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## April 2019 Parasite Forecast

### JOINT SCOPS AND COWS STATEMENT ON LIVER FLUKE

A press release from the COWS and SCOPS groups in April has emphasised the importance of chronic fluke infection. The mild winter may have led to a longer than usual risk period and treatments given in autumn being less effective in controlling disease.

Advised actions include:

- Monitor for signs of disease.
- Diagnostic testing
- Where treatment is indicated:
  - Consider use of a flukicide other than triclabendazole.
- For more information, please speak to your vet or SQP and see the COWS and SCOPS group websites.

### SHEEP

#### PARASITIC GASTROENTERITIS (PGE)

**1. Nematodirois:** *Nematodirus battus* infections pass directly from one season's lambs to the next. It is important to identify potentially contaminated pastures and avoid grazing lambs on these during peak risk periods. Both NADIS and SCOPS produce risk forecasts for *Nematodirus* based on local climatic conditions to help predict when "peak hatch" periods are likely to occur:

- a. Due to the record temperatures experienced in February, the SCOPS forecast is already predicting moderate to high risk for nematodirois in many parts of the UK, with cases already confirmed in some areas.
- b. The provisional NADIS *Nematodirus* forecast is also predicting early hatch, with peak hatch predicted to have occurred in March in some areas. This forecast will be updated in April.

**2. Other PGE-causing roundworms:** The "periparturient rise" (PPR) in worm egg count which occurs in pregnant ewes caused by a suppression of the ewe's immunity around lambing leading to increased pasture contamination

**3. Coccidiosis:** This disease is caused by the rapid accumulation of infective "oocysts"

in the environment. Unlike roundworm infections, coccidiosis can affect housed animals as well as those at pasture.

Advised actions include:

- Monitoring for disease:
  - **Nematodirois:** Typically 6-12 week old lambs. Sudden onset diarrhoea, anorexia, dehydration and death. Affected animals often have heavily soiled back ends.
  - **Other PGE-causing roundworms:** Infected ewes are likely to have very high worm egg counts.
  - **Coccidiosis:** Typically 4-8 week old lambs. Anorexia, weight loss, diarrhoea (with or without blood) and death in severe cases.
- Due their similarities, in grazing lambs it is important to determine whether coccidia or *Nematodirus* infection is present.
- For Nematodirois in lambs:
  - Consult the [SCOPS](#) and NADIS *Nematodirus* forecasts to determine peak risk period.
  - Identify high risk pastures (those grazed by the previous season's lambs) and avoid grazing these during peak risk periods.
  - Where disease occurs treatment with group 1-BZ is usually effective.
    - \* Ensure correct dosing and consider post treatment efficacy testing.
- For PPR in ewes, minimising selection for anthelmintic resistance:
  - Avoid blanket treatment of all ewes. Aim to leave a proportion untreated (around 10-20%).
  - If choosing to treat with ewes with a group 3-ML, seek veterinary advice first
  - Providing high protein feed in the run up to lambing can help to reduce egg shedding.
- For coccidiosis:
  - Reduce stocking densities, batch rear lambs by age and avoid heavily contaminated pastures/premises.
  - A number of anticoccidial products are available for prevention and treatment of coccidiosis.
- For more information on these, please speak to your vet or SQP.

### CATTLE

#### PARASITIC GASTROENTERITIS (PGE)

Previously untreated young stock that have been housed over winter may be at risk from type-2 ostertagiosis. This presents as intermittent diarrhoea with loss of appetite and rapid loss of body weight. Mortality in affected animals can be high without prompt treatment with either a group 3-ML or some group 1-BZ products. For more information, please speak to your vet or SQP and see the [COWS group guidelines](#).

Calves and young stock are at greatest risk of PGE in the coming grazing season. The COWS group currently recommend one of two control options:

1. Set stocking with strategic anthelmintic treatments to minimise pasture contamination up to mid-July, after which pasture infectivity should decline. To be effective, this strategy needs initiating within 3 weeks of turnout.
2. A "wait and see" approach aiming to avoid use of anthelmintics unless needed. This is reliant on monitoring and diagnostic testing to prevent disease, but can make use of pasture rotation and targeted selective treatments based on weight gain, body condition score or worm egg counts.

Irrespective of approach, regular performance testing, diagnostics and treatment efficacy testing help evaluate effectiveness of control. For more information, please speak to your vet or SQP and see the COWS website ([www.cattleparasites.org.uk](http://www.cattleparasites.org.uk)).

#### LUNGWORM

On farms with a history of lungworm infection, vaccination offers a valuable tool for protection against disease in calves. Vaccines must be planned and ordered ahead of each grazing season. For more information and to devise an appropriate vaccination schedule for your farm, please speak to your vet or SQP and see ["COWS" group guidelines](#).

The NADIS Parasite Forecast is based on detailed monthly Met Office data for each of the 40km<sup>2</sup> areas across the UK. Weather conditions directly affect the likely levels of parasite activity. Disease incidence will also depend on farm management, grazing and treatment history. Individual farm and field conditions may vary, so consult your vet as part of a veterinary parasite control plan.