

Farm News August 2023

Blowfly Strike

Blowfly strike affects over 80% of flocks in the UK and it is estimated that between 500,000 and 70,000 sheep are struck each year and of these 3% of cases are unfortunately fatal. That is why it is important to identify, treat and prevent cases, to optimise the health and welfare of flocks under our care.

Blowfly strike, also known as Struck, is the result of flies laying their eggs (Blow) in the fleece of sheep which then develop into larvae/maggots, which then cause damage to the skin (Strike).

Identify, Treat and Prevent

Blowfly Strike is a potential welfare concern causing negative impacts on the performance of flocks if left untreated.

Productivity of UK flocks will be impacted as affected individuals will have reduced grazing and therefore have reduced weight gain, weight loss and ewes will have reduced milk yields. As with any disease on farm, the control plan will be costly in terms of product purchase, time/labour to treat individuals/flock deaths and potential production losses as discussed above. Figures from 2015 have shown that blowfly costs the sheep industry £ 2.2 million per year.



Clinical Presentation

Blowflies thrive in warm and humid environments and less so in extreme temperatures and areas where it is windy or dry.

They actively seek soiled or wounded areas on live and dead animals to lay their eggs. They can lay up to 250 eggs at once and if the conditions are right, these will hatch into larvae (also known as maggots) and as they mature, they feed on living skin (Strike) secreting enzymes and using their mouthparts to damage the skin which in turn leads to production losses and welfare concerns.

To control the fly population, we need to reduce opportunities for fly breeding by limiting available areas to lay eggs.



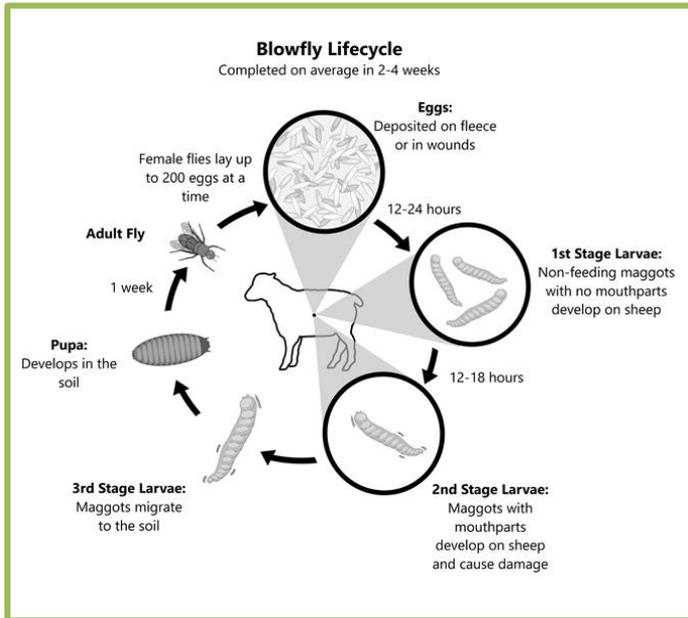
Fly activity is at its greatest from March to November. Once the conditions are optimal, adult flies can lay up to 3,000 eggs over 3 weeks. It is therefore vital that strike can be anticipated and acted on.

Temperature & Rainfall

Spring temperatures will determine when the overwintered larvae hatch and as temperatures increase the area under this combined with humidity will create a microclimate in the fleece which attracts adult flies. Heavy rainfall will aid humid conditions in the fleece.



Lifecycle



- 1 Fly deposits eggs in dirty or damp areas
- 2 Eggs develop into 1st larval stages
- 3 1st larval stages develop into 2nd and 3rd. Mouthparts are very active and feed on living tissue ➡ Clinical sign: patch of discoloured wool and agitation
- 4 Pupation
- 5 Flies emerge and then lay eggs

Significant damage can occur within 24 – 36 hours after eggs are laid.

Clinical Signs

Early Signs:

- Discoloured wool
- Agitation, kicking or nibbling at the affected area, eg tail or head
- Tail swishing
- Disturbed grazing

Severe Signs:

- Individual sheep isolate themselves
- Fleece loss
- Sick animals – toxins released by damaged tissue and ammonia from maggots are absorbed into bloodstream causing septicaemia and toxemia
- Death

Treatment

- Shear/clip wool away

- Physical removal of maggots
- Clean and disinfect wound
- Supportive care prescribed by a vet – NSAID's, antibiotics and fluids.

Prevention

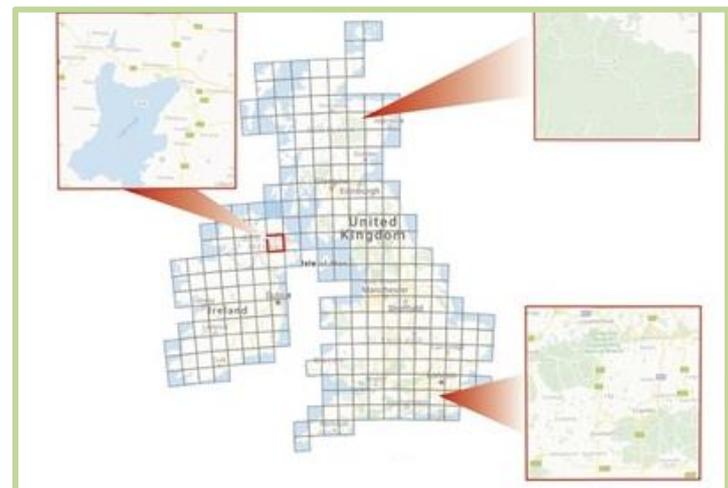
The first part of prevention is the application of preventative treatment – prior to the main risk period of flies and therefore, blowfly season.

- Insect growth regulators – prevent larvae development, and can provide protection for between 8 – 16 weeks.
- Cypermethrins – treat existing strike but also provides further protection from strike for 6 – 10 weeks
- Deltamethrin – only used to treat

Strategies to reduce dirty environments can be carried out:

- Appropriate dagging and crutching
- Shearing
- Tail docking
- Gastrointestinal worm control planning – control of parasitic gastroenteritis will reduce diarrhoea and faecal contamination of the fleece.
- Early detection and treatment of wounds and foot lesions

A useful tool that aids the timing and application of preventative products is the NADIS (National Animal Disease Information Service) "Blowfly Alert". This can be found on NADIS website www.nadis.org.uk



Map courtesy of NADIS



New declaration required!!

From 13th December 2023 EU Animal Health Regulations require farms producing animals or products of animal origin for export to the EU to have regular veterinary visits.

Currently a temporary measure is in place to allow farmers to self-declare but from the 13th December 2023 all producers sending animals to market or slaughter must be able to demonstrate that a veterinary visit has taken place in the past 12 months. At least some portion of most carcasses is exported which means most farm businesses will need to ensure compliance.

Those who are a certified member of a recognised assurance scheme (Red Tractor) are already compliant and will not require further documentation. Additionally, those who have had a visit as part of the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway will also be compliant but will still require the documentation which will be dated from the last recorded visit.



These visits are in place to aid disease prevention and improve biosecurity. This does not need to be the sole purpose of the visit but all species present at the premises are to be considered.

Currently there are no specific requirements for what the visit should include and we are awaiting further supporting guidance from APHA.

On completion of a qualifying visit your vet will:

- Provide a copy of the completed declaration to yourselves.
- Advise you to keep a copy of the declaration for your records.
- Store a copy of the declaration on the practices veterinary database.

The fee for the Veterinary Declaration for Animal Health Visits is £40 (ex VAT). A visit fee and time will be charged additionally if the visit is specifically for the declaration.

Visits should occur at least once during a 12-month period. If there is a need for a subsequent visit earlier than 12 months, (for example, 6 months), this will be communicated to the livestock owner/keeper and clearly stated in the validity of the attestation. The need for a subsequent visit could be due to, though is not limited to, the following events:

1. A change in type of livestock present on farm. For example, sheep are moved away and replaced with cattle.
2. A farmer moves their business to a new location.
3. A change in the national disease status on the farms local area, relevant to the species on farm.
4. Significant biosecurity concerns are identified which need to be addressed.

If you have any questions or comments about this new legislation please do not hesitate to contact the Farm Office on 01889 567200.

TB NEWS

Please note - From 1st August 2023 there have been some changes to the requirements for post-movement testing in England.

This will affect anyone who is on annual whole herd TB testing and in the 'Edge area' eg. (some of) Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire AND buys in from high risk areas eg. Staffordshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire, West Midlands, Herefordshire or Wales.

Please follow the following link for more information <http://apha.defra.gov.uk/documents/ov/Briefing-Note-1523.pdf> or do not hesitate to contact one of the vets.

- Any cattle moved TO herds located in annual testing in Edge areas, FROM areas of higher TB incidence (eg. 6 monthly Edge areas, High risk areas or Wales) will now need to be post movement tested



- These compulsory Post Movement tests will need to be arranged and paid for by the keeper within 60 to 120 days of arrival.
- They cannot be moved off the holding until they have tested negative expect for slaughter.
- A post movement test will not be required if an annual surveillance or other government funded test takes place within the 60-120 day window.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Selekt Pump Clinic

The Pump Clinic day is on
Thursday 10th August
at Uttoxeter from 10.30 onwards

This service is free of charge



PLOUGHING MATCHES

Burton & District Ploughing Match

Saturday 2nd September 2023

By kind permission of Messrs Archer
Marston Lane, Marston on Dove,
Derbyshire DE65 5GB



Uttoxeter Agricultural Society Ploughing Match



Saturday 9th September 2023

By kind permission of J B and R J Bettson
on land off Holly Lane, Kingstone,
Staffordshire ST14 8QD

Come and see us in the tent for a
cuppa and a chat

Brailsford Ploughing Match

Wednesday 4th October 2023

By kind permission of TR & EC Ball,
Carr Farm, Cubley, Ashbourne,
Derbyshire DE6 5FB



Be our guest at the Ploughing Match
and join us for a Hog Roast

