

Farm News November 2022

## Ovine Pulmonary Adenocarcinoma

Ovine Pulmonary Adenocarcinoma (OPA) may be a disease that you have heard of and the first thing that might spring to mind is “the wheelbarrow test” where fluid comes pouring out of a sheep’s nose. One recent study suggested OPA could be the third most frequent cause of on-farm adult sheep mortality in the UK (after mastitis and liver fluke).



### Causes

OPA is caused by a virus that creates tumours in the lungs. This causes issues for 2 reasons:

1. Valuable lung tissue is lost, reducing the amount of oxygen exchange that can take place
2. The tumour that replaces functional lung tissue produces a lot of mucus and fluid further blocking up oxygen exchange

The outcome of this causes sheep to drop condition. Over time, as the focus is on breathing rather than eating, the decreased oxygen in the system restricts the ability to move as fast as fitter animals in the flock, so the tendency is to eat less and the poorer parts of the ration. The result is that with less nutrition and oxygen in muscle tissue, they simply waste away.

OPA is spread through particles in breath and colostrum/milk, so is very easy to spread around the lambing shed. Ewes producing visible fluid will be shedding a large amount of virus within this fluid. The disease can take months or even years to progress so clinical signs are seen in animals of around 3-4 years of age.

### What can we do about it?

In flocks with severe infection (>30% of flock affected), destocking and restocking is gold standard, but not always financially possible. Aggressively culling animals showing any poor BCS or coughing are your best candidates, but not all will necessarily have OPA. Some flocks, where OPA has been diagnosed on several occasions, may remove all ewes over the age of 3 years as they are more likely to have the disease. It is always worth noting that re-stocking carries its own risks, so ensure that appropriate health testing is carried out PRIOR to purchase because of the potential for buying in more OPA inadvertently! If in any doubt, please contact us in the Farm Office on 01889 567200.

In flocks where aggressive culling is not possible, the single most effective management practice is to house animals in separate age groups. The recommendation would be to house any suspicious cases separately to “healthy” or young animals.

### Screening

A more reliable way to protect against OPA is to follow a screening programme. This is carried out by ultrasound scanning of the lungs which detects changes before external signs are seen. It is performed on both sides to allow selective culling. Lesions can be detected in the lungs around 2cm and above. Whilst there is no 100% guaranteed detection, it is an early opportunity to discuss other causes of those lesions.

### Cost

The cost of testing for OPA is around £1 per sheep. If you feel you may be interested in investigating OPA in more depth, or want to know more about the scanning, please do not hesitate to contact the Farm Office for a discussion.



## Avian Influenza

The UK Government has announced that all poultry and captive birds in England must be kept indoors from Monday 7th November, in a bid to contain an outbreak of avian influenza. An Avian Influenza Prevention Zone (AIPZ) was declared across the country two weeks ago.

Now the UK's chief veterinary officer, Christine Middlemiss, has stepped up mandatory housing measures meaning it will be a legal requirement to keep the birds indoors.

The new rules are set to come into force on Monday 7th November, to give owners time to make arrangements.

If you suspect any type of bird flu in poultry or captive birds you must report it immediately by calling the Defra Rural Services Helpline on 03000 200 301.

## TB Advisory Service

Through the TB Advisory Service (TBAS), we are able to offer two free visits to assess your farm and give tailored advice to reduce the risk and impact of TB. After the first visit four simple, cost effective, practical recommendations will be made, based on the risks identified. These two visits, 6 months apart, are fully funded by Defra, so there is no cost to eligible farmers. TBAS has been running for 4 years, funded by the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE). 98% of farmers that had a free farm visit said the recommendations at the end were useful, and 90%



rated the service as excellent. The funding is not just restricted to cattle farmers – it also allows those farmers of other TB susceptible species (camelids, deer, goats, pigs and sheep) to have visits.

Please contact the Farm Office on 01889 567200 to arrange a visit from one of our trained vets.

## Hannah Parry Okeden

Some of you may already have met our new farm vet Hannah who joined the team this Spring. Hannah graduated from the Royal Veterinary College in London and then spent time in a farm practice in Devon. At Glenthorne she is carrying out routine visits, TBAS advisory visits and general farm work. She is one of the primary vets running the Small Holders Club.

## The Farm Office

Please note the direct line to the Farm Office is

**01889 567200**

We have also created a directory below for our farm vet team:

Vet Name	Mobile Number
John Kirk	07736 101017
John Cammack	07736 101016
Gill Whitehurst	07855 500474
Emma Crust	07968 424305
Nicola Falder	07791 750425
Bethan Gidlow	07792 504434
Mary Lowe	07968 424303
Fiona Ridout	07772 966398
Shrea Patel	07977 253614
Hannah Parry Okeden	07977 253622

Please continue to phone or email to place medicine orders in advance.

For the tech savvy readers here is a QR code to save our direct line in your phone:

**SCAN ME**

