



WELCOME TO farm 2015 news



MAY 2015



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Please note that telephone
calls are recorded for quality
and monitoring purposes.

When do I worm my sheep?

Hector Santo-Tomas DVM MRCVS

A common question in the sheep industry, but unfortunately the answer is not simple!

Generally speaking, adult ewes should not need to be wormed unless there is a particular problem on the farm, but it can be advisable to treat ewes carrying triplets (or even twins) before lambing. Otherwise, worming is usually unnecessary in adult sheep. However, they may need to be treated for liver fluke if you have a problem on your farm. There are several flukicides on the market, effective against different stages of the liver fluke life cycle. This means we have to choose the right one depending of the time of the year. Give us a call if you are not sure!

Regarding lambs, they generally will need to be wormed. Traditionally, people have been worming lambs when clinical signs appear (i.e. scouring, wasting, etc.) or just every three weeks. Neither of these strategies is ideal, for a number of reasons! Firstly, by the time clinical signs appear, growth rates will have been reduced (by up to 50%) and the pasture contamination increased dramatically. Secondly, worming every three weeks may

work in the short term, but it will increase the risk of resistance in the mid/long term (plus you may be doing it more often than you need, hence wasting your money and time). A good and cost-effective practice is Faecal Egg Count (FEC) monitoring, and treating if necessary.

A FEC is cheap and easy. It counts the number of worm eggs in dung, and can be used to monitor the worm burden in sheep. Samples must be taken randomly from fresh dung of no less than ten lambs (to be representative). You can either gather some lambs in the corner of a field for a few minutes or collect the samples walking on the field as lambs get up. Pooled samples are more cost-effective and useful than ten FECs on ten individual samples, but it's a good idea to deliver the faeces to us as individual samples, and let the lab at Scarsdale pool them for you - that way, the lab staff can accurately weigh out exactly equal amounts of each sample, and thus make sure the pooled sample is a fair representative of the individual samples.

If the FEC is low, we won't need to worm, but if it is medium to high, we will. Samples should be taken at three-week intervals (or sooner if the last sample was slightly high), from six or seven weeks of age until mid-autumn (depending on the weather).

For further details on sustainable parasite control in sheep and parasite alerts, visit the SCOPS website: <http://www.scops.org.uk/index.php>. For parasite control in cattle, visit the COWS website: <http://www.cattleparasites.org.uk/>.

Remember we are here to help if you need further advice!



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Perplexed by Prolapses?

Carolyn Baguley MA VetMB CertAVP (Cattle) MRCVS

Vaginal prolapses in sheep...

A big well done to all sheep farmers who have now finished lambing - now you can catch up on some sleep! Hopefully lambing has gone well for all of you. We do seem to have seen a lot of vaginal prolapses in sheep this year. Prolapsed vaginas usually occur in the last 3 weeks before lambing, and mild or early cases can often be held in place by a retainer or a harness and truss. Sometimes, though, these measures prove inadequate and prompt veterinary attention is needed to stitch the prolapse in.



The causes of vaginal prolapses in sheep remain somewhat mysterious and controversial. Fat ewes seem to be more at risk, as do older ewes whose vaginal tissues may be more stretched, and the risk also increases with increasing litter size. Recent work has suggested that the condition is more common when nutritional control of the flock is poor. In particular, prolapses are more likely if ewes are fed very bulky feeds, poor-quality roughage or excessive concentrates, all of which can depress digestion and lead to increased abdominal pressure.

Without always knowing precisely the cause of prolapses in a flock, prevention strategies can be difficult. However, regular body condition scoring in the months leading up to lambing, and adjusting feed or splitting the flock into different management groups accordingly, is a sensible idea, as is feeding good quality roughage and dividing the day's concentrate ration into two feeds. A ewe that has had a vaginal prolapse once is likely to prolapse again the following year, and so it is recommended that affected ewes are not retained for breeding again.

vs uterine prolapses in cattle

This spring has also seen its fair share of uterine prolapses in cattle, and the cause of these is completely different to vaginal prolapses. Cattle usually prolapse their uteri 12-24 hours after calving, often after giving birth to oversize calves (either by themselves or after a hard pull!), due to fatigue of the uterine muscle and continued abdominal straining. Milk fever, either clinical or subclinical, is also a major cause of uterine prolapse since the low calcium affects the function of the uterine muscle. Pulling hard on the foetal membranes straight after calving can also sometimes cause a prolapse. Young beef cows and older dairy cows seem to get more than their fair share of prolapses!



A uterine prolapse is a true emergency, and requires immediate veterinary attention - the sooner we can attend, the better chance there is of a good outcome. Prolapses that have been out for a long while are often fragile and traumatised, and are far more likely to rupture during replacement.

As well as getting straight on the phone, there are a few things you can do before the vet arrives to make a good outcome more likely. It's vital to keep the cow calm and undisturbed. Running around can result in rupture of the uterine artery and bleeding into the abdomen. Also get other animals out of the way if at all possible - there are few things more frustrating than arriving at a prolapse to find it shredded by someone else putting their feet through it. If possible, keep the prolapse clean and moist by placing a wet towel or sheet over it.



To replace a prolapse, a cow needs to be either standing or propped on her front with her back legs stretched out behind her (as in the photos). It's worth thinking about how this might be achieved before the vet arrives, and having ropes, hip lifters and plenty of strong people on hand! If the cow looks like she has milk fever, give her some calcium. If she's down, there's an argument for giving the calcium under the skin rather than in the vein in case she then gets up, runs away and then damages the uterus before we've had a chance to replace it!

If a uterus is successfully replaced and the cow recovers well and cleans up, there's no reason not to try and get her in calf again - they often go on to live for many more long and fertile years! Unlike vaginal prolapses, there's no increased likelihood of a cow prolapsing again after subsequent calvings, and there's no evidence that susceptibility to prolapses is inherited.

As always, do call us if you have any questions or are concerned about the number of prolapses on your farm.

Derbyshire County Show on Sunday June 28th 2015...

Sid Parker BVM&S MRCVS



Scarsdale Veterinary Group, and before that, Taylor Thompstone and Partners, have been supplying the veterinary cover to the county show for a period in excess of 30 years. This year I am

very honoured to be the President of the show as a representative of Scarsdale Vets.

I feel that these county shows still play a vital role in bringing town and country together and, in particular, give city dwellers the chance to see at close quarters some of the best livestock the UK has to offer. The beautiful condition of these animals goes a long way to off-setting the occasional horror story in the press or on TV about factory farming.

I would therefore like to encourage you to enter the livestock classes if at all possible, and help put Derbyshire firmly on the show circuit. I can think of no more fitting outcome for a vets' term as president than to see livestock entries soaring.

For details of entry forms, fees etc., see derbyshirecountyshow.org.uk or contact the show secretary, Anne James, on 01332 793068.