

Autumn TB testing – please book in early

Although it might seem a bit early, we would like to ask you to start thinking about when would work best for you for Autumn TB testing. The earlier we get it in the diary the more likely it is that we can offer you the exact dates you would like. Also please remember to mention on the phone/before the day if you would like any other jobs done on the day that specifically require a vet (castrations/dehorns etc).

Autumn Lamb Health

Again thinking ahead to Autumn the most common diagnoses we make in lambs each year are *Pasteurellosis*, *Parasites - worms, fluke and Pine (cobalt deficiency)*. These common conditions can be related and found together.

- *Pasteurellosis* can present in two ways - pneumonia or systemically. Systemic pasteurellosis is common in 4-9 month old lambs between September and December. The bacteria responsible is found in healthy lambs' tonsils however during periods of stress (e.g. transport, mixing groups, weaning, diet and weather changes) causes disease. Usually, lambs are found dead and we make the diagnosis on PM. However, if caught lambs are lethargic, not eating and have a fever due to septicaemia. Control is best with this disease in lambs and can be done by using Ovivac- P- a combined clostridial and pasteurella vaccine more suitable for lambs.
- *Worms* as always are a concern and if we get mild and wet conditions in Autumn this will extend their season. No surprise (!) - faecal egg counts and targeted treatment to reduce resistance to wormers is the recommended approach.
- *Acute Fluke* is more common in sheep and usually peaks between July and December depending on factors such as the weather - usually occurring after a warm, wet summer. Sudden death, secondary clostridial infections due to the migration of the fluke in the liver, lethargy, abdominal pain and reduced grazing can all be signs of a fluke infestation. Unfortunately, there are different tests to detect fluke at different stages/different ages of sheep therefore it's important to consider this/talk to us about fluke on your farm. For example, a faecal sample to detect fluke eggs will not pick up on immature fluke which will cause sudden death in lambs however a blood test is not suitable for older ewes as it shows fluke infection occurred at any stage in the sheep's life. Your lambs are therefore ideal as an early warning as they can only have picked up liver fluke this season. For monitoring exposure during lambs first season grazing blood testing is recommended - gold standard would be once monthly from August to December for those who know fluke is an issue on their farms. As soon as they sero convert (i.e. become positive) the whole flock should be treated with a product that targets immature fluke. It is important to note that different products target fluke at different stages of their development. Remember that fluke treatments have no persistency and therefore do not protect animals against re-infection. If sheep are treated before peak infection has occurred and they stay on flukey pasture they are still at risk and treatment will have been unbeneficial - drug meat and milk withdrawal days that you see on bottles are not the same as persistence.

Photosensitivity in Cattle

For some cattle the sun can directly cause painful issues. Clinical signs of photosensitivity are seen as reddening/ulceration of the muzzle, eyes and teats, jaundice, off feed, severe irritation shown by tail swishing and laying down kicking for example, swelling of eyes and face (looking like they've been stung by a bee!) and a high temperature. If left to progress without intervention areas of skin necrosis (death) can occur. There are also a few types:

- Primary (due to eating plants e.g. St John's Wort which contain compounds that react with UV rays),
- Secondary (due to already present liver damage - liver fluke, abscesses, toxins etc.)
- or a genetic condition reported in Limousin cattle, Blonde d'Aquitane and Holsteins where they lack a specific enzyme.

Animals should be placed in a dark shed for at least three weeks, given anti-inflammatories (steroids if empty, Meloxicam/Emdocam if pregnant), antibiotics if there are any secondary skin infections and there are also liver support tonics available on the market but these are infrequently used in commercial cattle.

For the sheep farmers - we see the same condition in sheep and it has also been linked to cobalt deficiency, seen especially around the ears!

CCN - Cerebrocortical Necrosis

With the hot weather and feed problems in the last few weeks we have seen a few cases of CCN in cattle. The basis of the disease is a lack of Thiamine/Vitamin B1 which causes death of part of the brain. Ruminants do not ingest their B1 - it is produced by bacteria in the rumen. So, any disturbance in the rumen flora can cause an issue with thiamine production or destruction of Vitamin B1 by specific rumen bacteria. This can often be caused by too fast changes in feed or excess ration for example. Signs of animals affected are wandering away from the flock/herd, blindness, stargazing, recumbency and seizures progressing to death. Treatment involves Vitamin B1 and steroids intravenously and then continued for several days intramuscularly. Blind animals will need feed and water easily accessible and can also often be found dehydrated for this reason. Animals can make a full recovery however blindness may persist for several weeks in our experience and occasionally mental deficits can be permanent. Early detection is key.

! Reminder ! - Free Faecal Egg Counts for Cattle and Sheep - Samples can be dropped off at the office

A reminder that APHA are running free faecal egg counts for the summer for their research.

- Cattle: these must be from first season grazers who have not been wormed in the two weeks before sampling and 5-10 individual samples must be submitted.
- Sheep: Free Haemonchus testing. In the past two weeks we have all treated or post-mortemed anaemic collapsed ewes and lambs so faecal egg counts to monitor your farms burden is extremely important at the moment.

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Smallholder workshop - Last few places remaining!

Wednesday 17th August 10am -4pm
£100 per person

Please get in touch with the office if you are interested in attending