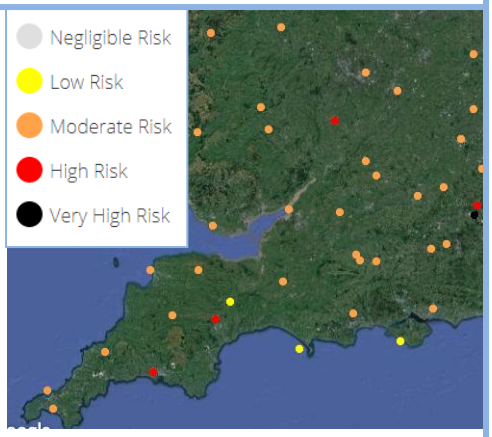
THE WOOD VETERINARY GROUP

SHEEP NEWSLETTER APRIL 2019

We hope the warmer weather this year has helped with your lambing time; much more pleasant without snow drifts in the sheds! With the gale force winds finally finished and most of you near the end of lambing, we hope turnout has been successful so far this year. This month we discuss shed diseases and upcoming grazing issues and pasture considerations.

NEMATODIRUS FORECAST



That time of year has come around quickly; we are again monitoring the SCOPS forecast for signs of Nematodirus hatching on pasture. In our area, we are currently at a **MODERATE** to **HIGH** risk **(map correct as of 29/3/19).**

This means that Nematodirus hatching has occurred in some areas (**Red dot – Pershore**) or is anticipated within the next 7- 14 days if the weather remains warm. **Lambs from 6-12 weeks old and on pasture grazed by lambs last year are at greatest risk.**

Please ensure to assess your individual farm and lamb risks –sudden deaths and scours should be investigated. Lambs will require worming with a white drench e.g. Rycoben/Albex – speak to us if you have any treatment queries.

Worming at Turnout

With turnout comes worming considerations. Last year we discussed new research from SCOPS suggesting worming pre turnout of all ewes to tackle anticipated large egg output on pasture due to **'peri-parturient' rise** does not necessarily equate to a lower pasture risk for lambs. **These are our suggestions for worming pre turnout:**

- **Do NOT worm all ewes -** Be selective with which animals require worming. This should be limited to ewes in poor BCS, 1st time lambers, ewes that had triplets and ewes suffering from other health conditions.

- **Maintain good nutrition -** Continuing high quality feed will not only assist milk production for strong, fit lambs better able to cope with worm exposure, but will support the ewes' own immune function. Ewes under nutritional stress will shed a higher level of internal parasites. Maintaining adequate dietary protein limits the number of worm eggs in their dung around lambing and so helps limit pasture contamination.

- **Considered product selection -** Get into the habit of carrying out faecal sampling for drench checks to assess product effectiveness, especially if you have been routinely using the same worming product year on year! Only use combination products when both active ingredients are definitely needed e.g. triclabendazole is **not** needed early spring. Please be aware using persistent action wormers do not necessarily create lower pasture contamination or lower re-infection pressure. These should **not** be your default wormer choice year on year.

- **Wait to move -** Wormed ewes should not be moved immediately post worming, a minimum wait of 24hrs in the shed ensures any eggs and worms are passed inside and are not deposited on new pasture. If moving between pastures, ideally stock should remain on the old pasture for 3-4 days pre move to prevent worm carry over onto new pasture.

- **Consider grazing management -** Do not rely on worming of ewes alone; ensure other management tools are carried out such as assessing stocking density and aim to use rested safe grazing for lambs. Regularly assessing lamb faecal samples and monitoring live weight gains (less than 200g suggests a problem) will

indicate treatment needs – keeping lambs in tight age groups at turnout is beneficial for accurate interpretation of faecal egg counts. Creep feeding lambs will help delay their exposure to worms from pasture.

Speak to us for more advice regarding worming and worm management

Watery Mouth

Last month APHA offered free Watery Mouth screens for suspected cases on farm. Antibiotic sensitivity was carried out on cultured bacteria from submitted samples. The full national results from this recent project have yet to be published, however historically, it has been estimated up to 30% of E.coli cultured from post mortem cases are resistant to Spectinomycin (Spectam). **Within the practice we have found further evidence of Spectam resistance from results of the project.** With this in mind, and cases of Watery Mouth cropping up on farm again this season, please see below for a reminder on suggested treatment protocols:

Clinical Signs: Watery mouth is caused by an **environmental E.coli infection**, with lambs being infected by ingesting bacteria from contaminated surfaces such as dirty teats, fleece and straw. Lambs present recumbent and unwilling to feed with cold, wet mouths from excessive salivation. They appear bloated and 'rattle belly' may be heard when picked up. **Early recognition and prompt treatment is key to preventing deaths.**

Management:

- **Hygiene** – lime and freshly bed up between ewes, shavings can be used to soak up extra moisture. This becomes especially important towards the end of the lambing period when sheds will be naturally dirtier. Keep outdoor paddocks and pens as clean as possible – ewes should come into lambing sheds clean and dry.
- **Do not use blanket antibiotic treatments** – Spectam is an antibiotic, use it selectively. Do not use from the start of lambing; should cases occur start using Spectam in at risk animals e.g. triplets.
- **Colostrum** – adequate colostrum intake is vital to ensure optimal antibodies and a strong immune system.

Treatment:

- Inject 0.5ml of Amoxypen LA into muscle – to treat systemic infection
- Inject 0.2ml of Metacam under skin – to reduce circulating toxins from E.coli
- Oral Spectam 1 pump – to treat bacteria in the gut
- Place under heat lamp – these lambs are at risk of hypothermia
- Tube 50ml warm rehydration fluid e.g. rehydion gel with water – repeat again in 4 hours. 50ml milk can then be given a further 4 hours later. Lambs should be left with the ewe, do not restrict milk for more than 12hrs.
- Consider intraperitoneal glucose injection – a liquid glucose preparation is available in 50ml bottles.

If you're concerned about treatment response rates please speak to us – sensitivity testing from post mortem samples may be needed.

CLOSTRIDIAL DISEASE

With lambs already turned out, we need to consider Clostridial disease vaccines. Last year we had a number of sudden deaths due to clostridial disease in young 3-4 week old lambs.

Vaccination of ewes with vaccine such as Heptavac P provides essential initial protection through colostrum intake, however **after 3 weeks passive protection begins to wane.**

Lambs can be vaccinated with **Heptavac P or Ovivac P from 3 weeks of age** to provide ongoing protection – please be aware lambs will need a 2 part starter course 4-6weeks apart.

Please speak to us if you are experiencing sudden death in lambs or to discuss lamb vaccination.

ABORTION BLOOD TESTING

Have you experienced abortions this season? Is your flock currently unvaccinated?

There are various **subsidised blood schemes** available for abortion and barren ewe investigation – these will be available from now until late summer.

Flocks are eligible for testing if you have a minimum of 50 breeding ewes and are currently **NOT** vaccinating. Ewes must be sampled a maximum of 3 months post lambing.

Speak to us at the practice for more information regarding blood sampling and which scheme would be most suitable for your flock.