



The warmer weather and the appearance of some sunshine (finally) is very much welcome after a wet start to May. Hopefully lambs are still growing well, despite the lack of grass growth during April, the downpours will undoubtedly get the grass growing but we also welcome some warm dry weather.

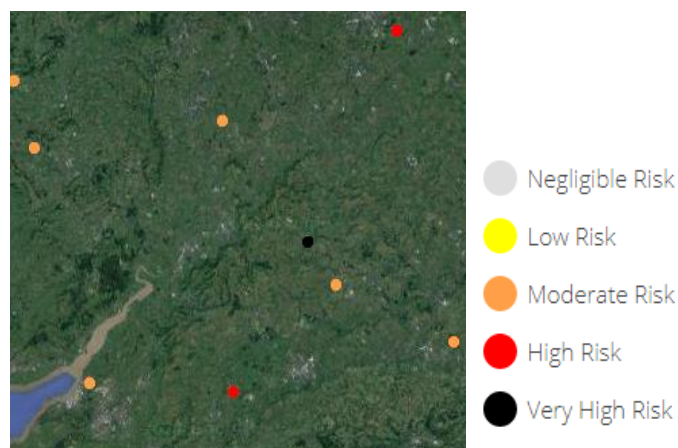
Key performance indicators can be a useful guide for your enterprise and will enable you to monitor your farm performance based on the industry standards. Lamb growth rates are important to monitor as will ultimately determine when you can sell. There will be a wide variation on farms and good record keeping will allow you to monitor lamb progress during the summer months and compare year on year results. It may also potentially identify areas which may need attention or require additional inputs to the system i.e. parasite treatment for worms and coccidiosis, reduced growth rates due to trace element deficiencies, ewe body condition to guide weaning. Industry targets as suggested by AHDB are listed in table 1 below. How do you compare?

Table 1. Industry performance targets (excludes pure hill breeds)

Key performance indicator (KPI)	Industry target	Your performance
Average eight-week lamb weight (kg)	>20 kg	
Average age at weaning (days)	<100 days	
Average weight at weaning (kg)	>30 kg	
Average daily liveweight gain to weaning (kg per day)	>250 g	
Average 90-day lamb weight (kg)	>30 kg	
90-day lamb weight per ewe to ram (kg)	>45 kg	
Weight of lamb reared per ewe to ram (kg)	>60 kg	

(AHDB,2021¹)

Nematodirus is still of concern and a risk to this year's crop of lambs. Lambs are at high risk if they are grazing pasture grazed by lambs or ewes the previous year. Sudden death of 6 to 12 week old lambs is the most common presentation so early management is key. Treatment may need to be given on a number of occasions to coincide with hatching which may occur in several stages. As lamb grass intakes really take off around 6 to 12 weeks of age they are at risk of *Nematodirus* especially when the temperature has jumped up like it has causing a new hatch of eggs. Please see the map for our risk level in the area and speak to us about timing treatments.



¹ Animal Horticulture Dairy Board (AHDB).2021. *Growing and finishing lambs for better returns*. [Online]. Available at https://projectblue.blob.core.windows.net/media/Default/Beef%20&%20Lamb/GrowingAndFinishingLambsForBR3340_200415_WEB-1.pdf

COCCIDIOSIS

Last month we touched on coccidiosis as a cause of reduced production and even sudden death in lambs. Cases have increased over the past few weeks as lambs grass intake really takes off. This tiny parasite can have severe implications on lamb productivity. Do you know your farm cocci history?

Coccidiosis is a protozoan parasite which is fairly resistant in the environment. There are many different species which do not cause a problem and 2 pathogenic species *Eimeria ovinodialis* and *Eimeria crandallis*. Lambs ingest oocysts (the infective stages) from the pasture which invade the gut lining. Here they multiply and burst out of the cells causing significant gut damage which in turn affects the animals ability to absorb nutrients. Many oocysts are shed out onto pasture acting as a source of infection to other lambs. Ewes can contribute to pasture contamination over the winter. Immunity does develop with exposure but animals such as lambs which have not been exposed to cocci are at risk of developing clinical signs. Whilst infection is seen usually in animals 4-8 weeks of age, as the season progresses and pasture levels increase animals can be affected at a younger age. Scour and reduced growth rates are the predominant signs, scour may be accompanied by mucus and/or blood, straining occasionally rectal prolapses and sometimes signs of pain. Faecal samples can be used to aid a diagnosis of coccidiosis, but not all high counts will cause clinical signs and so speciation (identifying which species is present) is sometimes necessary.

Good biosecurity and targeted treatments in a flock with a known history are important management factors. Reduce pasture contamination by moving animals regularly and where possible avoid ground grazed by lambs the previous year, similar to *Nematodirus*. Move creep feeders regularly to avoid build up of oocysts in these areas.

Treatment can include medicated creep feeds to reduce pasture contamination and it should be fed for the duration of the risk period typically 28 days. Oral drenches including Vecoxan and Baycox can be used if coccidiosis is diagnosed or used approximately a week to 10 days prior to expected disease. Please get in touch with the farm team if you are concerned about coccidiosis in your lambs or wish to discuss cocci management on your farm.

TRACE ELEMENT DEFICIENCIES

Trace element deficiencies can have negative effects on lamb performance and can be present with other production limiting conditions such as coccidiosis and high worm burden. Do you know if your soil is deficient in key trace elements? Have you had problems finishing lambs or reduced growth rates?

Cobalt deficiency or 'Pine' usually presents in weaned lambs in the late summer/autumn month, but can be seen earlier and lambs display lethargy and poor growth rates. Blood samples and abattoir liver samples can be used to evaluate trace element status in lambs. Please discuss with one of the vets if you would like more information on testing your flock.

FLY SEASON

We are heading towards peak fly season especially now the warmer weather looks set to stay. With some already shearing its time to consider fly protection over the summer months. Fly strike is a welfare issue for those animals affected, prompt identification and treatment is important to limit the impact of strike on an animal. There are a range of products on the market which can prevent strike for the majority of the season and also those which can be used to treat and prevent infection. These have varied meat withholds and so will need to be considered if using on lambs and cull ewes.

*****Reminder of New Bank Details*****

For those of you who kindly send your payments to us by BACS, please be advised that our bank details have now changed. Please see below the new details with immediate effect:

Bank: Natwest Account Name: Wood Vet Group Account Number: 55248454 Sort Code: 60-60-05