



THE  
**WOOD  
VETERINARY  
GROUP**



Happy New Year all! The Animal Health and Welfare Pathway launches this January so we will be informing you all of what we know. We will also discuss pregnant ewe nutrition, which after the poor summer we had, will be more important than ever, to ensure those lambs get the best start in life.

### Animal Health & Welfare Pathway

The animal health and welfare pathway scheme is starting this year, with funding available for cattle, sheep and pig farms. Funding is currently restricted to one aspect of the business, so if you have a beef and sheep farm then you will have to pick to focus on the sheep or the cattle. Sheep farms are entitled to claim back £436 per review and this money, for the first year of the pathway must be used to test for worm resistance. To test for worm resistance, a faecal egg count reduction test is performed. This involves taking a pooled poo sample before worming a group of animals, worm if results indicate to do so and then 7-14 days after worming (number of days will depend on what wormer was used), re-submit a pooled poo sample to see if any worm eggs remain.

The scheme is currently open to commercial farms, with >10 cattle, >20 sheep and >50 pigs and who are currently eligible for the basic payment scheme (BPS).

First steps on the pathway:

1. Application process:
  - Apply digitally and agree to complete a review with a vet within 6 months.
2. Vet visit:
  - On farm discussion regarding health, biosecurity and medicines (up to 3 hours) & testing for worm resistance in sheep. We can also signpost you to other financial support.
3. Vet report:
  - We produce a report on the discussion we had on the visit including results, along with other findings and recommendations from the visit.
4. After the review & report:
  - Vet invoices the farmer, farmers submit a summary of the review report and receives funding.

Applications will open in 2023 and must be acted upon within 6 months of application. **As the majority of faecal egg counts are performed in the summer months we would advise not to apply to the scheme until spring, so that we have time to do the sampling at a time of year which would be most useful.**

### Managing ewe nutrition in mid-late gestation

Getting the nutrition element right when it comes to managing pregnant ewes is one of the most fundamental aspects to having a successful lambing period. This aspect, when done well, often reduces many of the problems we see during a lambing season.

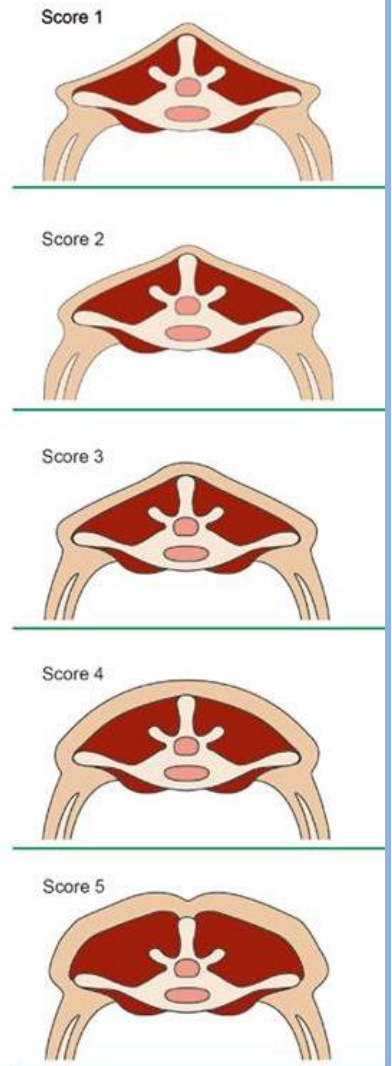
Body condition scoring (BCS) is one of the best and easiest tools to monitor ewe condition so take every opportunity to put your hand on the ewes' back and body condition score them. In over fat ewes, not only can the delivery of lambs be difficult due to excess fat in the pelvis, but it has also been shown that they may experience a more prolonged lambing.

In ewes that are too thin, we know that they are at a much higher risk of twin lamb disease and producing little and/or poorer quality colostrum. A target BCS of 3 - 3.5 is optimum for lambing ewes.

Maximising feed intakes in our pregnant ewes during mid-late pregnancy is essential. 75% of foetal growth occurs in the last 6-8 weeks of gestation and during this time the growing foetus(es) will be pressing on the rumen and reducing the amount that the ewe can eat. Therefore, high quality and palatable feeds must be used during this period. Where possible, try and have silage/haylage analysed before feeding it. It is often a false economy to be feeding poor quality forages to ewes and will likely be detrimental to the ewe and her unborn lamb(s). The microbes in the rumen work efficiently to digest forages and so we must feed the rumen to feed the sheep and not just feed the sheep! If feeding concentrates, aim to purchase a high protein cake (18-21%). If feeding fodder beet, remember it needs to be as clean as possible, try not to purchase very soiled beet as this can predispose to listeriosis. Roughages are in short supply this year, after a very difficult summer, but do try and ensure no mouldy bales are fed or mouldy sections are removed from bales before feeding.

### Pre-lambing ewe bloods:

Metabolic blood samples taken from ewes, 4-6 weeks before lambing and in conjunction with body condition scoring, can give us an indication about how well ewes are doing with regards to nutrition. If required, changes can then be made to their diet in time before lambing. We advise to blood sample several ewes from each management group to determine their energy status. Single bearing ewes and sick ewes are not representative and so should not be sampled. An equal number of twin and triplet bearing ewes is ideal.



### Understanding why we use certain parameters in pre-lambing metabolic bloods:

- BOHB levels – indicate whether ewes are receiving adequate energy from their current diet and reflects their risk of twin lamb disease
- Blood urea nitrogen levels – parameter used as an indicator of protein digestion. Adequate urea levels will mean that ewes will produce plentiful, good quality colostrum and will promote good milk production throughout their lactation

Speak to the practice to book in pre-lambing ewe bloods to make sure everything is on track for lambing

### Ongoing stock issues

#### Heptavac P

As many of you may already be aware, the supply of Heptavac P plus has been very unpredictable over the past year. Supply continues to be an issue so please do ring the practice in good time to place your order and we will do our very best to fulfil these. If you are unable to get Heptavac P plus, then do get in contact with us as we can discuss possible alternatives with you.



#### Strong Iodine 10%

We have been warned of an upcoming shortage of Strong Iodine 10% ahead of lambing. We have secured some smaller 500ml containers for clients, and we continue to sell Super7plus in spray bottles which is a fantastic alternative for spraying navels especially if anyone on farm experiences an iodine allergy.

