RCVS ACCREDITED PRACTICE
24 hour dedicated farm cover

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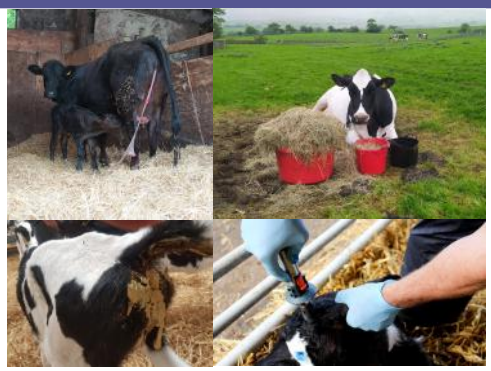
Dalehead Veterinary Group Ltd

FARM ANIMAL NEWSLETTER - AUGUST 2025

PAIN RELIEF IN CATTLE



Routine use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAIDs) injections such as Meloxicam (*e.g. Metacam, Meloxidyl*), Ketoprofen (*e.g. Kelaprofen, Ketofen*) and Flunixin (*e.g. Finadyne, Allevinix*) often alongside other treatments such as antibiotics, fluids and/or metabolic therapies is common practice on many farms.

NSAIDs help to reduce pain and inflammation as well as reducing fever (high temperature) and counteracting shock, which all help to make the cow 'feel better' so that it continues to eat, drink and exhibit normal behaviour. Antibiotics will often work better and achieve higher concentrations in diseased tissues if used alongside NSAIDs.

Conditions commonly encountered on dairy farms where additional NSAID treatment will be beneficial include:

- Mastitis, especially moderate to severe cases where there is obvious swelling and heat and/or the cow is off colour.
- Assisted calvings.
- Downer cows, often cows down with complications from milk fever or muscular injuries associated with 'doing the splits' can be treated with appropriate nursing including NSAID use.
- Acute lameness including prior to use of a hoof knife.
- Metritis and cows 'sticking to cleansing' especially when the cow is off colour in conjunction with antibiotic treatment.
- Respiratory infection in cows and calves including viral infections.
- Calf scours (alongside appropriate fluid therapy).
- Calf disbudding and castrating in addition to the use of local anaesthetics. Red Tractor Assurance members - as you know it is a **legal requirement** to use pain relief along side anaesthetic.

Prompt treatment with NSAIDs alongside appropriate nursing of new calved dairy cows which are off colour can help to maintain dry matter intakes thereby reducing risks of ketosis, displaced abomasums and aiding a prompt return to cyclicity.

Ketoprofen based injections have a **nil** milk withhold and short meat withhold whereas meloxicam based injections will maintain effective concentrations in the body for at least 48 hours.

Whilst on the subject of pain relief, we will just mention that there are no NSAIDs licensed for sheep. However, as vets we are able to prescribe these drugs under **the cascade system**. NSAIDs are commonly used in sheep when dealing with lameness, difficult lambings, and pneumonia cases, to name just a few.

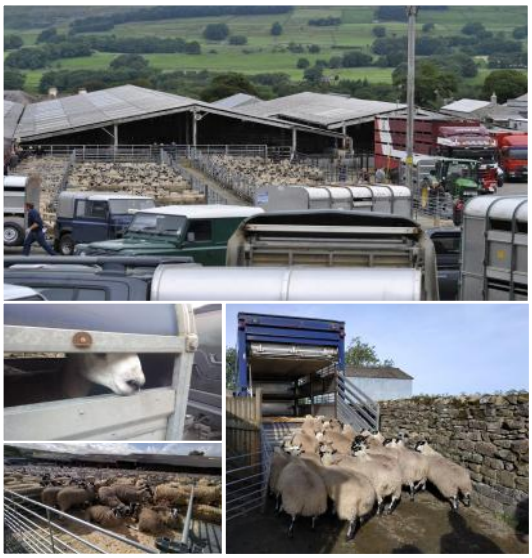
For further discussion about the uses of NSAIDs please speak to one of the farm vets.

LEGAL POSITION ON TRANSPORT OF COWS USING SHACKLES

APHA have recently written to livestock hauliers to remind them that animals that are fitted with leg shackles are not considered suitable to be transported alive to slaughter.

Slaughterhouses have been asked to notify APHA and the local authority to arrange further investigation if deemed necessary.

QUARANTINE PROTOCOL FOR PURCHASED SHEEP



It's that time of year again when the majority of sheep farmers will begin purchasing sheep to add to their flock. Whether it's tups, gimmer lambs or drafts, it is of the utmost importance to protect your existing flock by following quarantine and isolation procedures.

- Firstly, isolate bought in animals for 28 days. The isolation area should be **at least** 2 metres away from other stock and in a different airspace (this means none of the air from the isolated animals will pass over the other animals on the holding).
- All sheep should have their feet examined and good practice is to footbath them 3 times at 5 day intervals during isolation. Consider a foot disinfection mat in the isolation unit.
- Any ill health or abnormalities during isolation should be investigated by seeking veterinary advice; respiratory signs, scour, lameness, swellings, skin disease, etc.
- Vaccinate to the same status as the flock.
- Keep on a fluke free pasture (no snail habitat) for 4 weeks after second fluke dose, or realistically as low risk as possible.
- Hold in a quarantine pasture or yard for 48 hours after worm treatment then turn onto a worm contaminated pasture (i.e. one that has grazed ewes and lambs during the summer).
- Blood sample purchased sheep for scab exposure.
- The animal can enter the flock after 28 days or 14 days after the last vaccine and whenever test results are all negative.

Step 1.Treatment

All sheep brought onto the farm should be treated with a product likely to remove all worms (resistant and susceptible). Resistance is reported in the UK with BZ (group 1-White), levamisole (group 2-Yellow) wormers, ML (group 3-Clear) wormers and now Zolvix (Group 4-Orange) wormer. The recommendation is to treat with 2 broad spectrum wormers which are most likely to kill all worms carried. The simplest regime which also takes into account a scab risk is Zolvix and Cydectin 1%. However, if Footvax has or is going to be used Zolvix and Dectomax injection or OP dip.

Step 2. Holding

Hold sheep off pasture for 24-48 hours, until any worm eggs present in the gut have passed out with the dung. Faecal egg count (FEC) sampling at least 10 sheep where possible, 14 days after treatment will show that the worming regime has worked. Manure produced during this post-treatment period should **NOT** be spread on grass that will be grazed by sheep.

Step 3. Turnout onto contaminated pastures

Bought-in animals should then be turned out onto pasture contaminated with the farm's natural population of worm eggs and larvae. This helps to dilute any resistant worms that may have survived the treatment and rapidly infects the new animals with the farm's specific worm population. This shortens the period when any introduced worms are dominant.

LIVER FLUKE

A treatment with fluke products other than triclabendazole is prudent *(resistance to triclabendazole has been reported in sheep, and more rarely in cattle).* Sheep should be kept off pastures for at least four weeks after treatment to prevent resistant fluke being introduced *(infected animals can pass eggs for up to three weeks after the adult flukes have died).* Remember that no flukicide kills all fluke with one dose, immature fluke need to be killed by treating twice.

SCAB

Considering the fact that the resistance of scab to group 3 injections (e.g. Cydectin, Dectomax) was identified in late 2017, and that the use of these products also increases the resistance of worms to clear drenches, this emphasises the importance of using drugs responsibly and of quarantining bought-in and sheep grazed on other holdings. There is a blood sample available for detecting whether sheep have been exposed to scab. This can be used to monitor the disease in sheep grazed on open fells, in purchased stock or as a marketing tool if selling sheep.

ARE YOU MISSING OUT?

In 2020 Lesley Stubbings, who is part of SCOPS (Sustainable Control of Parasites in Sheep) reviewed the uptake of the Group 4 - Orange (Zolvix) and Group 5 - Purple (Startec) wormers.

Since 2017, 50% of sheep farmers are now using the Group 4 & 5 wormers. Recent surveys disclosed not all livestock owners know about the newer groups of anthelmintics, whereas others had lack of understanding of when to use the products. Some people are worried about using them at the wrong time, taking the view that they should wait and preserve them for when there is multiple resistance on their farm. However the reality is that using these newer worming groups will extend the life of the other three anthelmintic groups on our sheep farms. Leaving them on the shelf until all the other groups have failed means we will have no alternative but to use them exclusively.

So when is the right time to use a Group 4 or Group 5 wormer?

There are two times of the year when we should look at using the newer groups. The first is as a 'clear out or break dose' in lambs in the latter part of the summer, the second is as a quarantine dose for all incoming sheep. The theory behind a 'break dose' is that it clears out worms which have survived exposure to other groups of wormers administered earlier in the season. This has the dual benefit of boosting the lambs performance and slowing the rate resistance develops to the older classes of wormers. Quarantine drenching is designed to protect the farm from imported resistant worms.

ARE YOUR TUPS TIP TOP ?

It has been shown that carrying out a physical examination (not semen analysis) will identify 95% of infertile and sub-fertile tups. The fact that 30% of tups are sub-fertile illustrates that a pre-breeding examination is a really useful exercise to avoid a high geld rate or late lambers. We do recommend semen tests in tups with abnormalities or where they are used as single sires. Here is a summary of the things we check in our pre-breeding examinations . The "T" theme continues!

TOES

A lame tup is not going to be able to serve ewes to his full potential. Footrot and CODD are the most common infectious causes of lameness in sheep resulting in tups becoming infertile. Using a footrot vaccine *(Footvax)* 6 weeks prior to tupping can aid in preventing these diseases and is highly recommended.

TEETH

Checking the incisors for broken mouths is an obvious inspection to carry out. The back teeth *(molars)* are equally important in allowing a sheep to be able to eat efficiently. It is difficult to visually inspect the molars, but they often feel spiky or irregular when you feel along the jaw if they are overgrown. Cud spilling or grass staining around the mouth is a tell-tale sign of advanced diseased molars.

TONE

In this context tone is used to describe the body condition of the tup. To maximise his fertility a tup should be BCS 3.5-4 at tupping. He will lose 2 condition scores during tupping time, so he needs to have some reserves going into tupping. Ideally you can gradually feed him over 8-10 weeks pre-tupping to reach his ideal BCS and supplement him daily during tupping time. Overweight tups have a notorious reputation for poor fertility. This is because they have a poor libido!

TESTICLES

The testicles, scrotum, sheath and penis should all be inspected for abnormalities. The size and consistency of the testicles tell us a lot about the fertility of the tup. There is a minimum scrotal size we accept tups should reach when they are in the breeding season. The testes should be the same size and have no lumps or bumps within the tissue.

TREATMENTS

The worm and fluke status of the flock should always be taken into account, remember that tups may be on different pastures and may not have the same exposure and immunity as the ewes. Sampling is always advisable. It is also important to realise that newly purchased tups could introduce Scab, Footrot, CODD or resistant worms or fluke into your flock.

Do you have a quarantine treatment plan that you are sure is protecting you from these possibilities? A chat with one of the farm vets or SQPs is worthwhile from this perspective.

IT'S SHOW TIME!

We will once again be supporting this year's local agricultural shows attending:

MALHAM SHOW on **SATURDAY 23RD AUGUST** and

HODDER VALLEY SHOW on **SATURDAY 13TH SEPTEMBER**

It would be great to see as many of you as possible for a catch up over a cuppa!

SHEEP ABORTION VACCINES

For what seems like the first time in several years at present there are no problems with supply of either Enzootic abortion or Toxoplasma vaccines.

Cevac Chlamydophila and *Enzovax* are both licensed to be administered at least 4 weeks prior to tupping and orders can be made up to the nearest 10 doses.

Because *Toxovax* only has a short shelf life it needs to be ordered on a special prescription ideally at least 10 days in advance of delivery.

Toxovax is available in 20 and 50 dose bottles and can be administered at the same time as Enzootic Abortion vaccine or at least 2 weeks before or after the administration of other vaccines.

RESPONSIBLE USE OF MEDICINES COURSE

Tuesday 19th August, 1-3pm

At Dalehead Veterinary Group Farm Services Building

On 1st February 2025 changes were made to Red Tractor Standards. For our **dairy** clients, this included changes to medicine administration training. At **least one** person who is responsible for administering medicines must have undertaken a responsible use of medicine course **within the last 5 years**. Beef and sheep clients must have at least one person within the business who has completed a medicines course. To book your place, please contact the surgery.

HAEMONCHUS

There have been increasing cases of *Haemonchus contortus* across the northwest in previous weeks. This worm, more commonly known as the barber's pole worm, can be fatal with as few as 500 worms causing severe disease. A short lifecycle (20 days), combined with high egg output, means there can be a very rapid build up of parasites on pasture given suitable weather conditions – warm and wet!

The worm develops in the abomasum and survives by sucking blood from the stomach lining. This results in a severe anaemia and often death shortly after. A bottle jaw is seen in more chronic infections and can present very similarly to acute fluke. Scour often isn't an immediate clinical sign of *Haemonchus* but can be present when we see a mixed infection of *Haemonchus* with our usual summer worms in grazing lambs. Unlike other worms, adult sheep do not build up a natural immunity to *Haemonchus*, and so regular worm egg counts of adults must be incorporated into your regime.

Treatment is relatively simple as currently in the UK there is little known anthelmintic resistance to *Haemonchus* meaning that all classes of wormer should be effective. *Heamonchus* can also be killed by closantel based fluke drenches too which can be useful if there is a need to treat for fluke and *Haemonchus* at the same time in the back end.

Quarantine dosing animals brought onto your farm with a suitable quarantine dose – **Zolvix** or **Startect** – is the only way to prevent bringing *Haemonchus* and other resistant worms in. Animals should be treated on arrival and housed for 24-48 hours to ensure any eggs are excreted before being turned out to pasture.

Please speak to one of our farm vets if you have any questions.