

FARM ANIMAL NEWSLETTER MAY 2019

COCCIDIOSIS IN LAMBS

Coccidiosis is a problem found in intensively reared lambs, occurring primarily indoors where stocking densities are high, but may also occur in lambs at pasture where there is contamination around feed troughs in creep areas during warm, wet weather. The ewe is the initial source of the infection although coccidial oocysts (eggs) can survive on pasture or in buildings from one year to the next. Coccidia are species specific therefore the coccidial species that affect cattle or poultry do not affect lambs.

Life cycle of Coccidia

- Lambs take in coccidial oocysts (eggs) by mouth.
- Inside the gut the oocysts hatch, invade the gut cells and multiply rapidly with two results— damage to the gut lining as the coccidia emerge by bursting the cells and dramatic increase in number of oocysts in the lamb's faeces.

Symptoms

Damage to the intestinal tract results in diarrhoea which may contain mucus or blood and be accompanied by:

- Straining
- Pain
- Weight loss
- Possible death of the lamb.



Even in animals that show no obvious clinical signs sub-clinical disease can lead to reduced weight gain as the gut loses its ability to absorb nutrients from food.

Clinical coccidiosis is most often seen in lambs aged 4-8 weeks old however, the knock on effects of subclinical disease such as poor growth rates may be apparent in older lambs. If you have a history of coccidiosis on the farm from previous years or are a high risk flock, it is ideal to treat lambs after they have had a chance to pick up oocysts but before they are causing significant gut damage. In this way, the coccidiosis is killed off and the lambs are left with a residual immunity without suffering consequences of the infection.

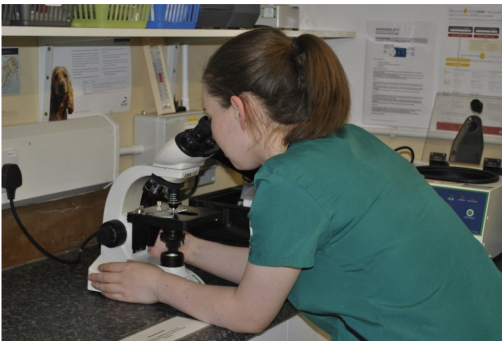
This usually entails treating lambs at 4-6 weeks of age. There are two licensed drenches available with one having the advantage of a persistent action for approximately 3 weeks after administration, providing a larger window over which lambs can be successfully treated.

For advice on diagnosis and treatment please contact the surgery and speak to one of our AMTRA qualified staff of farm vets. For further information on coccidiosis please visit our website at www.daleheadvetgroup.co.uk.

Remember that at this time of year lambs may have a mixed infection of Nematodirus and coccidiosis and that no single drench will treat both worms and coccidiosis.

NEMATODIRUS ALERT - HIGH RISK PERIOD

NEMATODIRUS RISK IN YOUNG LAMBS



The Nematodirus parasite has a simple life-cycle. Adult worms which live in the intestines of sheep/lambs lay eggs that are deposited on pasture in faeces. The Nematodirus eggs will only hatch out to release infective larvae after a period of cold weather followed by warmer weather with average daily temperatures above 10°C. This can result in a massive challenge of infective larvae on pasture in the spring when young lambs, which have no resistance to the parasite, start grazing. In most years this occurs in mid to late May but this year the risk is already very high in this area.

Acute Nematodirus infection can be a cause of sudden death but more often results in a profuse watery yellow-green scour and ill thrift. The concern is that the performance of young lambs that receive an early season check in growth due to Nematodirus may have reduced growth rates for the rest of the grazing season due to intestinal damage.

Highest risk fields are those grazed by young lambs in May/June 2018 which could harbour dangerous levels of larvae particularly if Nematodirus has been diagnosed in the past.



Points to remember include:

- * Nematodirus can cause clinical symptoms in lambs before the larvae they are carrying have matured into egg laying adults, therefore faecal egg counts from scouring lambs cannot be relied on to diagnose acute Nematodirus infection.
- * Re-infection with larvae can occur rapidly if lambs are kept on the same pasture so that a second treatment may be necessary after 7-10 days.
- * Concurrent coccidiosis infection will lead to more severe disease and increase losses.
- * Nematodirus is the dose limiting parasite for many wormers therefore under-dosing is very likely to result in treatment failures.

On most farms white drenches (e.g. Tramazole or Rycoben) should remain the drug of choice for treating Nematodirus.

No anthelmintics have a persistent effect against Nematodirus.

For more information about Nematodirus, to devise the most appropriate parasite control plan for your flock or for a quote, please contact the surgery on 01729 823538

YOUR PEAK HATCH PREDICTION - 01/05/2019

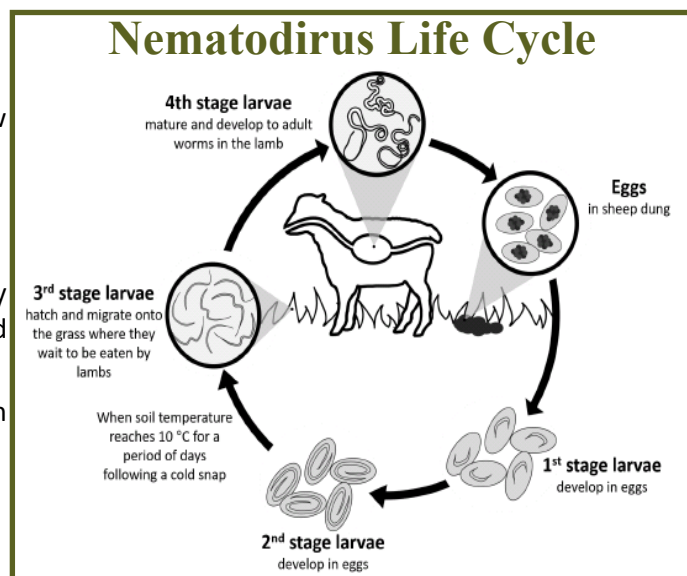
Prediction is based on the altitude of your nearest weather station. If your farm is at a lower altitude, the peak hatch will be before the predicted date (100m lower will be approximately 1 week earlier, www.scops.org.uk), or later if higher. South facing fields will also be earlier. Disease usually occurs one to two weeks after peak hatch if grazing infected pasture. Please contact the surgery for optimum treatment and product choice.

Local Weather—How It Affects Nematodirus

- Nematodirus battus has a unique life cycle as the larvae develop on the pasture within an egg. With most parasitic worms of sheep, eggs are passed out by infected sheep on pasture, they then undergo development into larvae within the sheep's gut once it has been ingested.
- The Nematodirus larva stage is very resistant to extreme temperature and survives even harsh winters on pasture within the egg.
- Larvae will hatch in large numbers after a period of cold exposure followed by a temperature exceeding 10°C over a period of days. This is predicted to occur within the next week in your local area.
- In wet and cool conditions, the larvae can survive for months on the pasture.
- This mass hatch occurs annually on permanent pasture, but the level of disease depends on it coinciding with grazing activity of young susceptible lambs.
- The cold spring this year has resulted in a delayed hatching of the larvae.
- If lambs are 6-12 weeks old at the time of the hatch, they are likely to experience problems.
- Lambs typically become immune to the effects of Nematodirus from exposure by about 3 months old and so are less likely to be affected if they are older when the mass hatch occurs.

Signs To Watch Out For:

- Only lambs are affected by Nematodirus; ewes do not show disease.
- Sudden onset of profuse watery diarrhoea in young lambs.
- Dirty 'back ends'.
- Lambs are dull and depressed, stop sucking, and rapidly develop a gaunt appearance with obvious dehydration and condition loss.
- Death from dehydration (early in an outbreak death can occur suddenly and without obvious signs of scour).
- Weight loss in the remaining lambs.



Prevention & Treatment

- If possible, move lambs to clean grazing (i.e. Pasture that has not been grazed by lambs in the previous year)
- If lambs can't be moved to clean grazing, treat all 'at risk' lambs.
- Repeat treatment 2 weeks later may be required. (Speak to one of the vets to help make this decision).
- White (1-BZ) wormers are still the recommended treatment of choice unless other worm species are present and resistance is confirmed. We will advise you of this if you are carrying out faecal egg counts on your farm.
- Some other commonly used wormers aren't as effective as white wormers against Nematodirus.
- Take a Faecal Egg Count 14 days after treatment to monitor if it has been effective. This will also tell us about your coccidiosis and other worms infection level.

Other Facts To Remember

Many white drenches have cobalt in them which is a valuable supplement in lambs to maximise growth rates. We can add more cobalt to white drenches to make oral drenching as effective as possible. If necessary, on farms where growing lambs are likely to be stunted by cobalt/vitamin B12 deficiencies, we also have a long acting vitamin B12 injection which, due to its micro-encapsulation technology, lasts 3-4 months when 0.5 mls is injected into young lambs. It is ideal to supplement growing lambs from 1 month of age. It costs in the region of 40p/lamb so it's an extremely cost effective and effective supplement! Ask the farm vets for details.

Carrying out a post drench test to ensure the drug is working and to check there are not any other gut worms or coccidiosis present is always worthwhile. It is very common for lambs to scour at this time of year due to cocci and Nematodirus at the same time.

GRASS TETANY (STAGGERS) IN SHEEP

While we are still waiting for the grass to grow, there is a risk of grass tetany where ewes and lambs are held up on a bare pasture with supplementation and then turned onto lush pasture which is low in magnesium and low in fibre, resulting in a marked change in diet.

Signs of grass tetany appear very rapidly with tremors, convulsions and rapid death.

Prevention includes ensuring ewes have a daily intake of magnesium until the animals get accustomed to the change in diet. This is achieved by offering high-mag lick buckets, supplementing with concentrates or the addition of magnesium to water. Magnesium bullets can also be administered.

Treatment with subcutaneous magnesium is an option but unless treated very early after onset of clinical signs treatment may be unsuccessful.

For more information or advice regarding prevention or treatment, please give us a call on 01729 823538



PRODUCT NEWS - LEPTOSPIROSIS VACCINE

As discussed in last month's newsletter, Leptavoid-H is currently unavailable for several months due to manufacturing problems. Because there is no alternative licensed leptospirosis vaccine available we have been allowed to import an American leptospirosis vaccine **Spirovac** into this country.

Spirovac is available in 10 and 50 dose bottles (2ml dose under the skin) and can be used either for the initial course for previously unvaccinated animals (2 doses, 4 weeks apart) or to give the annual booster to animals previously unvaccinated with Leptavoid-H. For more information or to secure your supply, please contact the surgery.



FREE BLOOD TESTING OF CULL EWES FOR ENZOOTIC ABORTION

In an initiative to raise awareness about Enzootic abortion, Ceva are arranging for free blood testing of cull ewes at Bentham Auction on Wednesday 15th May and Wednesday 22nd May. Up to 6 cull ewes which have not been vaccinated for Enzootic abortion can be tested to see if they have been exposed to the disease. The samples can also be tested for exposure to Toxoplasmosis.

For those of you who are not going to the auction on those days but would still like to take advantage of this offer please contact the surgery and register an interest as we shall be arranging a date in late May that sheep can be brought to the surgery for testing on the scheme.



DATES FOR YOUR DAIRY



WEDNESDAY 5TH JUNE: NORTH SHEEP 2019

Location: Frankland Farms, New Hall

Rathmell, BD24 0AJ

We are very proud to be the Official Veterinarians at this year's NSA North Sheep event. Everyone is looking forward to the day and we will be there in force with refreshments so once your feet get tired, do bob by our stand for a chat and a beverage! We are sure everyone will enjoy the day, and best of luck to the hosts this year at Frankland Farms.

SETTLE COUNTRY STORE SHEEP EVENT FRIDAY 10TH MAY 2PM—7PM

Location: Keasden Head Farm, LA2 8EZ

Dalehead will be there talking 'Itchy Sheep' and Sheep Scab

Heinegar Sheep Shearing Workshop

Please RSVP Settle Country Store by 8th May to assist with catering on 01729 815070

MAY2019



www.daleheadvetgroup.co.uk

