



Footvax

Following on from last month's newsletter here is further information about the use of footvax:

- This vaccine aims to help improve your overall flock immune status to foot rot
- The most current research suggests that it will help with CODD control by reducing skin damage from foot rot in the flock and improving skin defences
- The vaccine regime needs to be tailored to the farm as the frequency can vary depending on your circumstances – discuss with your vet
- It can also be used in the face of an outbreak
- Whole flock vaccination including the rams, prior to risk periods will produce the best results – these risk periods are generally between October to December and March to May
- Safe to use during pregnancy – but avoid use 4 weeks before start of lambing and 4 weeks immediately after lambing
- Do not vaccinate within 6 to 8 weeks of shearing
- It can leave a lump at the site of injection
- 1ml dose under the skin

For the best results the vaccine should be used as part of the 5 point lameness plan (see AHDB website) and it should be used before the risk periods. Typically vaccinating at weaning and at scanning produces the best results. Please discuss your lameness plan with us here at the practice to make sure you target your money effectively to get the best results!

Thin ewes

The animal health and plant agency (APHA) are offering free post-mortems and follow up testing on up to three thin breeding ewes or rams per farm recruited until the end of December. They are especially interested in the "iceberg diseases" such as OPA, Johnes, Maedi Visna and Borders disease but will also investigate other causes of ill thrift. The point is for them to be able to use the information obtained anonymously for research purposes. A report will be provided to us to go through with you and provide useful information on the health of the flock. Due to the location of the APHA lab, transport of the animal/s should be free of charge to you too. There is a limited amount of funding so please get in touch with us to take up this offer especially if you have identified animals in poor condition at tugging or empty at scanning.

OPA: Ovine pulmonary adenocarcinoma (OPA, also known as Jaagsiekte)

A virus that infects lung cells and causes them to form tumours

Tumours replace normal lung tissue often over several years and produce high volumes of fluid
Spread via respiratory secretions and sometimes in the milk from ewe to lamb

Johnes:

More commonly seen in cattle but can also affect other ruminants e.g. sheep and goats
Scour often isn't seen like in cattle. Sheep/goats slowly waste away despite eating normally
Often takes years for symptoms to develop and can survive for months in the environment
Infected early in life generally by the faecal-oral route but can be spread in the uterus from ewe to lamb or in the milk

Maedi Visna: Highly contagious virus that is fatal and difficult to diagnose
Main clinical signs are pneumonia and wasting but can affect lamb numbers and growth rates among other symptoms

Borders disease: Also known as “hairy shakers disease” due to the appearance of lambs that are infected in the uterus being born with a long hair coat, tremors which fail to thrive – these are persistently infected animals
Spread in all secretions including semen
Virus similar to BVD in cattle and can cross species

With all the above diseases there is currently no treatment or vaccines, some are difficult to diagnose as they present very similarly to other problems and can only be managed with strict biosecurity and replacement sourcing policies. Therefore, this is a really important project to allow further research into diagnosis, treatment and prevention via vaccination. If you don't qualify for the project, there are other options for diagnosis so please speak to a vet if you have any concerns.

Winter checklist

Use the below points to help you review the last few months ready for the new year:

- ✓ **Tupping** – were you happy with the rams? What body condition score are they in after the mating period? It would be advisable to do a FEC on the rams to check if they need a worming treatment after mating?
- ✓ **Fluke treatments** – did you fluke treat your at-risk sheep? Do you have any poor doing ewes, ears down, miserable, bottle jaw? They may be suffering from sub-acute fluke – a blood or faecal test can determine if this is the cause.
- ✓ **Sheep deaths** – did you have any? Why did they die? Pasturella, Clostridia, high worm burdens and fluke remain the top reasons for deaths in sheep.
- ✓ **Forage analysis** – did you get it done? There's still time to sample your forage and get it analysed. You can then select the most appropriate compound feed and work out how much you need to feed – a massive cost saving if you know the detail!
- ✓ **Scanning** – how does it compare to last year? Are there problems in the flock?
- ✓ **Lameness** – catch, treat and sort it out ASAP – the sooner you do so, the less chance of spread and the better chance of cure.

HEPATAVAC P

It's come around quickly! It's time to plan your Heptavac P boosters again.

First time vaccinated ewe lambs will need **2 injections 4-6 weeks apart**. The second injection and all boosters must be completed a minimum of **4 weeks pre lambing** to ensure adequate antibody levels in colostrum.

Please call the practice to place your orders

SCABIVAX

If you have a **known** Orf issue on farm now is a good time to consider vaccinating. Vaccination of ewes must be completed **7-8 weeks before lambing** to allow time for the infectious scabs to drop off. During this time ewes should be kept **well away** from intended lambing areas.

If you have any queries regarding Orf and vaccination please speak to us at the practice