



WENSUM VALLEY VETS FARM NEWSLETTER JUNE 2023

Blow Fly Strike:

Fly Strike (cutaneous myiasis) is a condition resulting from infestation of the larvae of Greenbottle, Blackbottle and Bluebottle flies. It can affect any animal, but we see it most commonly in fleeced animals such as sheep, alpacas and long coated goats.

It usually occurs in summer when flies are at their most prevalent, however it can be seen from March to December in some lowland areas in mild weather.

Flies are attracted especially to animals with soiled coats or wounds. They lay eggs around these areas which hatch into larvae (L1) and quickly develop through their larval stages to mature stage 3 (L3) maggots in as little as 3 days. At this point they drop off and pupate to become adult flies. In optimum conditions they complete their lifecycle in 10-14 days.

Maggots are very active, feeding on skin and faecal matter. They also secrete enzymes that damage the skin and muscle. The smell associated attracts secondary flies (black and blue bottles) which intensifies the condition.

Dead and decomposing tissue secrete toxins that can be absorbed into the blood stream which can result in toxæmia and even death in severe cases. Bacterial infection can also become implicated, worsening the condition.



Clinical Signs:

- Irritation – stamping, twitching tail, nibbling
- Isolation from flock
- Lameness
- Maggots visualised – best seen by parting the fleece
- Discoloured fleece/coat
- Decomposed skin
- Toxaemia
- Death
- Foul smell
- Inappetence



Prevention:

Prevention is best and may involve:

- Shearing before at-risk period
- Parasite control to reduce diarrhoea, therefore reducing attraction to flies.
- Pour on/ dipping to prevent flies or reduce growth of larvae
- Prompt treatment of foot rot lesions or wounds
- Reducing fly population – disposal of dead stock, trapping flies etc.



Images taken from NADIS website



Treatment:

The best option is ensuring preventative measures are in place as treatment is purely symptomatic.

- Clipping and cleaning affected areas
- Pain relief
- Topical +/- systemic antibiotics if infection present and depending on severity
- Prevention of further fly contact

Correct Administration of Chemical Control Agents:

Spot on formulations can be applied directly to maggot infested area to kill off larvae in a short period of time.

For Prevention:

Fan sprays can be used for wider coverage

- Ensure application gun is calibrated
- Apply from base of neck to tail head, then around rump area. (Half dose should be used for the shoulders and back, the other half for the rump)
- Ensure appropriate PPE is worn

One application tends to provide 6-8 weeks prevention.

Very soiled or matted fleeces will significantly reduce efficacy.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us on 01328 384444 Or email us at info@wensumvalleyvets.co.uk