



WENSUM VALLEY VETS NEWSLETTER

Worm Egg Counting

Worm egg counting is used to monitor the worm burden in sheep. The number of eggs found per gram of faeces gives an indication of the number of adult worms in the gut of the sheep.

We use worm egg counting to:

- Help determine whether treatment is needed
- Test the effectiveness of treatment
- Assess pasture contamination

The process:

- Each sample should contain a piece of faeces from 10 different individuals
- The samples should be taken at random from fresh faeces
- We will process them in our clinic laboratory
- Once counted we will report your results to you and discuss a treatment/management plan



Neosporosis

Neosporosis is caused by the protozoa, *Neospora caninum*, and causes abortion in sheep, cattle and dogs. Dogs and foxes are the definitive hosts (where the protozoal parasite reproduces) and cattle/sheep are the intermediate hosts. The parasite is spread to cattle from dog/fox faeces, they are then infected for life and these cattle are three times more likely to abort than unaffected animals. Calves born from infected dams are also permanently infected.



Treatment

There is no proven treatment or vaccine available.

Clinical Signs

- Abortion after 3 months gestation
- Still birth
- Premature calves
- Calves with brain disease/dysfunction
- Repeat abortions in the same cow
- Heifers born to infected dams abort when joining the breeding herd
- No clinical signs in the dam



Diagnosis

Diagnosis of Neosporosis can be made by post mortem of aborted calves. Blood testing of cows for Neospora antibodies can help to identify a herd problem and help with elimination.

Prevention

Dogs

Ensuring cattle food and water are kept away from dog and fox faeces.

High calving hygiene, including disposal of placental membranes and aborted/dead calves before dogs/foxes can get them.

Removal of dog faeces from pasture - this is a particular problem where public foot paths are present and may be helped by clear signage.



Storage and hygiene

Feed suppliers should provide assurances that measures are in place to prevent contamination. Measures should be taken on farm to ensure dogs, foxes and rodents do not have access to cattle feed.

Culling

Transmission occurs from Mother to calf across the placenta in 90% of affected cows. All cattle with antibodies to Neospora are sources of infection to their calves, so where practical culling of positive cows is recommended.

Selection for breeding

Only blood test negative cows should be used for breeding to help eliminate the infection from the herd.

In Dairy Herds...

In dairy herds positive cows should be put to a beef bull, if they cannot be culled, to avoid breeding positive replacement calves.

