



# CLOSTRIDIA & PASTEURELLA VACCINES

## INTRODUCTION

Clostridia and Pasteurella diseases can both lead to sudden deaths in lambs. Both are preventable via vaccination and so should be considered as part of your flock health plan. Clostridia are bacteria that produce toxins; they are found in soil, water and decomposing animal tissue. The different types of clostridia lead to different clinical diseases. You have probably heard of pulpy kidney, lamb dysentery, black disease, bighead and tetanus, but there are also many other fatal diseases caused by clostridia. Pasteurella causes sudden onset pneumonia caused by the bacteria *Manheimia haemolytica*. It is usually fatal. It can also lead to a fatal septicaemia in young lambs.

## DIAGNOSIS OF CLOSTRIDIAL DISEASES

Clostridial diseases can lead to catastrophic losses in sheep. The disease can be diagnosed as a cause of sudden death in an individual animal, but can also be the cause of outbreaks of disease leading to high losses. Even if we diagnose cases early, treatment is usually unsuccessful (except for bighead).

DISEASE	SYMPTOMS
Pulpy Kidney	Sudden death, 'mushy kidneys' found at post mortem.
Lamb Dysentery	Lambs <1 week old, die within a few hours, may have blood in faeces. No treatment.
Black Disease	Associated with liver fluke in summer and autumn. Can affect all ages. Usually found dead
Tetanus	Hind leg stiffness and difficulty walking. Often found on their side, unable to get up
Malignant oedema (bighead)	Usually seen in rams after head-butting. Very swollen head especially around eyes. Treatment may work

## DIAGNOSIS OF PASTEURELLA PNEUMONIA

Early symptoms include the occasional cough and low grade nasal and eye discharges, although it is more common to find lambs dead in the field. Although early cases will respond to antibiotics, frequently lambs are only spotted once the disease has progressed beyond help. Outbreaks of Pasteurella are usually linked to a stressful event such as extremes of temperature, very wet weather, dipping or weaning.



## VACCINATION

Ewes should be vaccinated 4-6 weeks before lambing to ensure that they provide good antibody protection in their colostrum to their lambs. The colostrum should protect the lambs against Clostridia for up to 3 months of age and Pasteurella for up to 4 weeks of age.

From 3 weeks old, lambs can be vaccinated with Ovivac-P Plus or Heptavac-P Plus, requiring a primary course of 2 doses, 4-6 weeks apart. Ovivac-P Plus is suitable for fattening lambs and Heptavac-P Plus can be given to any lambs that are intended to be kept as replacements. Sheep should be dry when they are vaccinated against Clostridial diseases to reduce the risk of painful abscesses forming at the injection sites.



## DO YOU NEED TO VACCINATE?

We would recommend that all breeding ewes are vaccinated with Heptavac-P Plus. Clostridia are everywhere and it is only time before a farm will inevitably have losses caused by this bacteria. As for vaccinating the lambs at 3 weeks old, it is advisable to do this if you have ever had unexplained pneumonia or deaths in growing lambs, or if your sheep graze flukey pasture.



## KEY POINTS

Clostridial diseases cause sudden deaths

Ewes need to be vaccinated 4-6 weeks before lambing

Colostrum from vaccinated ewes protects young lambs against Clostridia for up to 3 months and Pasteurella for up to 4 weeks

Lambs can be vaccinated from 3 weeks old

Heptavac-P Plus and Ovivac-P Plus also vaccinate against Pasteurella

Vaccination is cost effective

For further information, please contact us at the addresses below:

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