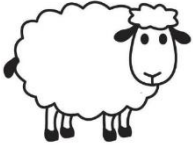
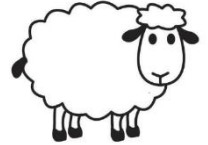


Shearwell Thame Summer Sheep Fair 2024!



We will be at the Sheep Fair on Thursday 1st and Friday 2nd August!
Come and say hi and enjoy a hot drink and a biscuit :)
We'll also be offering free faecal egg counts as well :)
Hope to see you all there!



Quarantine Procedures for Disease and Parasites

Although necessary there is always risks of buying in either diseases and/or worming resistance even if the seller is known to you. Therefore it is vital that you have quarantine procedures set up to ensure that only new sheep arrive on the farm and not new diseases.

The quarantine area has to be big enough to keep all the new stock in for a minimum of three weeks. This needs to include a field of "dirty" grazing - which would ideally be pasture that lambs have just moved off and a large enough yard to be able to shut everything in for 48 hours.

Common problems that can be bought in include resistant worms (the biggest risk to sheep farming in the UK at the moment), liver fluke, sheep scab, footrot, CODD, enzootic abortion, CLA, MV and orf among many others.

Quarantine Worming Sheep

It is more important than ever to have a quarantine plan in place for sheep brought home today and in the future, especially now with many of you using the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway to check your own farm's worm resistance status.

Why do I need to yard sheep on arrival?

- Yarding for a minimum 48 hours minimises the number of worm eggs dropping onto pasture from the incoming sheep AND allows time for the treatment to work.
- It also gives you time to think about what actions to take for sheep scab and liver fluke.
- In addition, you can check them over for other conditions such as lameness, orf and CLA.

Why do I need to turn these sheep out to dirty pasture?

- Important because if any resistant worms do survive we don't want them to have free rein on a clean pasture.
- Turning out to pasture that has carried sheep previously means any survivors will be diluted by other worms as the incoming sheep pick up the worms present on the pasture.
- Remember it is the resident flock we are protecting from the threats.

★ Best Practice Protocol ★

1. Yard all animals for 48 hours
2. Administer Zolvix
3. Isolate from flock for 28 days
4. Turn out onto fields grazed by main flock if available for 3-4 weeks during isolation time
5. FEC 14 days post treatment
6. After 28 days animals can join home flock

Flushing Ewes

Flushing ewes in the final three weeks before tupping can help to boost ovulation, increase heat expression, and improve scanning rates. Flushing involves feeding ewes on an increasing plane of nutrition, particularly focusing on increasing the energy and protein levels in the diet to increase ovulation rate. Flushing is needed for at least one cycle (2-3 weeks) to influence the ovaries to release more eggs.

At tupping ewes should be at a condition score of 2.5 – 3. Maintaining this score will mean the ewes' reproductive system is prime for maximizing lamb production. Ewes' ovulation rates can be severely affected if BCS is less than 2 at tupping. Flushing ewes that are in the correct body condition (3-3.5) at tupping time will not have any impact - they will already be producing quality follicles. Flushing older ewes and prolific breeds will increase the number of triplets - not always desirable in these groups. Younger ewes tend to have lower ovulation rates.

Targets to aim for:

- Ideally 75% of ewes holding to the first cycle.
- 98% holding to the first 2 cycles.
- Less than 2% barren rate.

Possible Methods of Flushing Ewes

- Good quality pasture (if you've got it!)
- If not available then high quality hay and a small amount of grain.
- Additional High energy lick buckets e.g. Crystalyx
- Molasses
- Boluses/Drenches for minerals
- Root crops

Do not flush on pastures containing red clover as it contains oestrogens that will affect ovulation rates. Keep ewes off red clover pastures for 45 days either side of tupping.

Although needed in very small quantities, deficiencies in certain trace elements can impact on fertility.

- Cobalt plays a key role in egg development and in the development of the early foetus. Supplementation of cobalt at tupping time can also result in ewes giving birth to more active lambs.
- Selenium deficiency can have an impact on reproductive performance, with increased risk of early embryonic death
- Copper deficiency can limit fertility however excess copper can be toxic and so supplementary copper should only be given if deficiency is confirmed
- Zinc can improve hoof quality. This will help ensure that both ewes and rams stay sound during tupping, increasing the likelihood of a successful mating season.
- Phosphorus - too much can increase the risk of embryo loss

Finally, during the first two weeks or so of pregnancy when implantation of the embryo into the uterus is taking place it is important to make sure that stressors are kept to an absolute minimum with no sudden changes in diet or forage quality or any rounding up of sheep.

Syncing - Progesterone (Sponges and CIDRs)

Sponges and CIDRs are used to advance and synchronise your sheep out of their normal breeding season. They are placed into the vagina using an applicator and removed about two weeks later (please refer to data sheets for protocols). PMSG can be used to advance your season (and are out of the normal breeding season). PMSG is injected at the time of sponge/CIDR removal. The ram is put with the ewes 24-36 hours later and removed after five days. The ram is then replaced for the next cycle with a different colour raddle. Please give us a call to discuss which protocol would suit your flock best.

Ram Vasectomies

Vasectomised rams (teasers) are a really useful tool for ensuring a successful sheep breeding season.

Teasers are particularly useful for:

- Early lambing flocks, to encourage ewes to start cycling early in the season
- Ewe lambs, to encourage them to start cycling before the rams are introduced
- Teasers can also be used to synchronize ewes at the start of the breeding season

To be safe to use without risk of unwanted pregnancy, teasers need to be vasectomised a minimum of 6 weeks before they are introduced to the ewes, so the sooner you can get them done the better! Most rams or well grown ram lambs are suitable to be vasectomised - when choosing them consider that although they aren't serving ewes, you are investing in them for the future and their effect relies on them behaving and interacting like rams. It's therefore important to pick sound sheep with good teeth and feet, and adequate bodyweight and testicular size.

Finally, it is advisable to permanently identify (e.g. management tag) teasers as the time of surgery - this will help to avoid the chance of any mix-ups that could be costly!

Autumn Lamb Health

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.
- Pine - cobalt deficiency is usually seen in lambs during late summer to early autumn especially in areas where cobalt is deficient in the soil. Cobalt is needed for microbes to manufacture Vitamin B12 in the rumen. Lambs affected by pine present as ill-thriving and lethargic with poor quality open fleeces despite good planes of nutrition. It is often seen along high worm burdens as worms affect the absorption of cobalt in the gut. For this reason we recommended Vitamin B12 injections or Cobalt drenches/boluses when treating wormy animals.

Pre-tupping checks

Pre-tupping checks can rule out common problems and can give you an indication of whether you should have a tup semen tested. Up to 30% of rams are thought to be subfertile.

Checking over eyes, mouths, feet and body condition scoring is important as well as palpating scrotums and examining the prepuce. Checks should be done at least 8-10 weeks before they are needed as sperm production takes 6 weeks allowing time for problems to be addressed.

A fit, fertile ram will get more ewes in lamb in a tighter time period and will also last longer in your flock. If you have any doubts about a tup it is best to give us a call and arrange a fertility exam where we examine a semen sample under the microscope.

Sheep Scab

Sheep scab is one of the most contagious parasitic diseases of sheep in the UK and is caused by an allergic reaction from the sheep to the mite *Psoroptes ovis* and its faeces causing huge economic burdens through production loss.

Repeated intense scratching and skin damage leads to wool loss and eventual skin damage and skin scabbing. Sheep will lose body condition and can potentially progress to seemingly fitting behavior.

Scab cannot be seen and can only be confirmed by a skin scraping or blood test. When it is confirmed in one sheep it must be assumed all are infected and all treated accordingly. The mite spreads through contact and can live on fence posts, housing, lorries and anything the sheep has been in contact with for 17 days - this makes biosecurity, animal handling and hygiene considerations a high priority as the mite can persist in the flock in this way.

All sheep in the group should be treated at the same time. Treatment involves either injections (more than a one-off jab!!) with a 'clear wormer' Macrocytic Lactone or ideally obviously dependent on the time of year dipping in an organophosphate. Injecting while a lot of the time considered easier brings the risk of roundworm resistance so this must be considered. Dipping also will kill any lice present.

Prevention and good biosecurity are key for scab. Poor fencing with neighbouring flocks and bought in sheep pose the greatest risk therefore double fencing is best used where possible. Where there is common grazing or risk of contact between sheep, communication is vital to ensure that all sheep in an area are treated at the same time. Bought in sheep should be treated and as always quarantined before introduction to the main flock - as is best practice for all disease.

If you suspect scab in your flock let us know and we can advise on treatment or decide if further tests are advisable to differentiate between lice and scab.

Chiltern Sheepdog Trails

Saturday 14th of September Nursey/Novice Class
Open Sweepstake (Time Permitting)
Sunday 15th September Starter Class/Informal Trail
Roughwood Park, Roughwood Lane, Chalfont St Giles HP8 4AA

Please fill in Entry Form (Ask if you need one)

Contact Steve Stone 07504 901411 stevestone1955@icloud.com What 3 words for field entrance, [farm.lock.guilty](https://www.farm.lock.guilty)

N.B. Any dog injuring a sheep shall be disqualified and the owner liable for compensation

NorCal Vets

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