Dalehead Veterinary Group Ltd

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RCVS ACCREDITED PRACTICE FARM ANIMAL PRACTICE

24 hour dedicated farm cover

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FARM ANIMAL NEWSLETTER - MAY 2024

THINGS TO DO BEFORE TURNOUT DAY

The better weather has landed and many of us (if not already) are getting nearer to turnout. So let's get ready for grass day! Here are some top tips to follow:

- Lungworm outbreaks are unpredictable, but are more prevalent in wetter, western areas of Britain – hence the reason we often see bad outbreaks! They usually occur in summer and early autumn. Youngstock in their first grazing season are at highest risk until they acquire immunity through exposure to lungworm larvae. Where there is a risk of lungworm infection, consider vaccinating youngstock before turnout. For older stock, we need to think about whether they may have immunity from previous grazing seasons. Speak to one of our farm vets for more guidance.
- For second-season calves, monitor liver and rumen fluke by faecal egg counting BEFORE turnout to clear out any last season infection. Depending on the exposure in the previous grazing season, these animals may be susceptible to lungworm infection as well.
- If possible, turn out first grazing season cattle, such as dairy x beef calves and autumn born weaned suckled calves, onto low-risk pasture (e.g. pasture not grazed by cattle last year). If using pasture grazed by youngstock last year, consider carrying out regular faecal egg counts for gut and lung worms. Only treat when necessary, rather than relying on doses of wormer throughout the season, to reduce the risk of resistance and over-worming.
- Spring born suckler calves that are still suckling are not likely to need any treatment for worms in the early season. Any larvae on the pasture will be consumed by their mothers which will be mostly immune. Worm egg counts later in the autumn would be beneficial to monitor burdens.

GOVERNMENT GRANTS

Throughout April we have had a big involvement in assisting clients with their Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) and Farming Equipment and Technology Fund applications.

People have taken advantage of the FETF and we have discussed handling systems, ventilation systems, EID readers and various other equipment all of which will improve efficiency, health and welfare of their stock. ***You can increase your application score by 20% if you provide evidence that you have discussed your application with a vet.***

The Farming Equipment and Technology Fund will be back later in the year, but in the meantime there are still Capital Grants and SFI's that are well worth looking into, especially as BPS continues to decrease.

We continue to complete Animal Health and Welfare Pathways for our clients and would like to remind clients who have completed their first species to keep an eye on when to apply for their second, this is usually 10 months after your first application. This funding is now available for everyone. Not just BPS recipients.

For more information please contact your land agent, visit the government website or speak to one of the farm team.

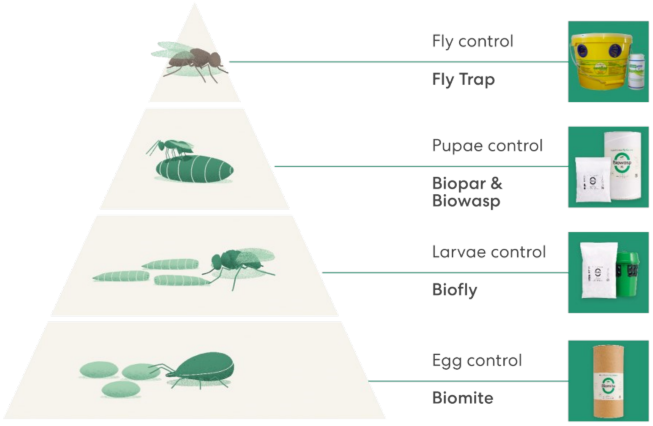
BESTICO FLY CONTROL

You may remember at the end of the summer last year we had a couple of meetings about using insect larvae as a control method to reduce irritant flies in the youngstock sheds and dairy herd. The bucket traps were rolled out and were an instant hit with the effect of hoovering flies from the backs of the cows as they came in from the field.

Placing these bucket traps alongside the tracks into the farm helped reduce the irritation on both cows and farm staff in the parlour. The insect larvae control was only tried on one farm due to the lateness of the season preventing year round calvers from "getting ahead of the curve" of fly production.

The one farm that did try the larvae release took advantage of our vet tech service and for less than £300 had the flies under control for the full calving season.

What does control look like? Two strands of fly tape in a fifteen metre calf building were put up as usual, but where a normal year would see 2-300 meters of winding on across the four months the tape was never full enough to justify winding so a reduction of 200 metres of flies in a season??? I don't know how many that is but it's a dramatic improvement however you measure it.



For 2024 we are offering an assessment visit by a vet who will compose a written report detailing the schedule of releases, the traps required and location of where the traps are to be situated costing £58.50 +VAT.

Once the schedule is complete and agreed, our team of vets techs will organise the delivery, monitoring and release on farm offering a complete 'fire and forget' service taking all the stress out of fly control.

For more information, please contact the surgery and speak to one of the farm vets or vet techs.

COCCIDIOSIS IN YOUNGSTOCK POST TURNOUT

There are three main infective species of coccidia in cattle, *Eimeria Bovis*, *Zuernii* and *Alabamensis*, the latter commonly associated with diarrhoea in young stock 1-2 weeks after turn out. The period between picking up the parasite and start of symptoms is only six to eight days – much shorter than the other coccidial species of cattle. The scour that occurs may be put down to a change in diet, therefore it is important to investigate the potential presence of *Eimeria Alabamensis* at this stage as cattle can deteriorate extremely quickly. If cattle are grazing the same piece of land each year, it is more than likely the problem will repeat each subsequent year.

Some points to consider about coccidiosis diagnosis:

- Clinical signs can arise in the pre-patent periodx with the onset of diarrhoea 4 days before to 1 day after oocyst shedding begins.
- The patent period can be very short and in acute infections oocyst output can drop sharply after the peak but diarrhoea can continue.
- Severe diarrhoea can lead to dilution of oocysts.
- We advise sampling more than one animal to increase the chance of detecting a high oocyst count.
- Chronic disease with re-infection, a partial immune response and lower numbers of oocysts excreted is seen commonly. The gut in these cases is usually persistently damaged with evidence of ongoing active injury and partial repair.
- Request species identification in cases where high oocyst counts have been found post treatment. The short pre-patent period can suggest treatment failure if not confirmed as E. Alabamensis.

For more information, please contact the surgery.

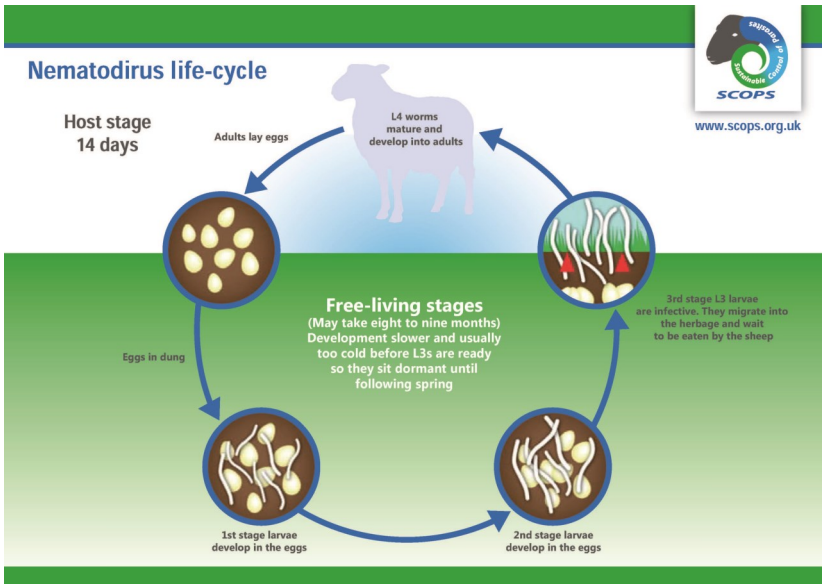
NEMATODIRUS & COCCIDIOSIS

Worm season has well and truly arrived in our lab! Our vet techs are busy with lamb WEC (worm egg counts) as we are seeing a significant number of scouring lambs and the samples from flocks who sample routinely are showing up positive results for roundworms and coccidiosis.

As many of you know, the first gut worm that causes problems in lambs is Nematodirus. It has several clever adaptations that allows it to survive and cause so much damage.

A thick-walled egg that hibernates on pastures for years, waiting for a period of warmer weather to hatch. The larvae coil around the gut lining to feed. If there is a mass hatch a large number of young Nematodirus larvae can cause severe scour, dehydration and death in lambs.

In contrast to the worms we see during the summer and autumn months Nematodirus causes damage before the adult worms are producing eggs that we can detect in the sheep faeces.



This means WEC (worm egg counts) are not ideal for monitoring for Nematodirus. We use the weather forecasting stations to monitor ground temperatures and predict when Nematodirus are likely to hatch. The SCOPS website is the place to look for this information. We usually see disease due to this worm in April - May when lambs have started to graze and there is a hatch of worms simultaneously. The forecast is still moderate for our area, however we are seeing a lot of infestations in lower farms, on the south facing fields where the ground temperature is likely to be higher. This is being picked up on FEC.

There is no resistance of Nematodirus to any wormers – therefore we use white drench if we only have Nematodirus as all other sheep gutworms have advanced resistance to these drugs.

Coccidiosis is another parasite that causes disease in lambs over 4 weeks of age. This is not a worm but a protozoa so it requires different drugs to control it. The risk factors for Cocci are heavily stocked wet environments, sound familiar to anyone this year?!!! Many flocks have seen a much bigger problem than usual.

We often see coccidiosis and Nematodirus at the same time. This is troublesome in several ways: The lambs' guts have a double whammy of damage, and you cannot dose a wormer and a coccidiostat at the same time. The drugs will inactivate each other, you need to treat at least a few hours apart.

To complicate the parasite situation further this year we are seeing some strongyle worms at a level high enough to dose in some, but by no means all flocks! This means that white wormer may not the best choice of drug due to its resistance.

The pattern of cocci, nematodirus and strongyles vary field to field, farm to farm and year to year.

Our advice is that a FEC should be undertaken before dosing lambs to avoid costly mistakes both in terms of cost and lamb health.

BLOWFLY STRIKE - ARE YOU PREPARED?

Blowfly strike is caused by the larvae of *Lucilia sericata* (greenbottles), *Phormia terrae-novae* (blackbottles) and *Calliphora erythrocephala* (bluebottles). The life cycle is broken up into three distinct stages; the egg, the larvae and the adult. Flies over-winter in the soil as pupae, and emerge as temperatures rise during the spring. Adult female flies lay eggs on desired laying sites such as dirty back ends, foot rot lesions or open wounds. Eggs hatch into first stage larvae within approximately 12 hours. These larvae feed on tissue, grow and moult twice, becoming mature maggots in 3 to 10 days, depending on temperature and humidity. Third stage maggots then drop to the ground and pupate, and so the life cycle begins again.

Blowfly populations are at peak during the summer months. The entire life cycle from egg to adult can occur in less than 10 days. Maggots are active and voracious, causing skin and muscle liquefaction as they develop attracting secondary blowflies. Toxins released by decomposing tissues and ammonia secreted by the maggots are absorbed through the lesions into the sheep's blood, causing systemic illness which result in death.

Managing worm burdens helps to prevent dirty backsides through scouring. 'Dagging' or 'crutching' decreases the amount of faecal matter build up which will help reduce the risk of blowfly strike. Hooves which are in good health and are free from foot-rot or severe scald will also assist in reducing the risk of blowflies becoming attracted and laying eggs.

	Meat Withdrawal	June	July	August	Septem-ber	October	November
Clik Extra	40 Days	19 Weeks					
Clik	40 Days	16 Weeks					
Crovect	8 Days	6 Weeks					
Dysect	49 Days	8 Weeks					
Ectofly	8 Days	6 Weeks					

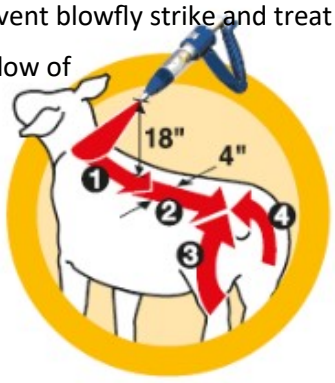
In addition to the above points there are chemical based products which can be applied onto the fleece that will prevent the incidence of blowfly strike. Dicyclanil based products (**Clik: 16 weeks protection, Clik extra: 19 weeks protection)** will prevent blowfly strike but will not treat active blowfly strike. Due to the prolonged protection, many of those who use the products apply at first dose. The product spreads and binds to the lanolin, providing full fleece protection. The product is applied to the weight of the lamb (e.g 10-20kg lamb receive 20ml of product). Clik and Clik Extra are Insect Growth Regulators (IGR), the products stop blowfly larvae developing to the damaging second and third stage maggots, which causes flystrike.

OP dips can will treat and prevent blowfly strike as well as other external parasite infections for 60 days.

It is stated in the datasheet not to shear sheep for 3 months post treatment relating to human health.

Cypermethrin (Crovect, Ectofly) based products can also be used to prevent blowfly strike and treat active blowfly strike infections. These provide a shorter protection window of up to 6-8 weeks and have a shorter meat withdrawal period with no restriction as to when a sheep can be clipped.

When using any products it is essential that all the manufacturers instructions are followed. Not doing so will affect the protection and may result in sheep becoming infested. We advise that sheep severely affected by blowfly strike are given antibiotics and NSAIDs.



For best results, always use the 4-stroke method (pictured left) when applying CLiK and CLiKZiN to ensure an accurate spread. Apply the total required dose one quarter at a time:

1. 1/4 from midshoulders to middle back
2. 1/4 from middle of back to top of tail
3. 1/4 to one side of animal's tail and crutch
4. 1/4 to other side of animal's tail and crutch

For more information regarding blowfly prevention or for a price on products we stock please contact the surgery on 01729 823538 to speak to a large animal vet or SQP's.