

## Nematodirus in Lambs - Risk Update

Nematodirus caused by the Nematodirus battus worm strikes very quickly with little or no warning. Each year we diagnose it as the cause of high mortality rates as well as stunting the growth of other susceptible lambs. Faecal egg counts (in this instance!) are not reliable as the damage is done by large numbers of immature larvae that are not producing eggs.

We are entering a risk period for Nematodirus in this area.

- Lambs grazing pasture that carried lambs last spring
- Generally happens in lambs aged 6-12 weeks old - old enough to be eating significant amounts of grass but might be younger if ewes are not milking well
- Concurrent challenges with coccidiosis
- Lambs under stress - triplets, fostered, older or younger ewes
- !! A sudden cold snap followed by a period of warm weather!!

If at all possible: avoid infection. Move your at risk lambs to a low risk pastures: pastures not grazed by lambs last spring.

If this is not possible the recommendation is to use a white wormer. Please check if worming has been effective by taking a FEC 7-10 days post treatment because although white wormer are usually highly effective against Nematodirus cases of resistance have still been reported. It is also important to remember that you might need to treat lambs more than once depending on the spread of ages in a group and weather conditions.

It is important to bear in mind that before they can hatch eggs need to undergo a period of cold weather followed by warmer temperatures of 10 degrees or more. If these conditions happen over a short period of time like the weather we've been recently happening this triggers a mass hatch. Couple this with lambs that are in the susceptible age bracket and huge problems will happen.

Give us a call if you have any questions/ need advice on how best to prevent this being an issue this springtime.

## Grass Tetany in cattle and sheep

Grass tetany (hypomagnesaemia/grass staggers) is an acute and true veterinary emergency which we are starting to see the past few weeks mostly in lactating sheep and cattle at grass. It is caused by a deficiency in blood magnesium levels.

Any reduced intake in grass in times of bad weather, bulling, transport, dietary changes or other concurrent disease can predispose to grass tetany as cattle and sheep need a constant daily intake especially during high milk production. Lush fast-growing grass as well as grass heavily fertilised with potassium or nitrogen also lead to low magnesium blood levels.

Signs commonly seen are staggering, high head carriage, muscle tremors which progresses to seizures with characteristic paddling. Immediate treatment is needed with Magniject No 9 injected under the skin.

Prevention is key so call us to discuss possible options such as mineral licks, rations containing magnesium, magnesium boluses and adding magnesium to water. If you suspect an animal has died from grass tetany call us ASAP if you would like a confirmed diagnosis as magnesium levels we collect from the eye are only accurate for a limited period after death.

## Propylene Glycol Now Available for Twin Lamb Disease

With difficulties sourcing effective treatment for twin lamb disease after Ketosaid joined the expanding list of products being discontinued/unavailable we are now stocking 2.5L drums of Propylene Glycol. Affected ewes require 100ml which can be repeated in 6 hours in clinical cases and continued for up to 5 days.

Remember who is most at risk of Twin Lamb Disease: twin and triplet bearing ewes who have increased energy demands as well as physically not having the abdominal space to eat enough due to the size of the growing multiple lambs. Death (of the unborn lambs as well as the ewe) can happen in as little as twelve hours if not picked up on early enough.

Look out for pregnant ewes separating themselves from the rest of the flock, not coming up for feed and especially displaying nervous/neurological signs.

## Red Mites in Housed Poultry

As the compulsory housing of poultry continues due to the Avian Influenza outbreak red mites are becoming more of an issue as the weather warms up. Mite infestations are a serious welfare concern as they can cause feather pecking from pain and skin irritation, cannibalism, anaemia and restlessness. Blood spots/streaks on eggs can indicate a red mite problem but it is better to spot earlier than this by checking houses for signs of mites.

If you suspect red mites in your birds, we can supply you with a solution (Exzolt) which can be given in their drinking water. This will need to be repeated after seven days. Along with this it is important to try to address the mites in the house. Red mites live in cracks and crevices so it is essential to thoroughly clean these out before applying a suitable product to kill the mites in the environment.

We are available to talk through the best approach if you think you may have a problem with red mites in your flock.

## Volunteer Farms needed for DEFRA Annual Health and Welfare Review Pilot

Defra will be funding a yearly vet visit for livestock farmers (eligible under certain criteria). The proposal is for an annual review looking at a range of themes important to animal health and welfare, focusing on the issues that the farmer and their vet consider to be most important for that farm.

This Annual Health and Welfare Review will test for particular priority endemic diseases/conditions, promote responsible use of veterinary medicines, improve welfare and increase sustainable farm productivity. It will also collect some key industry data needed to promote and support the efforts of English farmers to continually improve animal health and welfare within sustainable farming businesses.

Defra are looking for farmers to take part in a trial of the pilot scheme – please get in touch if interested/for any further information. You can learn more about the review here- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sfi-annual-health-and-welfare-review>.

Follow us on Instagram @norcalvets



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### Collie puppy for sale

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