



THE
**WOOD
VETERINARY
GROUP**



A muggy and moist start to November with still quite mild temperatures will mean favourable conditions for diseases such as fluke, worms and lameness caused by infectious causes. The infective immature liver fluke love the moisture on the grazing pasture and use it to their benefit to move across the sward and up to the top of the grass blade ready for eating by the unsuspecting sheep!

As mentioned in the previous newsletter, be aware of this and ensure that if you are at risk from fluke (previous cases, on wet ground, on unknown ground) then treat your ewes and store lambs now with a product containing either triclabendazole (Fasinex, Tribex) or if done later moving into December we can now use closantel or nitroxylnil (Flukiver or Trodax).

The risk to the South West has been downgraded slightly from very high to high-moderate. Therefore if you have already treated for fluke then you should not need to repeat treat, unless of course you see any obvious cases/problems. Please speak to us at the practice if you are unsure.

Why do ewes die?

This month we can look at the results of the AHDB fallen stock scheme carried out on adult sheep and we maybe able to answer why some ewes die! There were 282 ewe carcasses and 47 tups post mortemed from 200 farms in this section of the study. The main points are as follows:

- There were 48 different causes of death recorded!
- In 23% of cases there was no cause of death DIAGNOSED.
- The top 3 causes of death were OPA (Jaagsekite), Johnes and Listeriosis at 7%, 6.5% and 5% respectively.
- The next major causes of death were acute fluke and endocarditis/chronic suppurative pneumonia.

So what does this tell us?

Firstly the so called 'iceberg' diseases, i.e. OPA and Johnes in this study are becoming more frequently diagnosed. They are therefore very relevant and we must make sure that we investigate suspicious clinical signs and increasing numbers of thin ewes and chronic coughing with nasal discharge.

In this study the majority of the Listeriosis cases were caused by eating contaminated silage and the neurological form of Listeriosis was the most reported. Therefore it is important to remember not to take



the risk and feed mouldy/soil contaminated silage – it is not worth the risk.

Also interesting was the number of deaths caused by endocarditis (infected heart) and chronic pneumonia caused by the formation of 'pus' pockets throughout the lungs. The main causes of these conditions are related to an infected blood clot that has been released from an infected part of the body. An infected foot, a dirty needle/injection site and a skin infection/mastitis can all cause this scenario and subsequent death a few months later. So remember to use a clean needle and DO NOT inject sheep with a wet fleece.

A quarter of sheep in the study died from an undiagnosed condition, which reflects what we see when doing post-mortems in practice. The signs of death can sometimes only be detected microscopically which is why we often send samples away when the carcass itself appears quite normal or to confirm the cause of any clinical signs seen.

In the Premium and Basic Sheep Flock Health plans a post mortem of up to 3 lambs and 2 ewes at the practice is included in the cost of the scheme. This could prove invaluable to detected the presence of disease and preventing further losses.

Black scour worm

The return of wetter conditions has prompted more cases of worms arising. 'Black scour' and rapid weight loss is commonly seen at this time with trichostrongyle infections.

Within the practice the faecal egg counts have been showing significant increases of strongyle infections in many groups of store lambs.

Treatment options:

- This is a good time to incorporate the group 4 and 5 classes of anthelmintic into your parasite control plan.
- **Zolvix – Monepantel (Orange)** and **Startect – Derquantel/Abamectin (Purple)** can be used on store lambs/ewe lambs to 'clear out' an existing worm burden at this time as we head into the late



Autumn/winter. These drugs can also be used on lambs moving onto turnips.

