

August is here already, where has this year gone? Apologies for the amount of sheep content this month but with sheep sales and tugging approaching it is appropriate to ensure we are doing all we can to help you with next years lamb crop. The wet July has ensured good grass growth but this has woken up worm populations so be mindful of this and look out for signs such as coughing cattle and slower lamb growth rates. We have had our first cases of lungworm in cattle which we don't normally see until Aug/ September so keep your eyes and ears open!

Jim McKinstry

LESSONS FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:

The biggest threat for spread of disease between farms is with animals that look healthy, but are carrying infection. This shows as disease outbreaks down the line in new flocks and herds.



Auction marts are like airports: individuals arriving from all over, congregating for a while, then spreading out again to many destinations. Just as coronavirus began to spread uncontrollably, so scab, lice, new strains of lameness etc can spread through the national sheep flock, and BVD, IBR and TB etc through the cattle herd. Marts and livestock trade/movements are essential to farming enterprises and just as we can't live in lockdown for ever, livestock need to move. However, consider those movements that are essential to your business, assess the risks and do what you can to minimise them.

Quarantine and targeted treatments on arrival can reduce risks.

Each farm needs its own approach but this may include **ZOLVIX** drench to eliminate bought in resistant worm populations. This pandemic also illustrates what happens when a new disease hits a **naïve population** with no immunity at all. We see this where BVD spreads in a herd with no previous exposure, or where enzootic abortion hits a lambing flock for the first time. Unlike Covid-19, these diseases are well understood and effective affordable vaccines are available so we can avoid disasters. Remember your own farm pandemic might be just round the corner....

Covid 19 also highlights the individuals that are most susceptible when a new disease hits: the old and those with other health problems. In our farmed populations, we can **cull and replace** to maintain young, healthy flocks and herds. Overall flock/herd health depends on integrated control of all disease challenges.

Sarah Harker



STAMPING OUT SHEEP LAMENESS

After shearing and before tupping is a great time to get lameness under control and slash the costs of this horrible disease. A lame ewe is estimated to cost around £89.80 per affected ewe. It leads to increased risk of twin lamb, reduced fertility and poor milk production. In lambs, it delays finishing and even if they do get to finishing they maybe unfit to travel. It may not be possible to eradicate lameness entirely on your farm but anything to improve sheep welfare and health while saving you money in the long run can only be a good thing.

Use of the unique **FOOTVAX**[®] vaccine as part of the industry supported five-point lameness reduction plan can help cut these costs. The five-point plan builds flock resilience to disease, reduces the infection challenge on the farm and establishes immunity. The result is usually a significant reduction in the number of lame sheep on the farm.

For more detailed advice on how to implement the five-point plan in your flock, contact us for further information.

Andrew Rutherford



THERE IS NO GAIN WITH PAIN IN DAIRY FARMING!

Ceva Animal Health has recently launched the 'Wave Goodbye to Pain' campaign, which aims to raise awareness of the benefits of early lameness detection and highlight the importance of pain relief in lame cattle. The use of an anti-inflammatory as part of your treatment protocol for a lame cow has been proven to result in improved cure rates and a reduced recovery time.

So why is pain relief not given often enough?

Cost? – 40% of the financial losses of lameness are down to fertility failure, 25% due to loss of milk, 25% due to culling, with just 9% of the cost attributed to treatment (only the last 1% is the vet).

Milk withdrawal? – **KETOFEN** is a very effective anti-inflammatory with a zero milk withdrawal

Confusion between antibiotics, anti-inflammatories and anti-microbial resistance? – Anti-inflammatories are a completely different drug to antibiotics, and have no impact on antimicrobial resistance (in fact they may even help reduce antibiotic usage).

The outdated belief that pain is beneficial because it restricts mobility and helps healing? – Pain can actually delay healing!

Ketofen is a powerful anti-inflammatory and pain relief licensed for the management of lameness in cattle. It is fast acting (within 30 minutes), has zero milk withdrawal, and can be injected into the muscle. I would really recommend checking out www.wavegoodbyetopain.co.uk. There is an enormous amount of interesting information on there, from foot anatomy, risk factors and lesions, to treatment, prevention and the economics of lameness.

Becky Inman



RAM MOT'S

Approximately 2-3 out of 10 rams can be infertile or sub fertile, leading to costly repeats and extended lambing periods. This is why we recommend putting rams through a simple ram MOT which is a good physical check-up, ideally done 8-10 weeks before tupping to allow time for issues with body weight or virility to be addressed. The 5 main points are..

BODY CONDITION SCORE -A ram should not be too fat or too thin at tupping. The ideal score is 3.5 to 4, which is determined by a physical examination. A lean ram will not be able to service as many ewes as you might hope and an overweight ram will struggle to perform as well.

TEETH - Healthy teeth are a good indication that a ram is well-nourished. If the teeth are in poor condition the ram is more than likely not to have a balanced diet often resulting in a low BCS. Consider improving the nutrition or culling.

TESTICLES -A healthy testicle will produce 80% more semen than an unhealthy one. Make sure testicles are equal in size, large and firm, not soft, and remember it takes seven weeks for sperm to mature.

TOES -Rams are very busy during the mating season. Any problem with their legs or hooves can have a huge impact on performance. Look for abnormalities and check older rams for arthritis. Feet can be trimmed (if required) and foot rot can be treated, but more serious problems may never heal and the ram might need to be culled.

TREAT Make sure they are vaccinated against clostridial diseases and other conditions (Footrot) that are a risk on your farm. Treat them for fluke and worms as they are usually missed when the other sheep are treated.

We perform Ram MOT tests at the practice or on farm. Its well worth noting that Ram MOT's are discounted for members of our **Sheep Health Club**, so please ask us about joining.

Andrew Rutherford



farmgate
vets
sheep club

PRODUCT NEWS



Alamylin LA New Withdrawal Times—please note the increase.

Cattle Meat 41 days, Milk 8 days. **Sheep** Meat 24 days, Milk 7 days

Sheep Abortion Vaccines— we are approaching the busy season, if you have replacement sheep at home already it is well worth vaccinating in good time to avoid the September rush when replacements are bought in. We are not aware of any supply issues this year.



TEST DON'T GUESS—A WORM EGG COUNT CLIENT STORY

We are continually reminded of the benefits of muck samples (faecal egg counts/FECs) prior to treating for worms and fluke, which include savings of time and money, reduction in the development of resistance and better targeting of treatments for maximum benefit to stock. I was asked by a client in late May what they should be worming some mule hogs with (they hadn't been tugged so no lambs at foot). They had last been fluked and wormed in February and felt they were overdue for their next treatment.



Instead of jumping to conclusions, the client brought fresh muck samples from 6 hogs and testing at the surgery the same day showed only an occasional worm egg. Certainly nothing warranted treatment. Fluke tests need sending to the lab, so results took 3 or 4 days, but samples were negative for eggs and late immature/adult fluke. The time of year and current pasture type suggested a low risk of any early immatures, so again no treatment was warranted.

I do understand that if we sampled every batch of sheep or lambs before every treatment, we would get nothing else done and FECs do incur some cost, time and effort. However, if you do at least some, and combine that information with a discussion about the season, grazing management, previous treatments etc, we can make much more informed decisions.

Sarah Harker



LUNGWORM ALERT!



We have already seen clinical cases of lungworm in milking cows at grass. Lungworm is most commonly seen in unvaccinated youngstock during their first grazing season, but will affect cattle of any age if they have not had previous exposure to the parasite. We have a range of wormers in stock, including Eprizero which has a zero milk withdrawal.

Heather Millward



Good Luck to Emily who leaves us for pastures new down South in the middle of August. Emily joined us 6 years ago as a new grad and has become a very highly respected member of our Lancaster team. Please join us in wishing her all the very best in her new ventures .



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