



The alternating warm and cold weather continues, and the grass has started to get going so hopefully ewes are milking well and lambs average daily live weight gains are booming as a result. Many of you have now finished lambing, but for the few still going, we hope the warmer weather makes the last few weeks a little more bearable. We've been seeing a few cases of post lambing metabolic disease on farm lately. The two main causes of this are low calcium and low magnesium.

HYPOCALCAEMIA

Hypocalcaemia (low calcium) can occur at any time from 6 weeks before to 10 weeks after lambing.

Typically we see the greatest number of hypocalcaemia cases immediately post lambing and in early lactation. The condition is linked to calcium demands for producing the foetal skeleton and then the huge transition into producing colostrum and then peak lactation.

Any stresses e.g. disruption to feed, sudden turn out to poor grazing and poor weather can influence calcium levels in the body.

Calcium mobilisation from body stores takes 24-72hrs before it can release a sufficient level. Often older ewes can't mobilise enough calcium from their own body stores fast enough and therefore are a higher risk of hypocalcaemia.

Clinical signs:

- Typically post lambing (if before, may be linked to Twin Lamb)
- Stiff / wobbly on feet / down
- Excessive salivation / leakage of rumen contents from nose
- Constipated / hard dry faeces
- Off feed / water
- Collapsed

Treatment:

- 100ml **WARMED Calciject 6** → under the skin, split volume over 2 sites
- 20ml of **Calciject 5** slowly into the vein (if possible)
- Drench the ewe with 1 litre of fluid with electrolytes
- Lambs should receive supplementary feed for 24-48hrs to allow the ewe time to recuperate



HYPOMAGNESEMIA

Sheep, as with cattle, are unable to store magnesium efficiently and therefore need a constant supply of magnesium in their diet.

Hypomagnesemia (low magnesium) most commonly occurs 4-6 weeks post lambing.

It is closely linked to lactation, as magnesium is also excreted in milk. In some cases, low grade hypocalcaemia may also be present, especially in older ewes.

At this time of year, wet spring grazing is low in magnesium and so provides less dietary levels. In addition to this, lush spring grass is low in fibre and is highly digestible, meaning gut transit is faster, allowing even less time for magnesium absorption from the gut.

NB – Avoid fertilising your planned spring grazing with Potash (or slurry) – soils become high in potassium & nitrogen which can interfere with rumen absorption of magnesium and can predispose grazing stock to hypomagnesemia

Clinical signs:

- Uncoordinated / erratic gait
- Trembling / involuntary muscle contractions
- Hypersensitive to touch
- Recumbent / down

Treatment:

- 80ml of **WARMED Magniject 9** → under the skin, split volume over 2 sites
- 10-20ml of **Calciject 5** slowly into the vein (if possible)
- Magnesium supplementation from late pregnancy through to early lactation → especially for ewes to be turned out onto spring grazing
- Providing good fibre forage while at spring grass (hay/straw) to slow gut transit



FLUKE TREATMENT

Keeping with last month's theme of all things parasitic; a spring fluke treatment for ewes should be on our radar.

If you have a history of fluke on your farm, or have had fluke confirmed in ewes or lambs within the **last year**, then a spring fluke treatment for ewes **this month** will help to reduce the volume of fluke eggs shed onto your pasture this year.

At this time of year we are concerned about CHRONIC infections – the majority of the fluke burden will be ADULT fluke → by treating now, we reduce potential fluke egg numbers on pasture in summer



Chronic infections are characterised by:

- **Weight loss**
- **Submandibular oedema/'bottle jaw'**
- **Anaemia**
- **Diarrhoea**



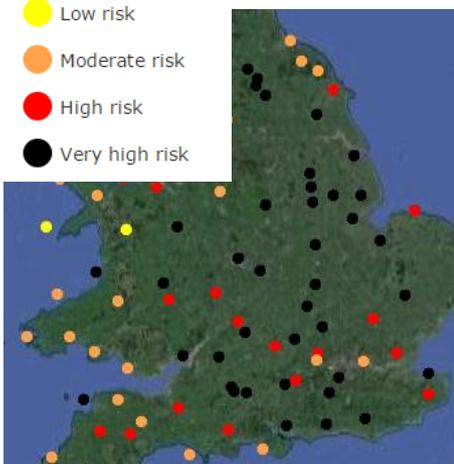
For spring fluke treatments you **MUST** use a Flukicide active against **ADULT** fluke
e.g. Closantel / Nitroxylin / Oxyclozanide

DO NOT USE TRICALBENDAZOLE

If you are suspicious that you may have a fluke burden in your flock, we are able to check for active infections using a faecal ELISA test. Contact us at the practice for more details about testing and treatment.

NEMATODIRUS HATCHING: UPDATE!

- Negligible risk
- Low risk
- Moderate risk
- High risk
- Very high risk



Following on from last month's Nematodirus report, many areas have now progressed to **HIGH RISK** and **VERY HIGH RISK**.



If you have not yet treated your lambs, make this an absolute priority!
(map accurate 27/4/17)

Remember we cannot count Nematodirus eggs on Worm Egg Counts

It is important to assess each group of lambs separately as colder areas on the farm (for example north facing slopes) may still be a developing threat.

Are your lambs at risk? Lambs are at risk of Nematodirus if your lambs are:

- Grazing pasture that was grazed by lambs LAST year

Plus any of the following:

- Lambs at 6 -12 weeks old now (i.e. eating grass)
- Triplet lambs / foster lambs or lambs from young/older ewes
- Older lambs also at risk of coccidiosis i.e. older and younger lambs grouped together
- Cold snap followed by warmer weather

Any concerns or queries regarding your farm risk or treatment, please do not hesitate to contact us

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