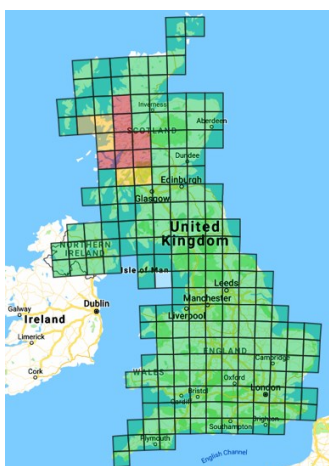


Contact:
Phone:
Email:

Sheep - January 2019 Parasite Forecast

Average UK temperature in November 2018 was 7.3°C, 1.1°C above the long-term national average (1981-2010). This was the case across all regions of the UK, with temperatures also above average for the previous 3 months (September-November) for all regions except Northern Ireland.

Overall, rainfall was 101% of the long-term average for the UK in November, but varied greatly between regions. Regional rainfall in November also bore little resemblance to overall rainfall from September-November, with below average rainfall observed across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and above average rainfall for this period in Scotland.



Fluke

The Autumn fluke forecast for 2018 predicted Medium to High risk in west Scotland and Low risk in all other regions (Figure 1). Continue to be vigilant for signs of disease where this parasite has been known to be a problem previously, particularly chronic infection at this time of year.

Ask the practice for the final NADIS liver fluke alert for your area.

Figure 1: Risk for liver fluke in autumn 2018. It is important to remember this forecast is a guide, and local conditions should be considered when evaluating on-farm disease risk.

Within a high risk area, the risk of disease depends on other factors specific to each individual farm. Are your cattle at greater risk of fluke?

Is there a history of liver fluke infection on the farm?

Yes No

Are animals grazing wet or boggy pastures previously grazed by other sheep and/ or cattle in the previous season or earlier in the current season?

Yes No

Parasitic Gastroenteritis (PGE)

Roundworm infection may continue to be a risk in grazing store and replacement lambs and, sometimes, yearlings into the winter (Figure 2). Consider also encysted larval infections, which cannot be assessed by FEC and may resume development in the spring to become a source of pasture contamination and potentially disease in heavy infections. Such infections can be targeted with products available in most major worming groups- please speak to your vet or SQP.

Advised actions include:

- Monitoring for signs of disease:
- Consider worm egg counts and weight gain in lambs to determine infection status.

Where anthelmintic treatments are required:

- Move to safe pasture if available.
 - Leave animals on dirty pasture for 2-3 days prior to moving.
 - Aim to leave at least 10% of the flock untreated
- Check efficacy through worm egg counts.



Figure 2: Trichostrongylosis is a common problem in store and replacement lambs in the autumn and winter months

Have store and replacement lambs been monitored for weight gain and/or FECs in the preceding months?

Yes No

Scab & Lice

Scab (mite) and louse infestations can become a problem in flocks over the autumn and winter.

Sheep scab causes loss of condition, secondary skin infections and death if not treated. On examination, fleece may be wet, sticky and yellow and the skin thickened and corrugated (Figure 3). Since scab mites can remain infective in the environment for up to 17 days, fields, sheds and pens where infected sheep have been kept and handled should be considered a potential source of infection for this period.



Figure 3: Severe case of sheep scab characterised by wool loss, serous exudate and thickening of the skin.

Louse infestations may present in a similar way to scab. High louse infestations often indicate an underlying problem with flock management.

To reach a diagnosis:

- For scab, diagnosis can be made through skin scrapings (figure 4) or blood sampling.
- Chewing lice can identified from wool samples (figure 4).
- For more information please speak to your vet.
- **It is important to remember sheep scab is notifiable in Scotland.**

Where treatment is required:

- Injectable macrocyclic lactones (3-ML) are effective against sheep scab.
 - 3-MLs are also anthelmintics and should be factored into roundworm control plans.
 - Evidence of resistance in scab mite to 3-MLs in the UK means correct diagnosis and treatment is essential. Seek veterinary advice if failure is suspected.
- Louse infestations can be controlled with [topical products containing synthetic pyrethroids](#). These are most effective on shorn sheep.
- Plunge dipping with diazinon is effective against both scab and louse infestations.
- For more information please speak to your vet or SQP.

As local conditions can vary considerably, why not call the practice to discuss control measures and treatments relevant to your farm? The most effective way to control all parasites is as part of a veterinary parasite control plan so contact the practice for further details.



Figure 4: Psoroptic mites (left) identified in skin scrapings and lice (right) in fleece taken from affected regions. Photos courtesy of Dr Joseph Angell.

Parasite control planning

Winter provides a good opportunity to review and plan on-farm parasite control strategies ahead of coming grazing season. Please speak to your vet about devising a parasite control plan to work for your farm. Information on sustainable parasite control can be found on the “SCOPS” and “COWS” websites, and NADIS parasite control planners are available through your vet (Figure 5). Important things to bear in mind include:

- Seasonal risk and farm history.
- Identify at-risk animals.
- Choice and rotation of anthelmintics.
- Bio-security and quarantine treatments.
- Diagnostic and performance testing.
- Identify “safe” and “contaminated” grazing.
- Other work planned through the year.



Figure 5 : Cattle and sheep specific NADIS parasite control planners are available through your vet and can help develop a sustainable, practical on-farm strategy.

The NADIS Parasite Forecast is based on detailed monthly Met Office data for each of the 40km² 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.