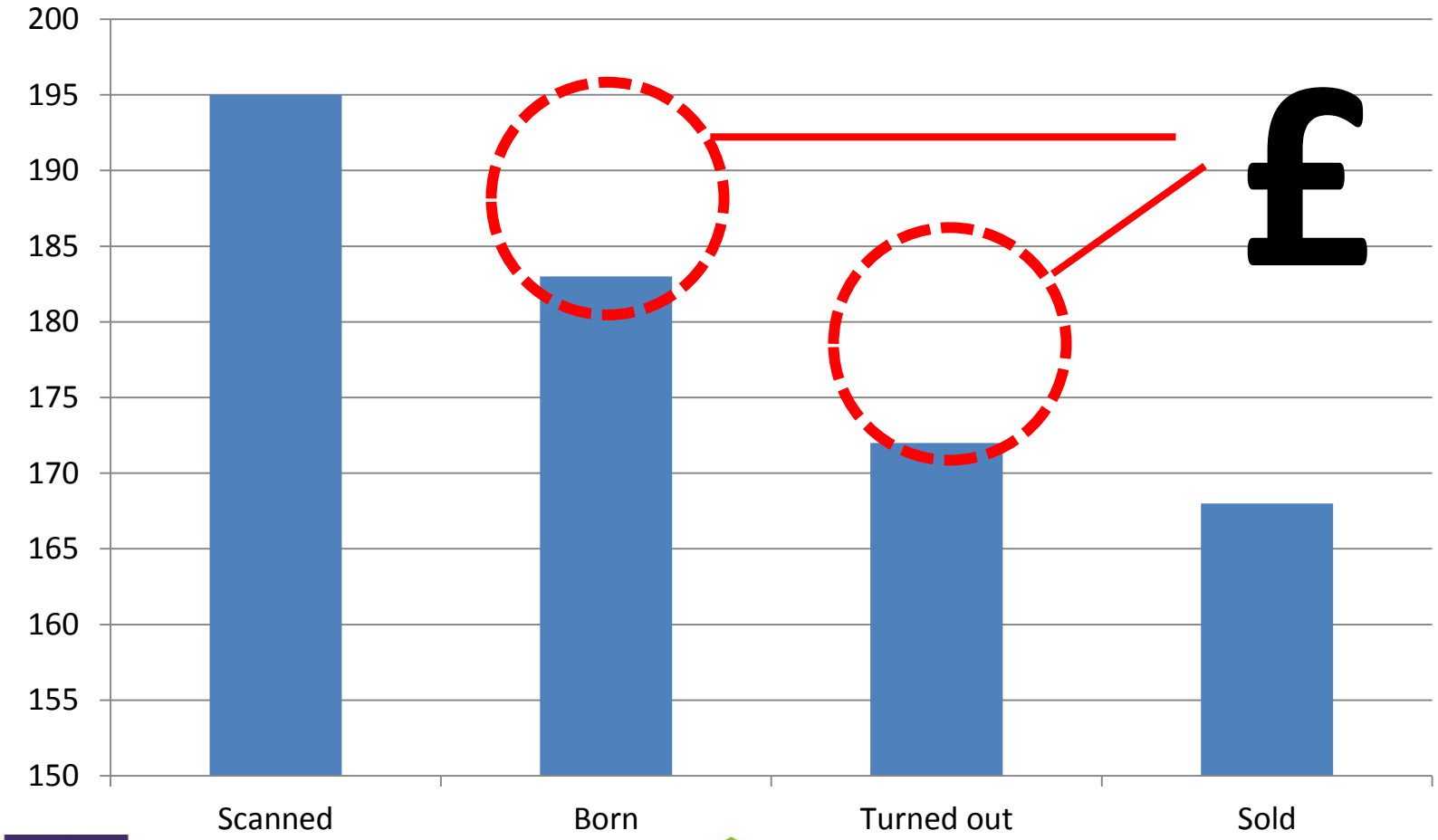

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Pre-lambing health

1. **Abortion – investigate or not?**
2. Diet – ask the ewe what she thinks
3. Trace-elements – not too much, not too little
4. Don’t forget…
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SAC Vet Services

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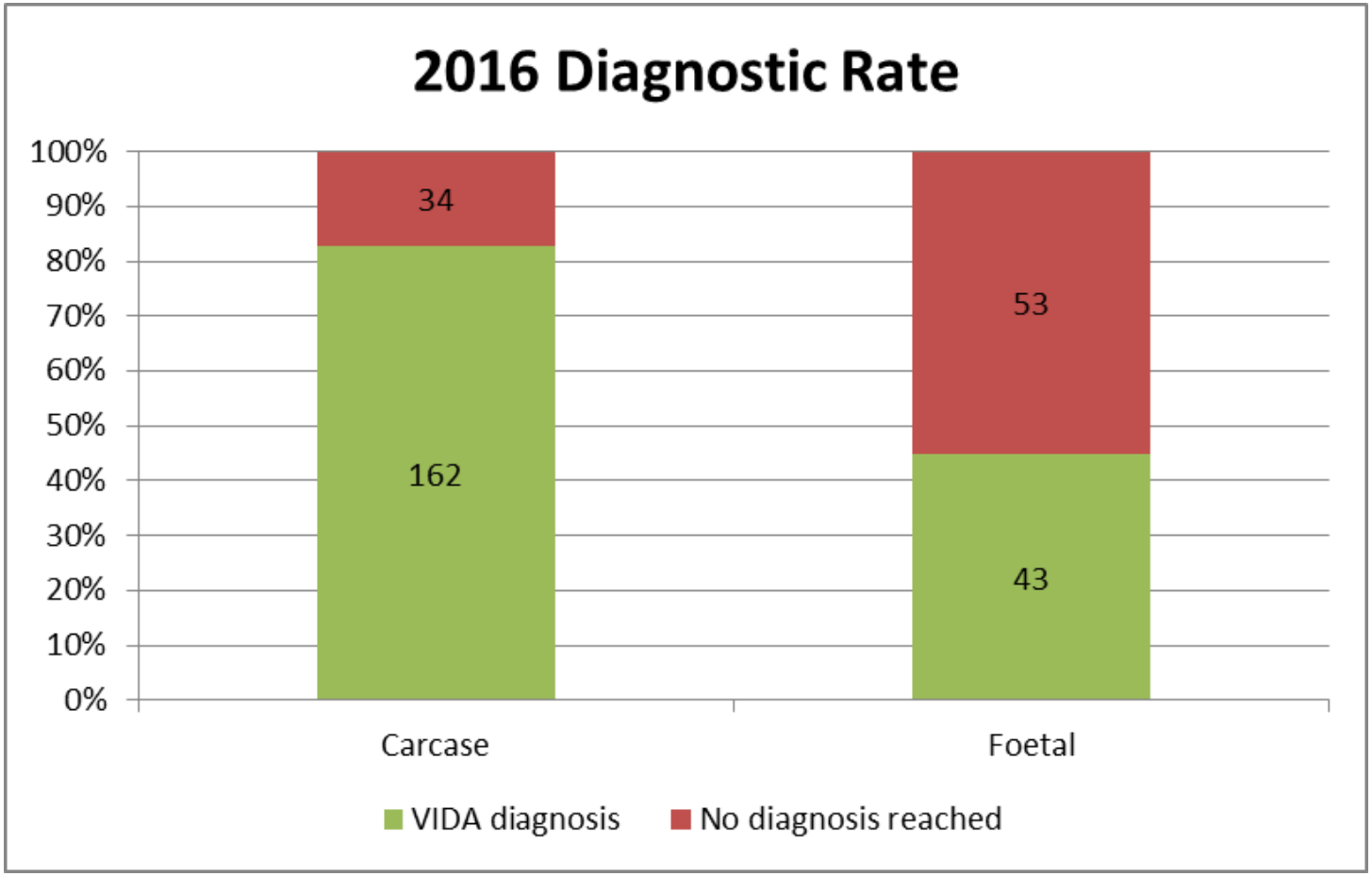

Aberdeen DSC: Cattle, sheep and pig submissions 2016

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What is tested for?

- BVD / BD
- IBR (cattle)
- Salmonellosis
- Leptospirosis (cattle)
- Campylobacter
- Neosporosis / toxoplasmosis
- Brucellosis
- EAE (in sheep)
- Listeria
- B. licheniformis
- Fungal abortion
- Congenital malformations
- Birth associated trauma
- Some emerging diseases (e.g. including schmallenberg)
- Other bacterial causes
- Iodine deficiency (stillbirths only)

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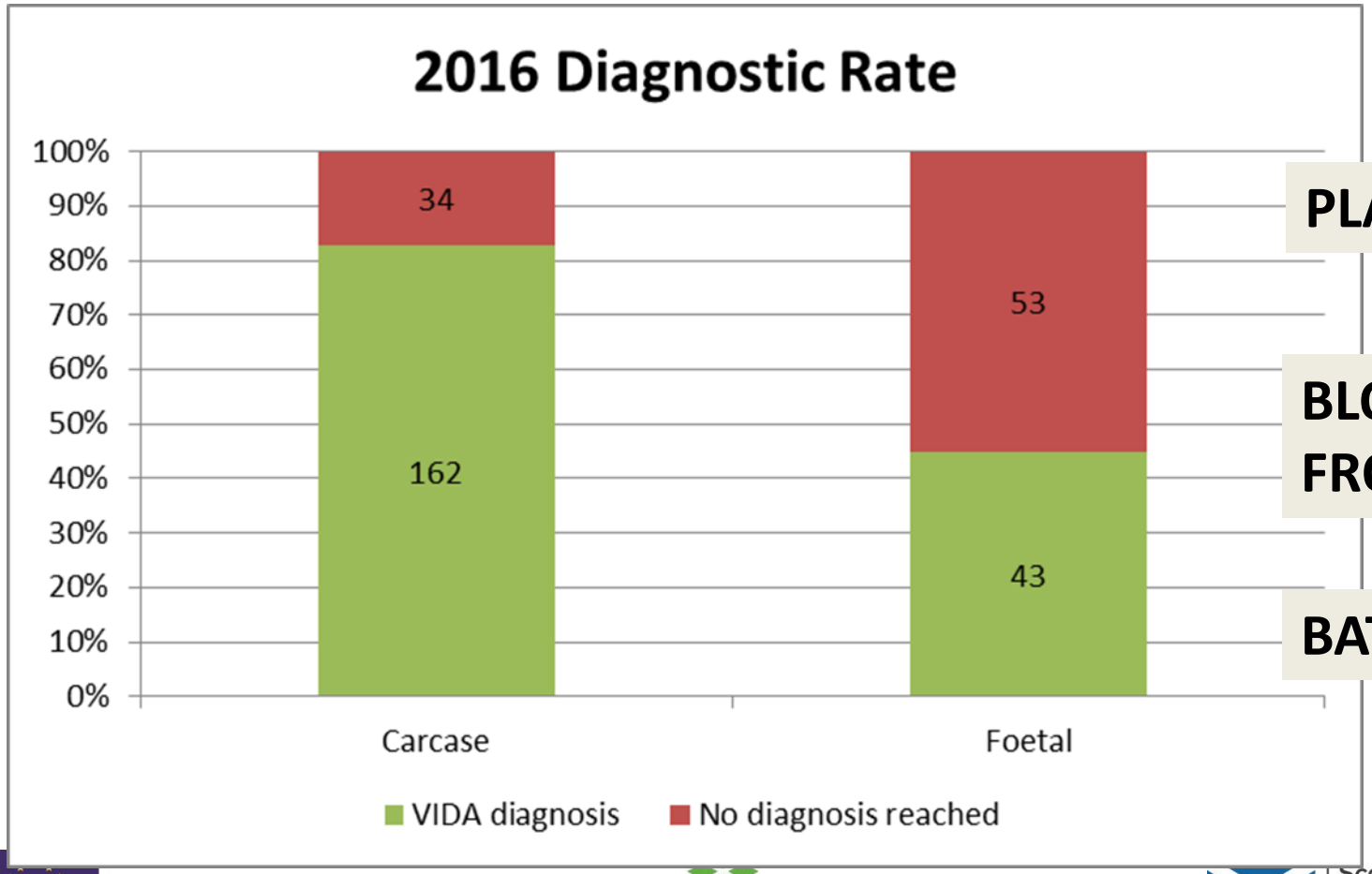

PLACENTA

BLOOD FROM DAM

BATCHES

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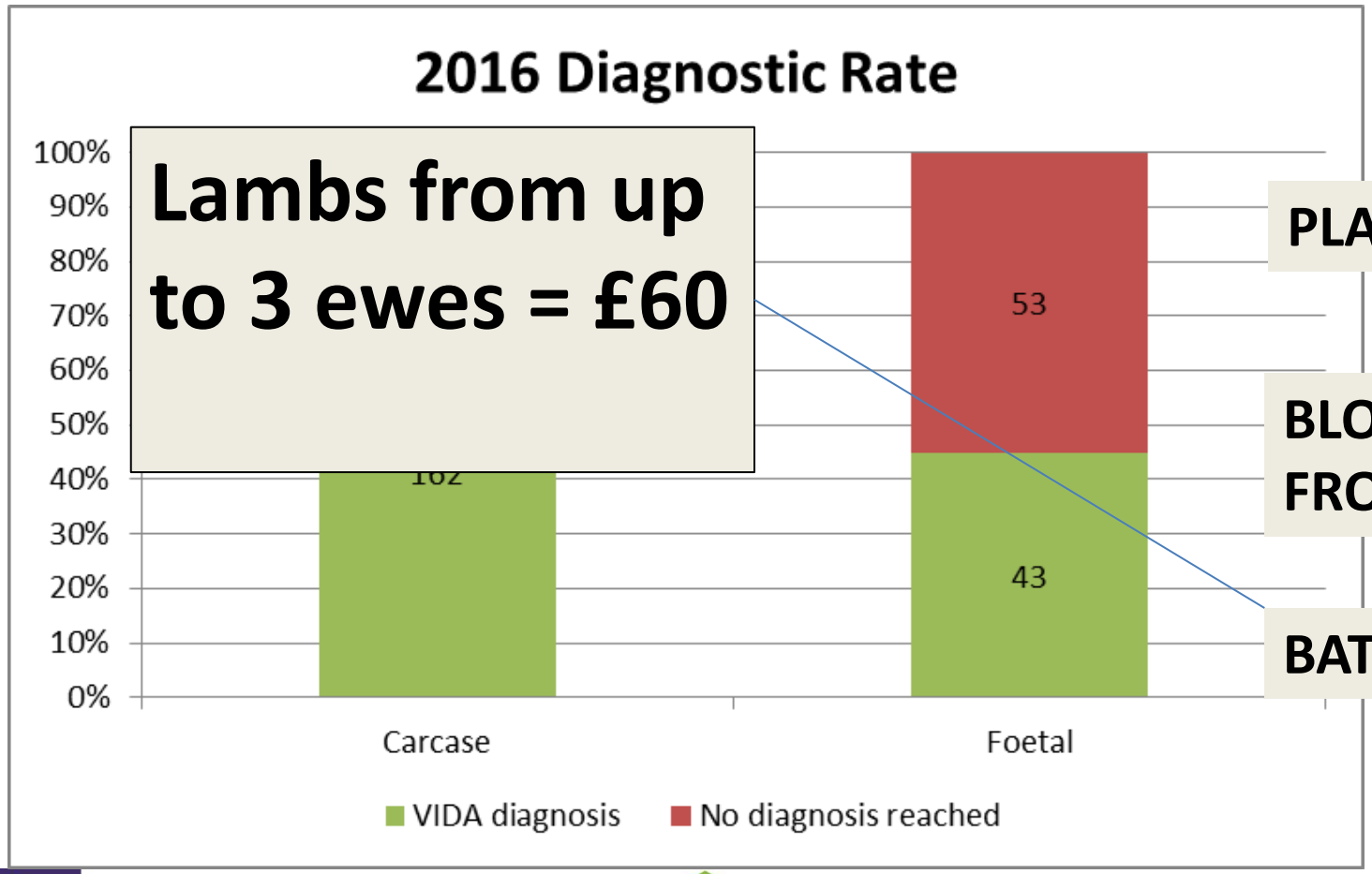

Lambs from up to 3 ewes = £60

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BLOOD FROM DAM

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Ewe abortions 2015

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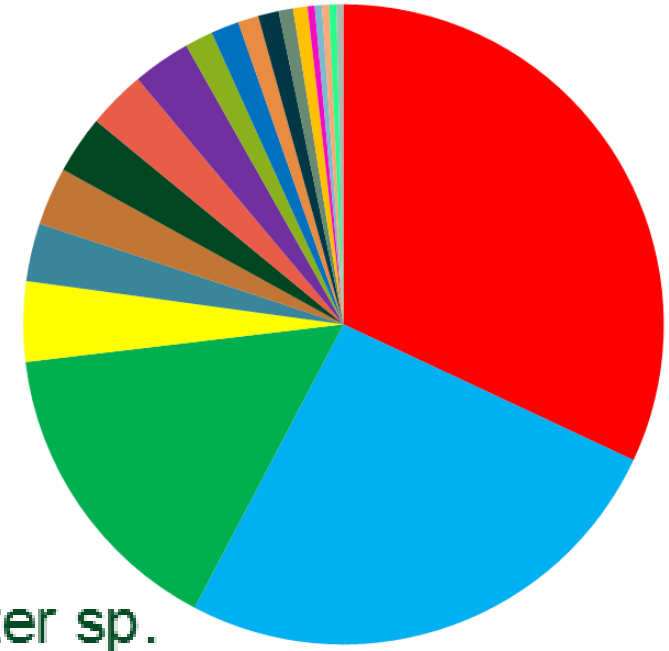

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Emerging disease?

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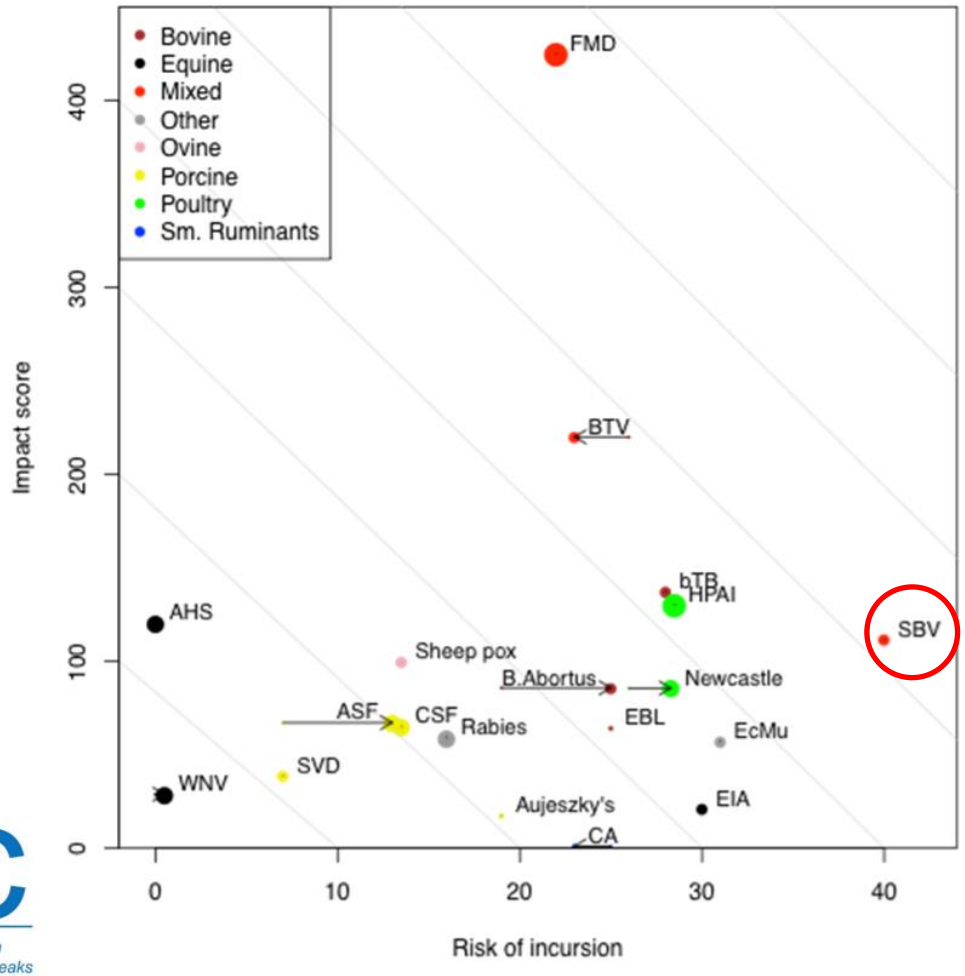

epic Centre of Expertise on Animal Disease Outbreaks

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Schmallenberg virus

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- Cases confirmed in the UK December 2016

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Should we investigate abortions?

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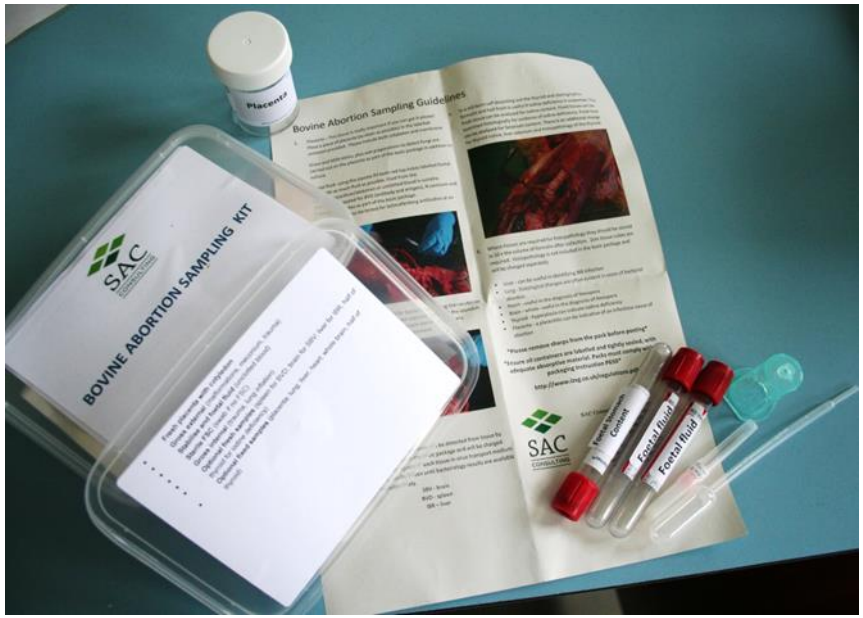
- Diagnosis in 30-40% of cases
- Batch charge – lambs from three ewes is £60
- Major causes are infectious and vaccines are available
- Emerging conditions?
- Kits available



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Pre-lambing health

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Pregnancy Toxaemia

- Ewe death.
- Time and cost of treatment.
- Lamb death.
- Response to treatment is poor.

Why are ewes susceptible?

- 70% of foetal growth occurs in the third trimester = huge energy demand.
- Weight of uterus and contents is greater relative to body weight than other species.
- Space for the rumen is reduced and DMI drops to < 2% body weight.
- Ewes cannot eat enough to meet energy demands so body fat is metabolised.

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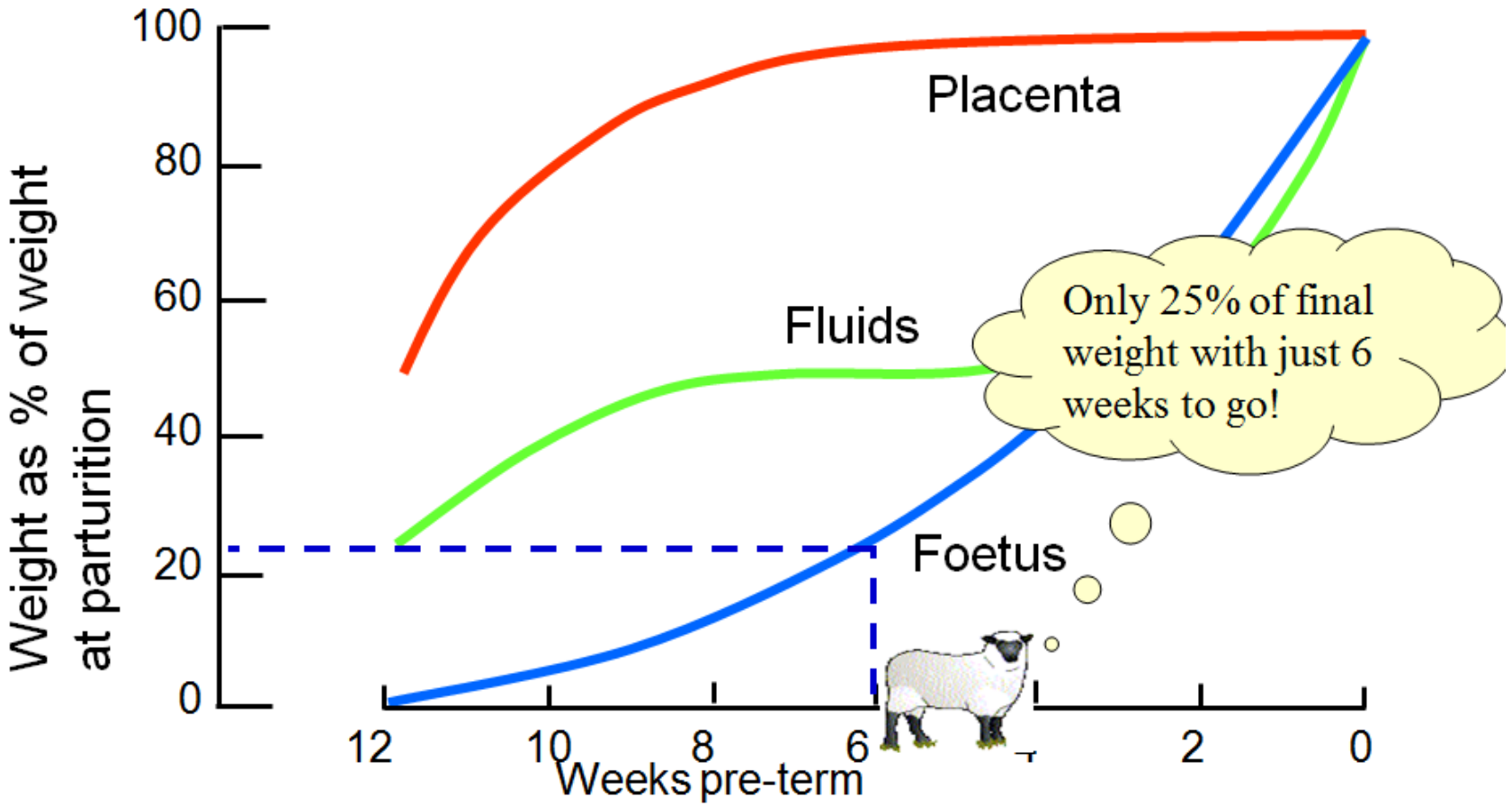
Feeding the pregnant ewe for viable lambs



Not a time for low quality feeds when intake is constrained

Consequences of underfeeding protein

- Ewe has to rely on body reserves which are considerable probably 20 % of muscle mass is mobile and gut, liver, and skin can also contribute which is all normal

- As protein is depleted the ewe prioritises for her own maintenance and reproduction but will sacrifice the immune response typically manifested as an increase in worm egg output.

- Severely underfed ewes may lack milk, have insufficient volume and quality of colostrum , delayed colostrum supply may occur, lambs may be smaller and lack vigour and ewes have poorer maternal care.

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Consequences of Poor Colostrum/Milk Supply

- Increased deaths from starvation/hypothermia.
- Increased problems with watery mouth, scour and joint ill.
- Reduced lamb growth rates.
- Increased damage to teats by sucking lambs. (Incidence of acute mastitis peaks in week 1 and weeks 3-4 of lactation.)

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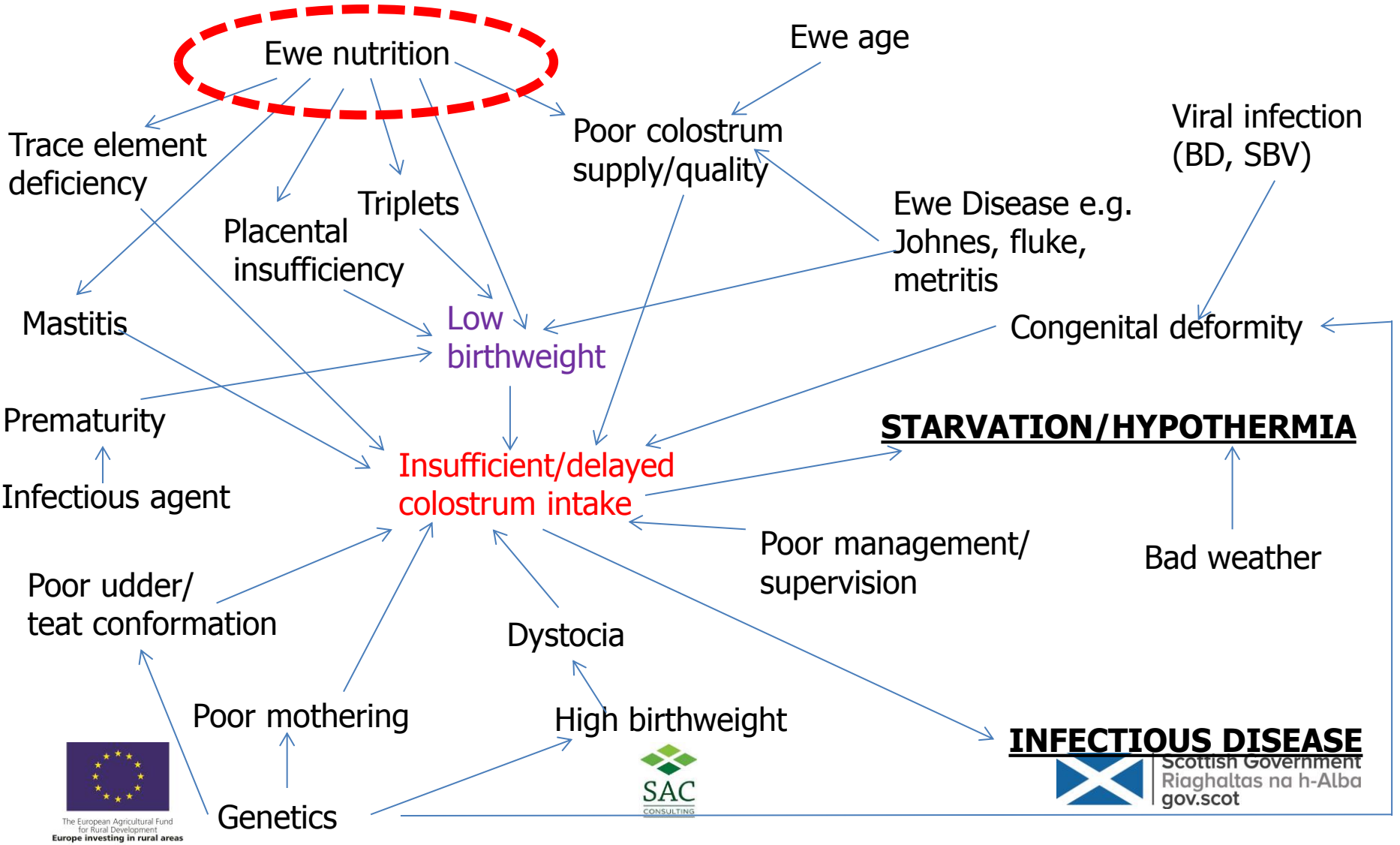
Consequences of Mastitis

- Ewe death
- Cost of treatment and feeding lambs
- Reduced milk yield
- Reduced lamb growth rates
- Loss of udder half
- Culling and replacement costs

Young lamb losses…



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Ask the ewe what she thinks of the ration now…

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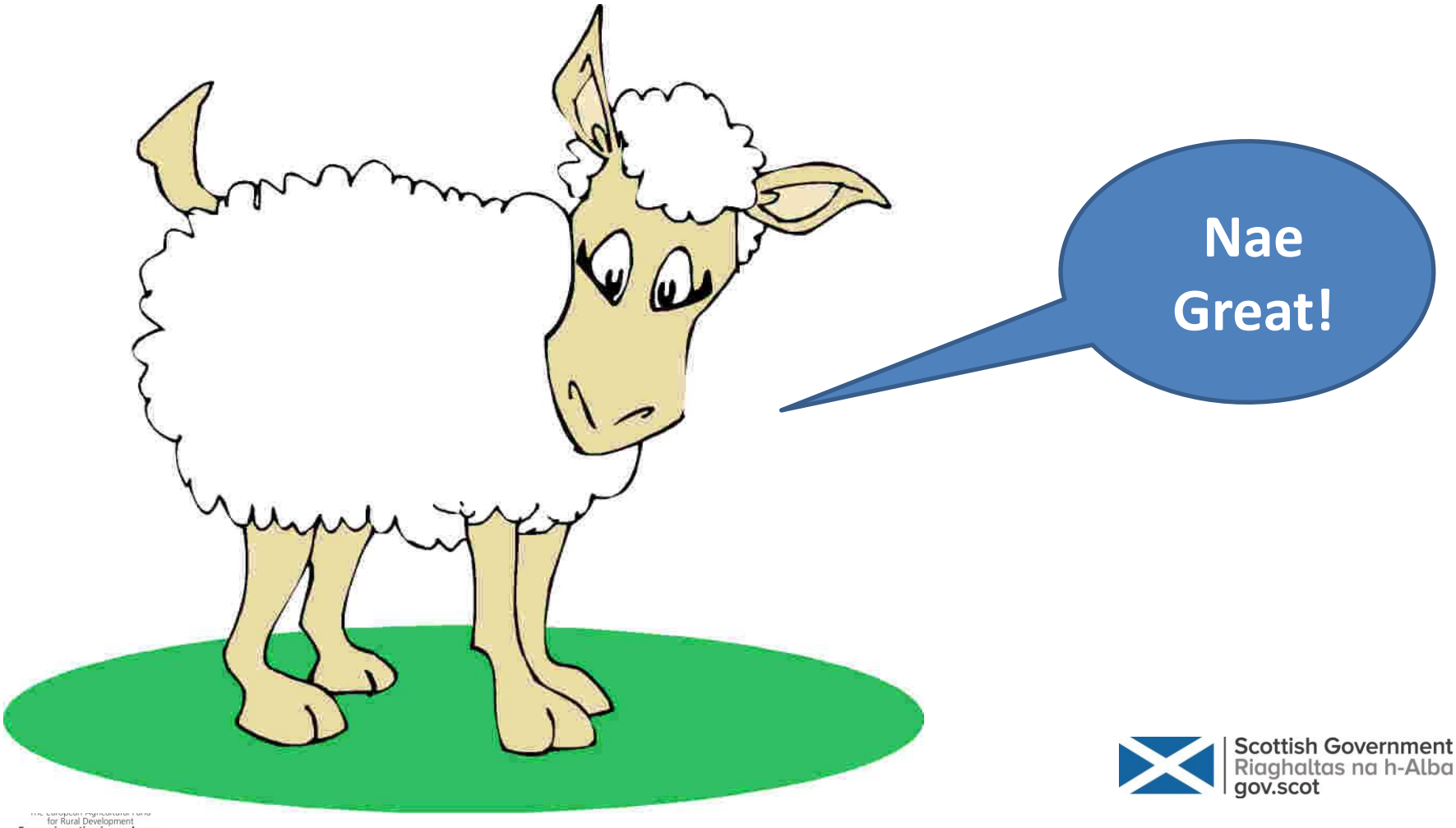

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Assessing Energy Status

- Blood sample 10 ewes 4-6 weeks before lambing to analyse BOHB.
- If unscanned avoid sampling gimmers.
- If scanned sample 5 twin and 5 triplet bearing ewes.
- Sample ewes in typical BCS for the group.
- Sample ewes due to lamb in the first week of lambing.

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Assessing Protein Status

- Urea - Measurement of short term intake of Effective Rumen Degradable Protein, (ERDP), - Target >2mmol/l.
- Albumin - Measurement of long term protein nutrition or liver function.
- Samples must be collected before concentrate feeding or > 4 hours later.

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Mini-metabolic profile

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- 10 ewes (5 twins / 5 triplets)
- BOHB and UREA
- **£36**

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Pre-lambing health

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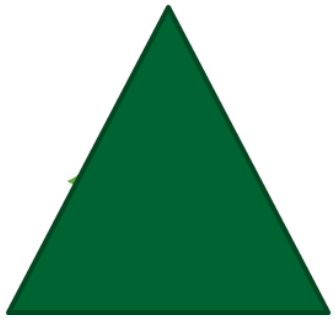
Iodine toxicity

- Excessive iodine intake pre-lambing can block colostrum uptake in lambs
- Requirement 0.9 mg per day
- Upper safe limit around 9 mg per day?

Deficiency Toxicity



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Iodine toxicity

- Beware of multiple sources
  - Mineral licks
  - Boluses
  - Pour-on
  - Mineralised feed

Deficiency Toxicity

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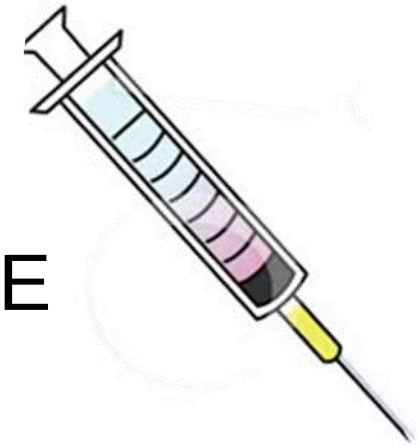
Don’t forget…

- Clostridial vaccine
  - 4-6 weeks pre-lambing
  - NEEDS COLOSTRUM UPTAKE
- Lameness
  - Get on top of foot-rot pre-housing
  - Reduces amount in shed
  - Reduces lamb challenge



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Summary messages: Sheep

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- Think about investigating abortions
- Ask the ewe how the ration is
- Beware of minerals from multiple sources
- Don’t forget…
  - Pre-lambing vaccines
  - Pre-housing lameness

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Thank You

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