



ARDENE HOUSE

VET PRACTICE LTD

Farm Newsletter
October 2020

Tel: 01224 740700



Top semen testing now available

Ardene House Vets is excited to now offer tup semen testing during a ram pre-breeding exam. As discussed in the May and July IVC newsletters, a pre-breeding exam is an extremely valuable tool for ensuring your tup is in top condition for tugging season and minimizing risk of an infertile or subfertile tup resulting in barren ewes and/or an extended lambing period.

We at Ardene House now have a probe to get semen samples from tups, similar to how we do for bulls, which is an excellent addition to the physical exam to identify any tups that may appear to be fit and healthy but in fact have poor semen quality. This can be an integral part of an annual pre-breeding check, or as part of a new tup MOT exam.

If you would like to schedule your tups for a pre-breeding exam, to be done either at the practice in our sheep/calf pen or on your farm, please contact the farm office 01224 740700

This handsome Valais tup was our first customer for a full pre-breeding exam including semen testing. The exam was done in our new sheep/calf pen here at the practice, and he passed with flying colours.

In this issue:

- Tup semen testing
- Ectoparasites
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 - Hydrafast
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- Endoparasite Packages

If you would like to opt out of receiving our newsletters by email, please send an email to farmandequine@ardenehouse.co.uk

You can find previous newsletters on our website <https://www.ardenehouse.co.uk/farm-animals/farm-newsletter>

**24 Hour
Emergency Service
01224 740700**



Ectoparasites: What causes itchy animals

Ectoparasites are parasites that live on the skin of an animal, and include flies, lice, midges, mites, and ticks. These parasites, just as the endoparasites discussed in our previous Arden newsletter, can be a serious economic and welfare concern for a farmer and their animals.

Common types of ectoparasites

Flies



<https://www.scops.org.uk/external-parasites/blowflies/>

Biting flies can be a significant nuisance to animals and cause a production loss as the animals spend less time eating and more time trying to shake off the flies. Flies also spread diseases such as summer mastitis and pink eye (also known as New Forest Eye, infectious bovine keratoconjunctivitis, and IBK). Flies can also cause myiasis, or blowfly strike, in which they lay their eggs on the animal and the hatched maggots burrow into the animal and eat living tissue. Blowfly strike is primarily a concern in sheep however it can also be seen in cattle, and it can be fatal if not treated early. There are many species of biting flies in the UK, including head flies, warble flies, horn flies, and horse flies.

Midges

We here in Scotland are very familiar with Culicoides species midges, as are our animals. Midges are a type of biting fly deserving of a specific mention, because not only can midges cause extreme pain and irritation due to their bites, they are also carriers of several significant diseases such as the bluetongue virus and Schmallenburg virus.

Ticks



<https://www.scops.org.uk/external-parasites/ticks/>

As with midges, ticks are a common scourge of both humans and animals, and their bite can spread many diseases such as redwater fever, louping ill, tickborne fever, and Lyme disease.

Lice

Lice are small parasites that live their entire life cycle on cattle and sheep. There are two types of lice: chewing lice, and sucking lice. Chewing lice eat skin and hair, whereas sucking lice bite into the skin to feed on blood. In the UK, both chewing and sucking lice affect cattle. Sheep are affected by chewing lice, however in the UK there are no sucking lice that affect sheep. Most species of lice are host specific, meaning the lice that infect cattle only infect cattle and not sheep, and vice versa.



<https://www.scops.org.uk/external-parasites/lice/>

Small numbers of lice are normal but can increase due to underlying diseases such as nutritional deficiencies, and due to close proximity with other animals at housing. High numbers of lice can cause the animals to become extremely itchy, which can result in bald patches and damaged hide from excess scratching and inflammation. The distress and reduced time eating in favour of scratching themselves can also cause poor growth rates, reduced fertility, and loss of condition. In severe cases of sucking lice infestations, they can also cause anaemia.



<https://www.nadis.org.uk/disease-a-z/cattle/ectoparasites-of-cattle/>

Mites



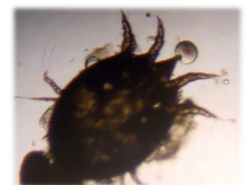
<https://www.nadis.org.uk/disease-a-z/cattle/ectoparasites-of-cattle/>

Mites are the parasite that cause mange. Similar to lice, they live their life cycle on the animals with limited ability to survive in the environment. Animals affected by mange are often very itchy, and the affected lesions on the skin are often thickened with hair loss and scabs.

There are three main types: Sarcoptic mange caused by *Sarcoptes* species, Chorioptic mange caused by *Chorioptes* mites, and Psoroptic mange caused by *Psoroptes* mites. The main types of mange that affect cattle in the UK are Sarcoptic and Chorioptic mange. Cattle may also be affected by psoroptic mange in the UK but it is rare. Sheep, rams in particular, can be affected by chorioptic mange, which causes scrotal mange. Rams affected with chorioptic mange have itchy lesions on their scrotum, and both rams and ewes can have the itchy lesions on their lower limbs and polls.

Sheep Scab

The main mite of concern in sheep is Psoroptic mange caused by the sheep scab mite *Psoroptes ovis*, which causes sheep scab. In Scotland, Sheep Scab is a notifiable disease. In the early stages of sheep scab, the sheep may be moderately itchy and restless, with soiled areas of wool. As the mites grow in numbers and spread across the body, the sheep become extremely itchy with excessive areas of wool loss often with bleeding wounds underneath. These sheep rapidly lose condition, and as the disease progresses, the severe weight loss and wool loss can lead to death.



<https://www.nadis.org.uk/disease-a-z/sheep/ectoparasites-of-sheep/sheep-scab/>

Ectoparasites: Preventing itchy animals

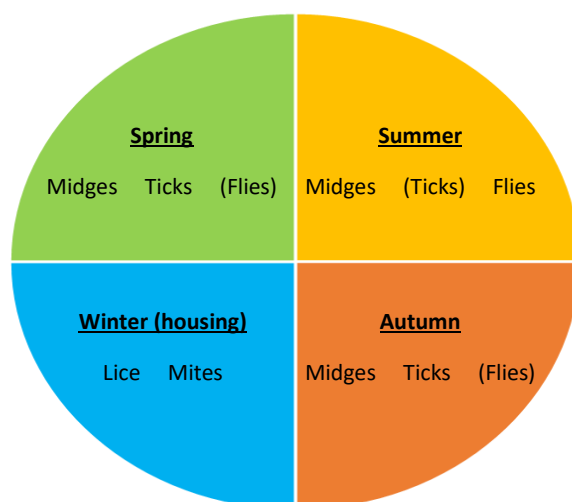
High risk periods: When ectoparasites are most likely to cause problems

Risk periods for ectoparasites depends primarily on their life cycle and management practices.

Midges, other flies, and ticks spend a majority of their life cycle in the environment. Therefore, they are dependent on environmental conditions, particularly weather, for development and survival: They become active as the weather warms in spring and die back in the cold of winter. Midges are most common in the summer and autumn months; you can quickly determine if it is still midge season by being outdoors at dusk on a calm evening. Other flies are most common primarily during the summer months, while ticks have peak activity in spring and late summer/autumn. However, as the climate in Scotland has become warmer earlier in spring and stays warmer later into autumn, the risk period for these ectoparasites has been extending and may now need to be considered during early and late winter as well.

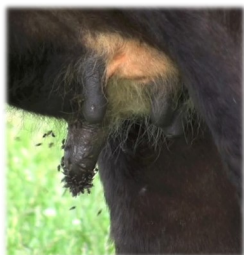
In contrast, lice and mites spend a majority of their lives on the animals themselves, and therefore they are less dependent on the weather for survival.

It is normal for a small number of lice and mites to be present on an animal, however bringing the animals into closer proximity to each other, i.e. during housing, results in increased risk of lice and mites increasing in number and spreading between animals. Therefore, the risk for lice and mites causing disease is highest at housing. For most sheep flocks and beef herds, this means during winter housing. However if the animals are housed all year such as in intensive dairies, the risk period is year round.



Prevention and Control

Flies



<https://www.nadis.org.uk/disease-a-z/cattle/ectoparasites-of-cattle/>

Prevention is key for minimizing the number of flies on farm. Identifying and removing breeding sites of flies such as dung heaps with minimize the number of various species of biting flies. As wounds and soiled fleece are breeding grounds for blowfly larvae, it is important to closely monitor animals for wounds and faecal staining, and immediately clean and clip the affected areas.

Prevention of fly strike in sheep is strengthened with use of pour-on products such as Crovect and CLiK. Products such as Crovect can also be used for treatment of fly strike, however it is important to note that some products such as CLiK are only licensed for prevention. For other species of flies, products such as pyrethroid-containing ear tags as well as pyrethroid pour-ons may be used.

Ticks

Ticks are particularly difficult to control as a majority of their life cycle is spent sheltered in thick vegetation in the environment. Risk can be reduced through extensive pasture management to ensure drainage and shrub clearance. Several pyrethroid pour-on products are licensed for prevention as well as treatment of ticks in sheep, however none in the UK are currently licensed for use in cattle.



<https://www.cattleparasites.org.uk/lice-mites-insect-pests/>

Lice and Mites

As lice and mites spend their lives on the animals, it is easier to directly target these parasites with treatments such as pyrethroid pour-ons. Injectable drugs such as injectable ivermectin is also an option, however it is only effective for species that suck blood but will not affect chewing lice species.



<https://nadis.org.uk/disease-a-z/sheep/ectoparasites-of-sheep/sheep-scab/>

If your flock or herd is suffering from a particularly severe outbreak of lice and mites, a further investigation may be warranted to identify if there is an underlying cause such as low trace minerals.

For itchy sheep here in Scotland, diagnosis is very important to make first to determine if it is being caused by lice or sheep scab. This can be done via a skin scrape by a veterinarian, as it is not possible to differentiate lice from sheep scab by clinical signs alone.

If you have any questions about ectoparasites in your herd or flock, contact the farm office at 01224 740700 or speak with one of our farm vets.

Product updates

Hydrafast

Hydrafast is a new generation of oral rehydration solution, designed to rehydrate and energize scouring calves. Hydrafast was developed alongside Professor Gayle Hallowell, Professor of Veterinary Internal Medicine and Critical Care at the School of Veterinary Medicine and Science, University of Nottingham.

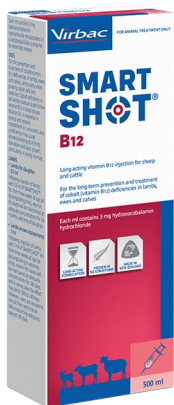
Benefits include:

- High levels of glucose, which drives water absorption into the calf's tissues and provides an energy source while the calf has a reduced appetite for milk.
- Glycine, an amino acid which further facilitates water absorption
- Buffers that counteract the high acid levels in scouring calves without interfering with the digestion of milk
- Provides maximum rehydrating power, energy provision, and acid buffering to support recovery from scour.



Hydrafast comes in sachets of 133g. Hydrafast should be administered alongside milk feeding, with a 3 hour gap between milk feeding and hydrafast. It is designed to be given in 2L of clean water twice daily. It is best teat or bucket fed, but it can be tubed if required.

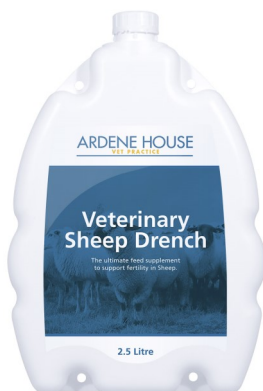
SmartShot B12



A long lasting injection for prevention and treatment of cobalt deficiency in lambs, ewes, and calves. This injection of Vitamin B12 utilizes microencapsulation technology for extended release: A single injection maintains vitamin B12 levels for up to 6 months in lambs and ewes, and up to 3.5 months in calves. There is no withdrawal period for meat or milk.

If you are unsure if cobalt deficiency is a concern in your animals and thus if this product is right for your flock or herd, contact us to discuss blood sampling for trace mineral deficiencies.

Veterinary Sheep Drench



A feed supplement to support fertility and nutrition sheep, this drench contains several vitamins and minerals such as Vitamins A, Bs (thiamine, riboflavin, cyanocobalamine, folic acid), C (ascorbic acid), D3, and E, calcium and trace elements such as selenium, cobalt, potassium, zinc, and manganese.

This feed product can be used to supplement feeding in 3-4 weeks prior to mating in both ewes and rams, 3-4 weeks prior to lambing to reduce risk of twin lamb disease, 3 weeks after birth to support nutrition and growth, and as an additional support when drenching for parasites or after veterinary treatment.

If you have any questions about these products or would like to discuss if they are right for your herd or flock, contact the farm office at 01224 740700 or speak with one of our farm vets.

Endoparasites: Ardene House packages

Sheep Flock Health Club 2020-2021

Aug/Sept 2020: Blood sample No.1 from 5 lambs for liver fluke antibodies (lab fee not included), pooled faecal worm egg count from 5 lambs for gut worms. Blood samples can also be taken for trace mineral analysis in the lambs.

Nov/Dec 2020: Blood sample No.2 from 5 lambs for liver fluke antibodies (lab fee not included), pooled faecal worm egg count from 5 lambs for gut worms

Before Spring turnout 2021: Pooled faecal sedimentation from any 10 sheep >1yr old for liver fluke eggs. Blood samples can also be taken at this time for trace mineral analysis in the ewes.

For a single fee of £80, membership in the Flock Health Club also comes with a **free health plan**, and blood sampling for **subsidized EAE/**

Toxoplasmosis testing. A value of over £130!



Cattle Parasite Package 2020-2021

Aug/Sept 2020: Blood sample No.1 from 5 calves for liver fluke antibodies (lab fee not included), pooled faecal worm egg count from 10 calves for gut worms and 5 calves for Baermann for lungworm



Nov/Dec 2020: Blood sample No.2 from 5 calves for liver fluke antibodies (lab fee not included), pooled faecal worm egg count from 10 calves for gut worms and 5 calves for Baermann for lungworm. This visit can be combined with the annual BVD check test visit.

Before Spring turnout 2021: Pooled faecal sedimentation from any 10 cattle >1yr old for liver fluke eggs.

For a single fee of £120, purchase of the Cattle Parasite Package also comes with a **free health plan**. A value of over £220!

Flock Health Club Calendar

	Fluke Testing	Faecal worm egg count	Trace mineral blood test	EAE and toxoplasmosis blood test
Jan				
Feb				✓ 1-3 months post-lambing
Mar				
Apr	✓ Faecal test		✓ Ewes	
May				
June				
July				
Aug	✓ Blood test	✓	✓ Lambs	
Sept				
Oct				
Nov	✓ Blood test	✓		
Dec				

Cattle Parasite Pack Calendar

	Fluke Testing	Faecal worm egg count	Baermann (lungworm)
Jan			
Feb			
Mar			
Apr	✓ Faecal test		
May			
June			
July			
Aug	✓ Blood test	✓	✓
Sept			
Oct			
Nov	✓ Blood test	✓	✓
Dec			

If you have any questions about endoparasites in your herd or flock, or would like to register for the Flock Health Club or Cattle Parasite Package, contact the farm office at 01224 740700 or speak with one of our farm vets.