

## Flystrike

With the warmer humid weather, we often see increased cases of Blowfly strike in sheep that are yet to be shorn. If caught early fly strike is easily treated however if not detected and left untreated the maggots can cause severe damage with the most severe cases resulting in death.

Affected sheep are usually restless and may bite or kick at the area. These areas are usually sites of faecal contamination or infected wounds and therefore usually occur over the hindquarters. Eggs hatch within 24 hours with larvae penetrating and damaging the skin. Maggots will be seen at skin level when the fleece is parted. Fleeces will become discoloured and damp with loss of wool progressing to separation from the flock and eventual death due to septicaemia, secondary bacterial infection and release of toxins.

Treatment involves immediate removal of dirty, contaminated fleece around the whole area of strike and removal of as many maggots as possible. Wash the area with a disinfectant such as iodine or Hibiscrub and apply Engemycin spray. Preparations such as Crovect should be used as per the instructions. In severe cases administration of antibiotics and anti-inflammatories is needed. Please call us if you have a case of flystrike needing veterinary attention or if you need any further advice.

Remember that treatment is achieved using products such as Crovect rather than insect growth regulator products like Clik, Clik Extra or Clikzin, which are used for prevention. For season long control the best option is to use a long duration insect growth regulator pour-on. This needs to be applied before sheep are at risk of flystrike. However, it is important to observe the withdrawal period of each individual product especially in your lambs. For shorter term control and shorter meat withhold periods use a short acting IGR or Pyrethroid. These will provide 6-8 weeks cover with a 7-8-day meat withhold period.

## Worms in Sheep

With the rain and warmer temperatures, we are starting to see faecal egg count results start to increase again. Increased reports of resistance to wormers due to unnecessary use means it is now more important than ever to regularly check the worm status of your flock to determine the need for dosing and what products to use. We can check samples at the practice for £12 (incl. VAT). Please speak to one of the vets to make a dosing plan for the summer.

## Coccidiosis in Calves and Lambs

In the past two weeks we have had several calls for Coccidiosis in calves as well as lambs. Coccidiosis is caused by a parasite that usually infects 3 weeks to 6-month-old calves and 4 to 6 weeks old lambs.

Clinical signs of disease include scour, which is usually bloody, dehydration, rapid weight loss, straining to defecate (sometimes with rectal prolapse as a result) and occasionally death. Subclinical signs show reduced appetite, weight loss, reduction in growth rate and a dull appearance. Clinical signs are usually suggestive of disease, but a faecal egg count is the best way of reaching a definite diagnosis. However, scouring can happen before coccidial oocysts are shed and continue after shedding has ceased. By pooling samples taken from scouring and non-scouring animals there is more chance of finding coccidia oocysts.

Treatment involves using the coccidiocidal drench Tolracol as well as oral/intravenous fluid therapy depending on severity and often antibiotics/anti-inflammatories. Alternatively, an in-feed coccidiostat (decoquinat) – in combined mineral buckets or in feed can be used to suppress the infection.

### Getting your animals ready for breeding

Believe it or not now is the time of year that you need to start thinking about getting your herd ready for breeding next year. A couple of things you may want to consider...

- **Booking your Bull in for a MOT.** Your bull is vital for a successful breeding season therefore it is important that you ensure he is in good physical health prior to work. We offer a full bull breeding soundness examination, and we recommend you do it at least 60 days prior to using your bull. This involves a full physical examination along with examination of a semen sample crush side so results can be given immediately, and a full detailed report is available afterwards. As well as identifying sub-fertile bulls, the results can be used to help guide how many cows should be put to each bull.
- **Selecting heifers for breeding.** Deciding which heifers to replace older cows in your herd can be a difficult decision and is based on multiple factors one of which should be the pelvic size of the heifers. We offer a pelvic measuring service which is carried out in a standing animal using a special set of callipers inserted rectally providing the perfect opportunity to examine the heifer's reproductive tract also. The procedure does not guarantee assistance free calving's but choosing to breed from animals with particularly small pelvises should likely reduce interventions needed at calving.
- **Trace Element Deficiencies.** This year more than ever we have seen more and more cows with trace-element deficiencies; these include copper, cobalt, selenium and iodine. Due to the dry conditions of last summer and the availability of forage/ feed this has had a knock-on effect on the condition of the animals this season. Therefore, we would recommend you take bloods to check the levels of your animals prior to breeding this year to check whether they need supplementation. This will help increase fertility rates and ensure your animals remain in good condition whilst in calf throughout the summer.

### MSD Flock Check Reminder

Another reminder that MSD are running their annual Flock Check Bloods for antibodies for Toxoplasma and Enzootic abortions in ewes. These bloods should be targeted at 6 to 8 ewes post lambing who have aborted or are barren at lambing. The scheme is available until 30th June 2023 and is open for flocks of 100 or more breeding ewes and the cost of lab testing is covered. Please mark any suitable ewes and give us a call to discuss/arrange bloods.

### TBAS and Animal Health and Welfare Review Pathway Reminder

Just to remind you that you can still sign up for a free TBAS visit!

It involves two visits about six months apart. The initial visit depending on the individual farm takes between 2-4 hours and will include discussions about TB, wildlife ecology, biosecurity, building design, movements and trading options bespoke to your business. This is separate to the other past TB schemes, and it does not matter if you have previously had a visit.

Please get in contact with one of us if you wish to book one in!

### Sheep/Flock Meeting

After the success of our suckler herd meeting we will be holding a similar free talk at the end of May targeted at sheep discussing flock performance and covering topics we are most asked about including worming, cull ewe screening and iceberg diseases.

Please contact the office if you are interested in attending. We will be releasing a date for this shortly!



### Latest avian influenza update

Poultry Housing Measures have been officially lifted from 18<sup>th</sup> April poultry and other captive birds will no longer need to be housed and can be kept outside, unless they are in a Protection Zone.

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