



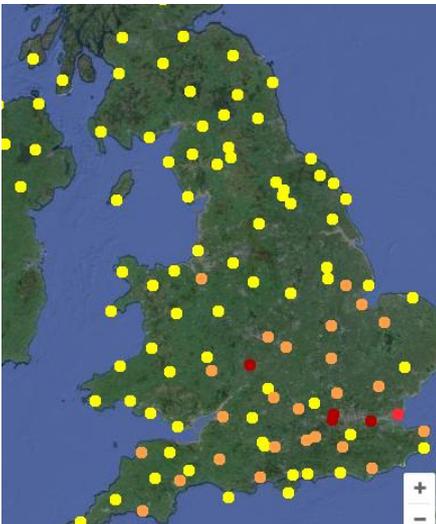
## Sheep Newsletter

Things are looking up weather wise, with warmer temperatures predicted. This should mean that the grass starts moving.

### NEMATODIRUS WARNING!!

Following on from the April newsletter, the nematodirus warning has changed from low risk to medium/high risk depending upon where you are in the county. The red area identified on the map is at Pershore at 35 meters above sea level. Hatching has started here and so it is very likely that this will be starting to occur on our lower lying farms. In general this will be delayed by approximately 1 week for every 100 meters above sea level.

The Sustainable Control of Parasites in Sheep (SCOPS) website has a live map of nematodirus predictions and has excellent advice on worming. [www.scops.org.uk](http://www.scops.org.uk)



#### Nematodirus features:

- Causes **disease in LAMBS** not ewes. Ewes gain immunity.
- **6-12 WEEK OLD** lambs are at risk.
- **Risk assess your farm now.**
- HIGH RISK pastures are those grazed by ewes and lambs last year (pretty much all!) and southern facing slopes.
- Disease is caused by the IMMATURE worm hatching from **the small intestine = scour** and in large numbers = **DEATH.**
- Therefore a Faecal Egg Count may be **NEGATIVE.**

- Lambs can look fit and well, then sudden death.
- Or lambs can be scouring and open fleeced/poor.

#### Treatment and prevention:

- ✓ **TREAT ALL lambs in the group.**
- ✓ **USE ALBENDAZOLE/RICOBENDAZOLE** – I.E. Albex, Albenil, Rycoben etc.

**If the weather continues to be damp/warm – another treatment in 2-3 weeks maybe required.**

If you are having cases, please speak to us at the practice as we can post mortem to give an indication of cause and we can advise on the course of action specific to your grazing. Or refer to your Veterinary Flock Health Plan.

**N.B Coccidiosis – this can occur at the same time as a Nematodirus outbreak.** If you are unsure or have continued problems after treatment then please check with us.

**N.B** Pasturella and Coccidiosis are both causes of sudden death in lambs and may also occur in this age group.



### **When do you wean your lambs?**

Rather than this being a set date each year it should be based upon a number of factors in order to optimise your sheep production system.

**Ewe body condition** –this should be a trigger to wean. Ewes need to start their quest for optimum fertility at weaning and actually even before this. The oocysts required for their first ovulation are already being determined around this time.

**Availability of grass** – good condition dry ewes have a much reduced need for quality grass and so weaning early will free up grass for weaned lambs and conserve grass for ewes later in the summer.

Throughout the whole sheep year and the sheep production cycle, your most important asset is a ewe in optimum body condition.

The success of your fat lambs or replacement ewe lambs is **ALWAYS down to the ewe** and the start that the lamb receives (early as conception!).

Hence the cost it takes you to produce a lamb can be reduced if efforts are put into ensuring your ewes are in the optimum condition – and this starts **in lactation and at weaning.**

**BODY CONDITION** scoring at weaning will give you an idea of how to prepare your ewes for the next tupping season.

**By 12 weeks of age** the lamb will be growing well on grazing and creep if used, and does not require milk from the ewe. If grazing conditions are poor, then supplementary feed should be available.

Leaving the lamb on the ewe will not help and at this age will start to have a detrimental effect on the ewe in terms of her condition.

They will not suffer a growth check provided the grazing, creep, worm control and any other diseases are under control.

**BODY CONDITION SCORE** the ewes and record it! Action to be taken with ewes at less than BCS 2.

**Identify the cause and treat LAMENESS** and make sure it is cured! – or cull the ewe.

### Faecal Egg Counting!!

- Remember – start counting mobs of lambs from around **10-12 weeks** of age **BEFORE deciding to worm!**
- Collect samples from around 10% of lambs in that group.
- Gather ewes and lambs or weaned lambs in corner of field or handling system and pick up lamb muck samples into 1 bag/pot.
- Submit to lab and we should have a result for you the same day.

**Daily live weight gain** – a very accurate measure of the worm burden present. Weigh 10% of your lambs and track their weight gain. If it drops below 175 g/day then there is likely to be a significant worm burden present.

### SPRING FLUKE treatment for EWES

If you have a known fluke risk on your farm or had fluke confirmed in ewes/store lambs last year, then a spring fluke treatment for the ewes IN MAY will reduce the egg output onto your pasture for THIS YEAR.

- **Treat with CLOSANTEL** – I.E. Flukiver and **NOT** Triclabendazole.

