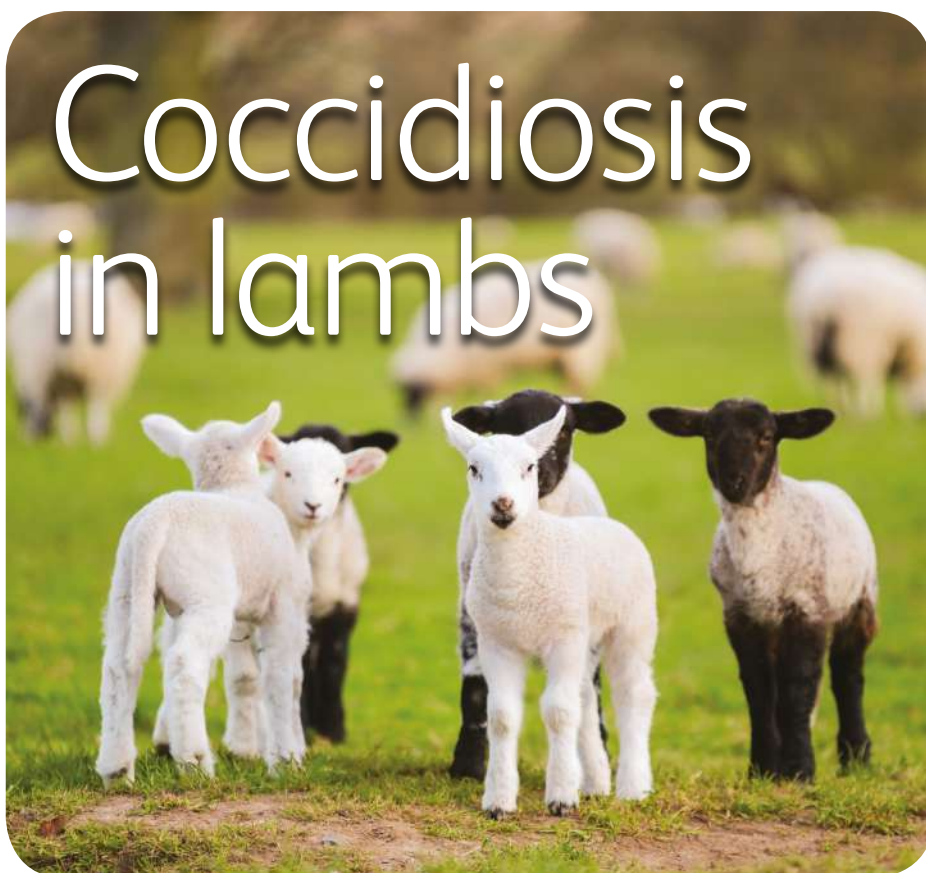


# farm news



## Coccidiosis in lambs

Emily Payne BVM BVS MRCVS



**Coccidiosis is a commonly seen, serious issue in lambs.**

It is caused by a single-celled protozoan parasite that affects growth rates, causes scouring and at worst, can lead to death.

The cycle initially starts with the ewes shedding oocysts in their muck. As the muck builds up in housed environments, the lambs ingest more and more oocysts. The ewes themselves have a degree of immunity, but the younger lambs are susceptible.

The oocysts are very resilient and can build up on pasture, creating a problem after lambs have been turned out. Once lambs start suffering with coccidiosis there will be an initial drop in the growth rate, followed by scour and, if left untreated, gut damage and eventual death. Often there can be subclinical disease present

and diminished growth rates are not noticed until clinical disease develops. Lambs typically are at the highest risk when they are one to three months old. If this coincides with the risk period for nematodirus (variable each year, but often in May), mixed coccidia and nematodirus infections can occur, resulting in very severe disease.

Coccidia oocysts are easily identified by carrying out a faecal egg count. Once identified, a treatment and prevention plan can be put in place. As a faecal-oral disease, one of the major factors in controlling coccidiosis is hygiene. In sheds, this means mucking out and disinfecting with a coccidia-approved disinfectant.

Outdoors this means rotating grazing, moving feed troughs and minimising poaching to avoid the ingestion of large numbers of oocytes. There are multiple oral drenches available once a diagnosis has been made, or in more severe cases in-feed preparations can be prescribed from your vet.



## Holly Leaves and Lambs



Carolyn Baguley  
MA VetMB Cert  
AVP (Cattle)  
MRCVS

We'd like to draw your attention to a phenomenon involving lambs and holly leaves, which might be more common than we think.

It seems that three to four week old lambs weighing about 10kg are particularly susceptible to suffocating on holly leaves. If a leaf is ingested stem-first, with the shiny side facing upwards, the downward-facing spines can hook over the edge of the epiglottis (entrance to the larynx) and the upward-facing spines can lodge in the lining of the pharynx (back of the throat).

In this position, the leaf can be neither swallowed nor coughed out, and forms a valve over the entrance to the larynx, causing suffocation. The condition occurs because of a unique combination of the size and shape of the holly leaf, and the size and shape of a young lamb's pharynx.

The morals of the story are to be careful when allowing lambs access to pastures with holly, to consider the condition in young lambs showing signs of laryngeal disease, and to pay particular attention to the throat area when performing post-mortem examinations on three to four week old lambs.



Rose Jackson BVSc DBR MRCVS Partner



At the BCBC conference in January, Roger Hildreth from Curlow Fields Farm in Yorkshire shared his tips for successful heifer rearing.

The UK average age at first calving is 26 months and the costs associated with this are around £1800. However, there is quite a range; if we achieve the ideal of 22-24 months, we can save ~£300 in rearing costs. However, if we miss the boat and calve them down at 32 months, it will cost £2500 to get them to calving. Roger Hildreth estimates that, on average, it costs him

£2.87 per day for every day over 24 months' so it is easy to see how these costs can stack up.

Roger is very consistent with his colostrum management, quality is checked using a BRIX refractometer (£13 from eBay!) and each calf receives two feeds of 3l in the first 12 hours. He aims to achieve 90kg body weight by 8 weeks by feeding 875g milk powder per calf per day. He has a maximum calf group size of 6 and does not move the groups around at any stage. Roger recommends also weighing heifers whilst out at grass as the grass quality is so variable from year to year and supplementary feed may sometimes be required. He aims to achieve 55-60% of mature body weight at first service.

Mr Hildreth also advocates the use of genomic testing in heifer calves but stressed that it is essential to do something with the results! He sells any heifer calves with £PLI (Profitable Lifetime Index) of <£275 to a calf rearer. He has had some astonishing results from the genomic testing; one set of twins had an expected £PLI of £346 based on their parent average, genomic testing revealed that one twin was slightly worse off at £251 but one came in at only £129 which equates to an expected difference of £244 between the twins over their lifetime!

Scarsdale Vets offer a bespoke genomic testing service through Clarifide, the veterinary lead genomic service; speak to one of the vets for more information.



## Danger of Kexxtone to Dogs

Oli Maxwell BVSc BSc (Hons) DipECBHM MRCVS



We've come across a few stray Kexxtone boluses hanging around on farms recently.

Please be aware that monensin (the active ingredient in Kexxtone) is very toxic to dogs and when eaten, can cause a severe and sometimes fatal muscular and neurological disease. Intact, broken and regurgitated boluses are all equally dangerous – make sure that there's no risk of dogs coming into contact with them.

Amendment from February issue...

The article by Bobby Hyde: **Latest Research**, had the wrong web links quoted at the end. The correct link for the full paper is: [bit.ly/2rj9Eot](https://bit.ly/2rj9Eot) and the link to the video is: [bit.ly/2rkKE0a](https://bit.ly/2rkKE0a)

**oops!**

# TB Testing Update

Sue Ivings



This year we will see the introduction of six monthly TB testing in most of the area that we cover. While there are lots of benefits for your herd in doing six monthly testing, we appreciate the problems it may

bring. So, later this year we will be introducing Wednesday and Saturday testing which will be on a first come first served basis. This will be carried out every other week and we hope this we will give everybody more options and flexibility in arranging their test dates.

If you have any questions you can contact us on the usual number but further information and a list of the parishes affected can be found at: [bit.ly/2Hw3epQ](http://bit.ly/2Hw3epQ)



## Huskvac Reminder !

Rose Jackson BVSc  
DBR MRCVS Partner

A reminder to contact the practice to plan your lungworm control strategies for this season and to order Bovilis Huskvac soon. Remember that for dairy calves, vaccination should be completed at least two weeks before the calves are turned out to grass. For suckled calves, the vaccine course should finish two weeks before the calves begin to eat significant amounts of grass. Wormers should not be given until two weeks after the final dose of vaccine.



# Welcome George

Welcome to George Sovrea, who joined us as a TB tester in January this year.

George graduated from Bucharest University of Veterinary Medicine in 2009. After graduating as a vet, he then achieved a Food Control Master's Degree in 2011. He moved to the UK in 2014 and has previously worked in food safety in the East Midlands area.

George is very interested in farm animals and would like to have his own farm in the future. Outside of work George enjoys spending time with his two cats Bob and Kittykat, gardening, walking, cycling, fishing and watching TV.

## National Johne's Management Plan Carolyn Baguley MA VetMB Cert AVP (Cattle) MRCVS

The National Johne's Management Plan (NJMP), facilitated by Dairy UK, is entering Phase 2. While Phase 1 focused on farmer engagement, Phase 2 will take things further by requiring farmers to consult with BCVA Johne's accredited vets.

Many of you will have been made aware of this already by your milk processor. By 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018, both vets and farmers will be asked to sign a declaration confirming that an assessment of Johne's risk and status has been undertaken on the farm in the last 12 months, and that there is a written Johne's Management Plan in place which has been agreed with the herd owner. The certificates will be updated in 2019 with another signed declaration confirming that the actions agreed in the written Johne's management plan have been carried out.

Some of you have engaged extensively with controlling Johne's disease for many years now. For others, it has been less of a focus. Either way, you will reap benefits from fully participating in Phase 2. The risk assessments may highlight many areas with great potential for improvement on the farm, or just a few, or they may remind you of things you did in the past that have now lapsed or been forgotten about.

We have several Johne's-accredited vets in the practice, so do give us a call. This is a great chance to re-engage and make sure that you a) know the Johne's disease status on your farm and b) know where your main risks lie in terms of Johne's entering the farm and spreading within it. Only then can you begin to control this disheartening and costly disease.



## Guide for Treating Hypothermic Lambs

Vicky Rhodes BVSc MRCVS



For all the sheep farmers among us, we've enclosed a pull-out on treating hypothermic lambs. Something to keep handy in the lambing shed! For more information on treating sick lambs, or to discuss individual cases, please ring us and speak to a member of the farm team for further advice.

# Hydatid Cysts

Chantal Bryant  
BSc BVM&S MRCVS



Some of you may have had part of a carcass condemned due to hydatid cysts (approximately 0.2% of sheep livers are thought to contain these cysts).

They are caused by the larval stage of the tapeworm *Echinococcus granulosus*. The cysts are zoonotic, meaning they pose a risk to people, and are a food safety issue.

The life cycle of the tapeworm is shown below. The most common cycle is between dogs and sheep. Dogs can acquire the infection if they are fed fresh offal or if they scavenge infected sheep carcasses.



Carnivores (dogs and foxes) are definitive hosts. The tapeworm grows and reproduces within their intestine, spreading the disease via eggs in their faeces. The sheep and cow are an intermediate host and cannot advance the lifecycle of this tapeworm. They pick up the eggs, which progress to larvae but no further. The larvae sit inside the cysts in the tissues.

Infected livestock rarely have any major health issues related to their infections, as the animals are often slaughtered before the cysts grow large enough to cause a problem (cysts in a sheep are around 2-6cm in size). In older animals, production may be affected as the cysts impact on the function of the organ they are in (most commonly the liver). A farmer is usually made aware of the infection by the abattoir when affected organs are condemned.

In humans the infection is called Hydatid disease (Echinococcosis), which can be fatal if untreated. In humans, cysts usually develop in the liver or lungs, leading to liver or lung dysfunction. If the cysts rupture they can cause a fatal allergic reaction.

The only control method available is to break the lifecycle in dogs. This can be achieved in the following ways:

1. Regular worming of all working and visiting dogs for tapeworm (use a product which contains praziquantel)
2. Consider fencing off footpaths
3. Don't feed dogs with raw offal or allow them to scavenge on carcasses
4. Only feed dogs proprietary pet food
5. Pick up dog faeces where possible and encourage walkers to do this in fields with footpaths
6. Collect carcasses from the field as soon as possible
7. Practice good hygiene when handling your dog

The habit of feeding pet dogs a raw meat diet has expanded rapidly in the last few years, increasing the risk of *Echinococcus granulosus* infection. We'd recommend not feeding these products to your dog unless they have been frozen below -20°C for at least 3 days, stopping the cysts from becoming infective. There are also other issues with raw meat, including bacteria which can survive freezing and still make your pet (and you) ill.

If you send your animals straight to slaughter it is always worth asking the abattoir for a report. These reports are highly valuable sources of information for your farm. There may be a wide range of infections present which aren't severe enough for condemnation, but allow you to adjust management to improve productivity.

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