

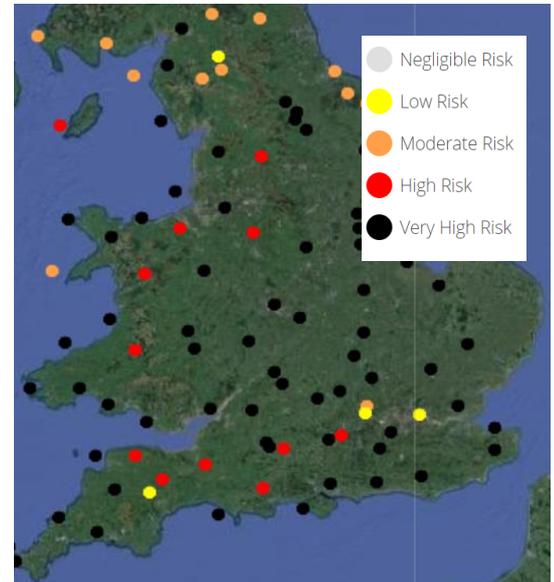


Parasite update:

Nematodirus

In last month's newsletter we stated that the risk was low to moderate whereas now we have had an extended period of warm weather, this has dramatically escalated to VERY HIGH. Therefore, if you have lambs that are 6 to 12 weeks old, out on pasture that had sheep on previously and they haven't been treated yet then it is vital to consider implementing a treatment strategy asap. This is the only time of year we would advocate the use of a white wormer.

Lambs often die before we see scour or evidence on a worm egg count, therefore it is important to get postmortems carried out but also take note of the forecast and farm history/circumstances. Please get in touch to discuss a farm specific plan.



Fluke

At this time of year, it is important to look out for sheep affected by chronic fluke, particularly if they have not been treated for some time. Symptoms of **chronic fluke** which are due to adult fluke damaging the liver include:

- Weight loss
- Anaemia
- Bottle jaw due to fluid accumulation
- Poor fleece quality
- Death especially if there are high energy demands of pregnancy or lactation

If you have concerns due to historic fluke or are unsure if you have the above symptoms in your sheep, diagnostic testing can be used to help identify an issue before productivity is heavily reduced:

- Group faecal samples
- Blood sampling 6 to 12 ewes from each management group
- Postmortems and/or abattoir feedback



If chronic infection is present, then it would be advisable not to use a Triclabendazole based product as there is already fairly high levels of resistance documented. This is important because Triclabendazole is the only product affective against very early stages of fluke which are normally involved with acute disease.

Active ingredient	Age of fluke in weeks (% kill rate)														Optimum time of year to use
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
Albendazole										50-70%	80-99%				Spring / summer
Oxyclozanide										50-70%	80-99%				Spring / summer
Nitroxylnil							50-90%			91-99%					Late autumn / winter
Closantel			23-73%		91%		91-95%			97-100%				Autumn	
Triclabendazole (assuming a fully susceptible population)	90-99%	99-99.9%													Autumn

Thanks to Professor Diana Williams for this table.

With the relatively mild and wet winter, the intermediate fluke host of the mud snail may not have hibernated that early. This allows for greater levels of fluke to be present on pasture later in the year meaning that we could expect a sudden peak of infection when snails start to come out of hibernation. As a result, in the next few months it will be important to remain vigilant in looking out for signs of **acute fluke**:

- Sudden deaths due to massive blood loss in the liver or secondary infection
- Lethargic and reduced grazing in groups
- Signs of abdominal pain

As usual make sure any sudden deaths are investigated with the aid of postmortem examination so treatment can be implemented quickly.

Environmental control plays a huge part in reducing the damage done by fluke as if there is not a suitable environment for the mud snail then there cannot be fluke development. Plan to spend some time assessing grazing and whether you could reduce your risk:

- Fence off any areas of wet ground
- Provide clean water troughs and avoid relying on natural water sources if possible
- Assess drainage of pasture and see if anything can be done
- If these are not practical, try to avoid grazing the wettest pasture in Autumn and Winter
- Practice good biosecurity – don't buy in fluke if you don't have it and don't buy in resistant fluke

There has also been some **recent research** to suggest that liver fluke cysts can survive in spoiled silage. Cysts were shown to be killed after 2 weeks storage in silage that followed a strict anaerobic fermentation process however in aerobic spoiled silage, they could survive up to 10 weeks. This has potentially a huge implication when making and feeding silage.

As always speak to a vet to help with a tailored plan for monitoring, diagnosing, treating and preventing fluke from causing you losses.

Flies

It may seem early, but it would be wise to start considering what you plan to do about fly prevention. We have already had some unseasonably warm weather so although the NADIS blowfly alert is low currently it is expected the strike season will start in mid-May. We can advise on correct product choice, timing and supply products so please get in touch.