



R.M. JONES Newsletter

February 2026

FARMCENTRES

www.rmjones.com

Did you know 38% of Lambing Deaths are due to Infections*

Prebiotics

**Source: Shiels et al 2018*

Prebiotics are designed to feed the beneficial bacteria present in the gut. More beneficial bacteria make it harder for pathogenic bacteria, such as E.Coli, to establish a foothold in the lamb's gut. **Downland Lamb Boost** is a source of energy with a prebiotic and a powerful antioxidant blend. Encouraging a healthy gut environment and lamb survival.

Environment

Prevention is better than a cure! Ensure the lambing environment is kept clean and use fresh straw. We stock a range of disinfection products to help maintain a clean environment. It is important that sterilant is applied to a surface free from muck, otherwise you will not effectively kill the pathogenic bacteria.

- **Iodine** — Ensuring Navels are double dipped with **STRONG** iodine. **Downland Iodine** is 10% strength. Talk to us about NoBACZ, an alternative to iodine for Navel protection.
- **Bactibed** — helps keep bedding dry and helps prevent the growth of potentially pathogenic bacteria such as E.Coli
- **Sterilising Fluid** — Keep bottles and tube feeders clean, as these present a huge risk for cross-contamination between lambs.
- **Blitz** — Effective against all viruses and bacteria. Does not cause mis-mothering and you can re-stock immediately after use. Ideal for spraying pens between lambing. This falls under the Explosive Precursor Act, so requires a photo ID when buying for the first time.

Colostrum. 3Qs – Quality, Quantity, Quickly

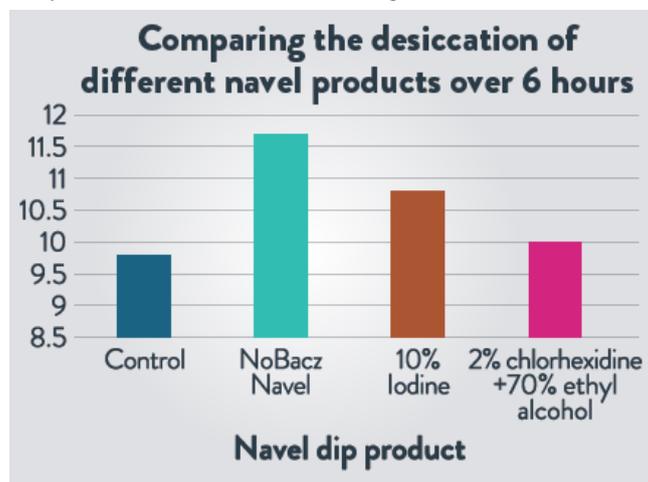
Ewe's colostrum is always the best but, if the ewe isn't milky and there's none in the freezer to defrost then use **Downland Lamb Force** colostrum – knocks the socks off the competition with the highest levels of antibodies (Cambridge University trials). Feed 50mg/kg LW at birth and then every 6hrs for the first 24hrs.

Milk Powder

Quality milk powders give the best results and **Downland Lamb Force** with **Pro Zest** stands head and shoulders above the rest. Trials show a 3kg LWG advantage over well-known competitor brands: that's the benefit of using powder based on ewe's milk with added prebiotics. Feed warm or cold, by bottle or ad lib. Available in conventional and freeflow versions.

NoBacZ Navel

Independent UK trial data shows NoBACZ Navel delivers superior navel desiccation and protection compared with iodine, helping reduce early-life infection risk. In the largest navel protection study to date, this translated into lower mortality and heavier lambs at eight weeks.



Data from a UK randomised controlled trial (Lovatt, 2024; n = 6,840 lambs).

Arable Update

UK LIFFE Wheat May 26
MATIF OSR May 26
AN34.5% Fertiliser

£166 - £170/t
 £410 - £422/t
 £395- £420/t

Current wheat GS
Current OSR GS

GS21—25
 GS25—30

Comments

As we move into February the “investment” phase of crops starts to happen. This year, with low crop values but good yield potential, there is going to be some uncertainty on how to manage crops – least spend or yield maximisation. To be honest, yield maximisation is least cost as long as yield targets are achieved – diluting spend gives lower costs per tonne. The question we need to look at is whether the cost incurred gives a decent return either in isolation or in conjunction with other investment.

The biggest driver of yield is Nitrogen and crop nutrition – all of which start this month. This is also your biggest cost. How do you achieve best bang for your buck without compromising yield?

Know what you have in the soil and plan accordingly

RB209	DEFRA crop nutrition guide Eg. 8t/ha wheat crop needs 220kgN/ha @ SNS 1	£0
N Min Test	Measures soil available N content More accurate than RB209 and may suggest lower N requirements than RB209	£120 sample

Use these to build your **Nutrient Management Plan** for each crop in each field – *don't just do what you did last year!!*

Use organic manures applied to the crop (as part of a Nutrient Management Plan)

Cow Slurry	Application rate of 30m ³ /ha** gives approx.	30kgN/ha
Broiler dung	Max application rate of 5t/ha** gives approx.	30kgN/ha

**be aware of PK levels and NVZ/FRW compliance

**Application costs may be higher than using a farm fertiliser spinner, consider spread width and compaction issues

Can you use lower cost Urea instead of AN?

Product	Cost £/kgN	@ 220kgN/Ha	Saving	Comments
AN34.5	£1.19/kgN	£262/ha	N/A	Industry standard
Urea	£0.94/kgN	£207/ha	£55/ha*	Must not be applied after March 31st
Protected Urea	£1.02/kgN	£225/ha	£37/ha	Opportunity to save costs by reducing passes
N28 products	£1.65/kgN	£363/ha	-£101/ha	Can be cost effective in dryer conditions

Other ideas and suggestions

Biological N	£0.90/kgN	Can fix 30kgN/ha for the plant if applied early
Nutriphite PGA	-	Can improve utilisation use of Nitrogen

Sulphur

Don't scrimp on Sulphur, it improves Nitrogen utilisation efficiency by up to 30%. Ideally apply Nitrogen and Sulphur at every application.

Summary

There are opportunities to save £60/ha in Nitrogen costs alone by utilising manure, biological N, Urea and protected Urea – that's £7.50/t or £2,400 over 40ha. If you factor in N Min sampling there are further potential savings of £20/ha - £25/ha.

There are opportunities to drive down costs and maintain yield – speak to us for farm specific opportunities.