

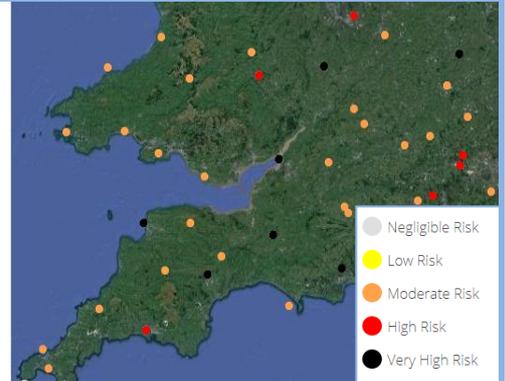


This last month has been perfect grass growing weather with a few very welcome days of rain. Hopefully this has meant ewes have maintained milk yield producing good lamb growth and minimal mastitis cases. For those of you producing your own forage, we wish you successful silage making over the following weeks.

*** NEMATODIRUS FORECAST ***

Following last month's report, we have now transitioned into **VERY HIGH-RISK area** (black dots at Pershore & Filton – map correct 19/4/19). Forecasts suggest the major hatch has passed and numbers of larvae will start to decline into May. However, lambs will still be at risk of infection on holdings at higher altitudes or on later hatching north facing fields.

With continued mild weather forecasted, if you have not already done so, please make treating your lambs a priority this month!



Lambs from 6-12 weeks and grazing on pasture that had lambs on last year are your greatest risk – but any milk supply issues or mastitis in ewes will force younger lambs to start eating significant volumes of grass earlier, putting these animals at risk too. Clinical signs to look out for are rapid onset diarrhoea, poor looking lambs and any sudden deaths.

A **white wormer** treatment is needed (e.g. Rycobendazole/Albendazole). This is the **ONLY** time a white wormer should be used on farm. This class of wormer is not suitable for use in older stock as there is wide spread resistance to this wormer for other species of worms. Please be aware repeat treatments in 2 to 4 weeks may be needed if the hatch risk remains high.

For more information or to discuss individual farm risks, please speak to us at the practice

Lamb Diarrhoea

With lamb scour being a concern at this time of year, Nematodirus remains our highest priority, however we also need to discuss other causes of scour at pasture such as Coccidiosis.

This parasite is a **risk to lambs over 4 weeks old** with clinical signs presenting 2 weeks after turnout; this includes scour, straining lambs, poor growth and sudden death.

Oocysts (eggs) survive on pasture over winter. Ingestion of a low level of hatched cocci oocysts in spring triggers immune development, but if environmental pressure becomes too high, debilitating disease can occur. **Worm egg counts are important to ensure cocci is the causal agent** - only 2 of the many species of



cocci cause disease. Your set up and the number of eggs seen on sample will influence what treatment we advise e.g. Vecoxan/Baycox.

Collect teaspoon sized samples of fresh faeces from lambs **only** to assess for cocci burdens **sampling 10% of the group. Do not let samples get warm between collection and delivery as oocysts hatch giving us falsely low readings.**

If you are concerned about Coccidiosis on farm or are unsure about Coccidiosis treatments, please speak to us at the practice for more advice.

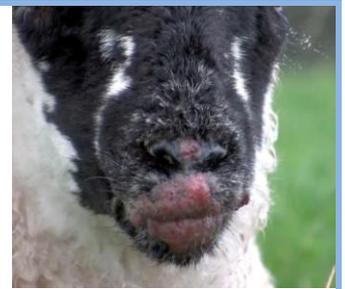
Orf Virus

Year on year we experience a few Orf outbreaks within the practice and this year has been no exception.

➤ What is it?

Orf, or Contagious Pustular Dermatitis, is a viral infection caused by a Parapox virus. This virus is hardy and can survive on equipment and dry surfaces for years. Scabs shed from infected animals are highly

infectious for months. Newer research suggests ewes may also carry the virus on their skin. The virus requires superficial damage to the skin to enter the body. This is reflected in outbreak patterns seen when stock graze rough pastures with bramble, thistle or stubble. Once infected, red swollen lesions, scabs and pustules form on mucous membrane to skin margins with the most commonly affected sites being the mouth, nose and teats. Foot lesions may also occur in rare cases.



➤ Why worry?

Orf lesions are painful, bleed readily and commonly get secondary bacterial infections. Mouth lesions reduce lamb feed intakes resulting in poor weight gain and high lamb losses. Importantly, affected lambs can transfer Orf lesions to ewes teats creating a high risk of mastitis due to teat damage and painful ewes kicking off lambs.



➤ Treatment

Treatment of the lesions is unrewarding as Orf is caused by a virus. Lesions will regress and heal slowly within a few weeks. Use of Oxytetracycline antibiotic spray will help to treat secondary bacterial infections that may deal healing. Please be aware affected lambs will need supplementary



feeding and nursing. Use of bottles and teats requires scrupulous hygiene to avoid spread of infection between lambs.

Please note, Orf is Zoonotic and can create painful sores on humans – wear gloves when handling any infected stock or infective material!

➤ Control

Dry conditions are required for virus survival so it is unlikely that pastures carry infection from year to year with the damp South West weather. Thorough disinfection and cleaning of lambing sheds and equipment is needed to reduce virus spread. Vaccination also provides valuable control in flocks.

- **As the vaccination is a live virus it must only be used in flocks with a history of Orf.**
- Vaccination must be completed no less than 7 weeks pre-lambing to allow time for infectious scabs to drop off and to provide initial protection for neonatal lambs.
- Lambs can also be vaccinated **FROM BIRTH** in flocks suffering from outbreaks to protect against infection and limit the severity of lesions. Yearly boosters are needed.
- Infected stock should be isolated away from unaffected stock preferably indoors where infectious scab material can not be spread on pasture and infect other stock.

If you notice any possible lesions on your stock, or wish to discuss individual farm Orf management, please get in touch.

Vaginal Prolapse Reminder

This year we have seen several vaginal prolapses.

These ewes should be permanently marked and go onto your **cull list**.

There is a genetic component to these prolapses and an inherent weakness in the musculature.

These ewes should NOT be retained for breeding – it will happen next year

Fluke Consideration

As we move towards summer, a **fluke treatment to reduce fluke egg output onto pasture this spring** should be considered to reduce fluke risk.

At this time of year, farms with known high fluke rates can treat **chronic fluke infections** – this means selecting flukicides targeted against adult fluke **.e.g. Closantel / Nitroxylin / Oxyclozanide.**

Blow Fly Preparation

Currently our region is still a low risk for Blow Fly, but with continued mild/warm weather, the start of the fly season is fast approaching with **cases anticipated soon.**

Are you prepared for ewe fly treatments? Have you organised the shearer? Early preparation will be key if this summer is going to be a repeat of last year!