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Veterinary Group Ltd



24 hour
dedicated
farm cov-

FARM ANIMAL NEWSLETTER - MAY

FLY CONTROL IN CATTLE– WHEN TO TREAT

Different species of flies are active at varying times of the year. Regular, frequent treatment is required throughout the period of risk to keep existing flies, as well as any newly emerging populations, under good control. If you delay treatment until significant numbers of flies are noticeable, it is already too late to adequately control fly numbers—reproduction of the existing fly population will have already commenced meaning hundreds to thousands of eggs will be lurking in the surrounds, waiting to hatch and compound the problem. Start treatment early before a problem even arises to maximize the success.



This season we are stocking **Spotinor**, a deltamethrin based product which is licensed to treat and prevent infestations by flies and lice in cattle as well as ticks, keds and established blowfly strike in sheep.

The dose rate of Spotinor is 10mls for cattle applied in the mid-line between the shoulder blades. To maintain full cover applications should be repeated monthly. At a cost of treatment of less than 50 pence/cow or 25 pence/sheep Spotinor can represent excellent value. Please contact the surgery for further details.

SMALL DAIRY FARMERS SCHEME

What is the Small Dairy Farmers Scheme?

A fund of approximately £8.5 million has been made available to support small dairy farmers in England. The scheme will provide a one off payment to eligible farmers who choose to apply.

Who can apply?

You can apply for this scheme if both of the following apply:

- You had an annual cows' milk production of up to and including 1,000,000 litres (or equivalent in kilograms) during the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016.
- You are still active in cows' milk production.

For more information along with how to apply, please visit:

www.gov.uk/guidance/small-dairy-farmers-scheme

PARASITES IN LAMBS

Planning, Prevention and Pharmacy Part 1



Nematodirus Egg

Coccidi-

The gut parasites that cause scour and severe production losses in lambs have developed some clever mechanisms for survival. This means we have to understand how they work to minimise the disease they cause. The two parasites that we meet at this time of year are the worm nematodirus and the protozoa coccidiosis. The planning prevention and pharmacy regimes for these are very different. To maximise production we need to identify which parasite we have on our farms, when or if both are present at the same time.

Nematodirus has the ability to survive on the pasture for a couple of years and matures within its egg when a cold spell of weather is followed by a few days of temperature above 10 °C. The worms tend to hatch together so levels build extremely quickly.

This means that livestock units where lambs are grazed on the same pastures every year have a high risk of suffering from nematodirus. Infection in the lambs who are grazing (4 weeks onwards) is rapid due to the mass hatching. This results in massive gut damage and scour before we can detect any eggs. Our usual means of faecal sampling to predict treatment times is therefore useless. As we all well know the weather conditions at lambing time varies widely year on year so the peak nematodirus risk varies too. We have to plan our attack on nematodirus at the ideal time as there are no drugs which have any persistency for nematodirus. There are several very useful forecasting tools to help target treatments. Both the NADIS and SCOPS websites have accurate information based on local weather conditions. You can enter your location and set up alerts to be texted or emailed when the risk becomes high.

Prevention is only achieved by avoiding grazing lambs on pastures where sheep and lambs have grazed last year. We recommend that you use a white drench to treat nematodirus. Little resistance has been shown to this group1 wormer. It may be necessary to treat younger lambs later in the season if they were not old enough to be grazing significantly when the risk level was high.



Recent research by the Moredun institute has suggested that a population of nematodirus have developed that don't need to have had the period of chilling before they hatch. This means that disease is seen in autumn and winter. These worrying findings emphasise the importance of faecal sampling to monitor which worms are present in your sheep.

Coccidiosis exploits its ability to multiply in the gut of non immune lambs very rapidly to survive. Within 2-3 weeks of being infected a lamb will be shedding millions of oocysts (cocci eggs) back into the environment. Infection is spread by eating the oocysts which survive in relatively small numbers in sheds, pastures and in adult sheep. Immunity to cocci develops quickly once sheep are exposed to the infection but the rapid breeding of the parasite in the gut causes damage. If large numbers of the pathogenic strains *Eimeria crandallis* and *Eimeria ovinoidalis* are present the damage causes scour, straining and possibly death but lesser infections result in ill thrift and production loss. It has been shown that coccidial oocysts output is highly correlated with reduced weight gains.

The timing of disease and the age of lambs affected varies hugely depending on when they first meet the protozoa. Commonly we see

outbreaks in several circumstances:

- Susceptible lambs are moved onto fields or into a contaminated building where older lambs have been.
- Lambs, which have been kept housed in well-bedded clean conditions for a number of weeks after, are turned out onto contaminated pasture.
- Lambs which have been fed on medicated creep feed (or had access to their mothers' medicated feed) and the medication is suddenly withdrawn.
- When lambs from different flocks are mixed or moved into previously used fields and they meet a species of coccidiosis they haven't encountered previously.
- Good standards of hygiene are important in housed lambs to help prevent coccidiosis. Avoid damp, dirty bedding and overcrowding. Maintaining good nutrition and other disease levels will also help.

To plan effective strategies we need to understand the level of infection in your flock and environment. The aim is to treat when the cocci count is rising before there is too much gut damage but not to treat too early before the lambs have met a challenge. Faecal sampling lambs from 3 weeks of age for cocci counts is a great way to monitor disease.

We tend to treat several scenarios, it is rare that every lamb on a unit is treated at the same time.

- **Coccidiosis is diagnosed in a single lamb in a group.**
 - *Dose all lambs over three weeks old in that group.*
- **Group treatment in the face of expected high coccidia challenge.**
 - *Dose 7-10 days before expected peak risk.*
 - *or medicate the creep with Decoquinat. A prescription is needed for this to be ordered from your feed firm.*



Tolracol (toltrazuril), a cost effective cocci dose has become available on the UK market. It kills all stages of the parasite and therefore needs only one treatment dose unlike some medications we have prescribed in the past. This class of drug also has the benefit of reducing shedding of oocysts also which helps control disease. In the past adding decoquinat to the ewe ration to suppress the number of oocysts shed by the ewes has been a recommendation. Such a blanket approach is not ideal as some of the original source of coccidia for the lambs comes from those which overwintered on the pasture so medicating the ewes does not remove the need to consider control in the lambs. There are also benefits of very young lambs having access to low levels of coccidia to build immunity.

There are other worms that cause problems later in the grazing season, they have their own survival adaptations such as overwintering in adult sheep. All will be revealed in next month's part 2 of this instalment

Summary

- Use a forecasting tool to predict your **nematodirus** risk period.
- Contact us to put a specific plan in place for your farm.
- Sample all scouring lambs so you treat effectively.



THE DO'S AND DON'T OF DOSING

Making sure the full dose of an anthelmintic is given every time is essential to slow down anthelmintic resistance and to get the full benefit from the product.

- **Always weigh the group to be treated**

Weigh the heaviest and smallest in the group and use the dose recommended for the heaviest, **not an average**. Where there is a wide range of weights, split into tighter weight groups and dose to the heaviest in each.

- **Check the weigh scales are accurate each time you use them**

- **Calibrate your drenching gun & injector**

Check the gun each time you use it by putting a dose of the drug into a measuring jug or syringe and checking the volume you are going to administer is correct. It is important to calibrate using the product you are going to use—some liquids are thicker than others. Make sure you have got rid of any air bubbles first. Adjust the gun until the dose delivered is correct.



- **Maintain the guns & injectors.**

Clean with warm soapy water after use and check springs and tubes to make sure there are no kinks that will form air bubbles. Oil the gun after cleaning.

Subcutaneous injections:

- The product must be placed under the skin
- 'Tent' the skin 10-15cm below the ear
- Massage the site after administration
- A 1.6cm (5/8") needle is ideal

Intramuscular injections:

- The product must go into the muscle 10-15cm in front of the shoulder on the neck, well above the jugular vein.
- Insert at a 60° angle, aiming inwards and upwards towards the head.
- A 2.5cm (1") needle is ideal

- **Restrain the sheep adequately**

This prevents the sheep from jumping around and spitting out the drench and therefore not receiving the full dose. Serious injury, or death can result from poorly restrained sheep where the gun penetrates the tissues at the back of the mouth.

- **Placing the nozzle over the back of the tongue**

This is especially important. If the wormer is just put into the mouth, it will oesophageal groove. This is particularly important for white (1-BZ) drenches.

by-pass the rumen as it escapes down the

- **Withhold food**

The efficacy of the white (1-BZ) and clear (3-ML) drenches is markedly improved by withholding food for 12-24 hours before treatment. It is important that water is not withheld.



- **Read the labelling for the dose and follow the instructions**

- **Do not mix 2 drenches together or mix with other products**

If you are going to drench 2 products on the same day it is by far better to drench a whole group of sheep with one product then put them through the handling pens later and drench with the other product. This is called sequential dosing.

Mixing two products in the same container or drenching one product immediately after another will cause at least one of the medicines to be less effective.

