

## Pasteurellosis in sheep

Probably in part due to the rotten weather we have been having, we have seen a number of flocks having problems with pasteurella. Unfortunately, this often presents as a number of sudden deaths, or severe cases of pneumonia that respond poorly to treatment.

Pasteurellosis can affect sheep of all ages and is one of the most common causes of mortality and is therefore of quite substantial economic significance. The bacteria that cause pasteurellosis are *Mannheimia haemolytica*, *Bibersteinia trehalosi* and *Pasteurella multocida*. These bugs live in the throat of healthy animals but are able to multiply and invade a sheep's lungs when the animals' immune system is suppressed. From here the bacteria can either set up a pneumonia or get into the blood stream and cause septicemia.

### Animal factors

Colostrum wanes by 3 months  
Stress factors (weaning, transport, mixing)  
Age (lambs immune systems aren't fully developed till 12mo)

### Environmental factors

Humidity and dampness  
Stocking density  
Mixing of age groups  
Air quality

### Infectious agents

Bacteria can cause direct damage  
Other pathogens such as parasites  
can contribute to poor immune status

### Diagnosis

A presumptive diagnosis of pasteurellosis can be based on history of stress such as inclement weather, clinical exam of sheep with laboured breathing, high temperatures as well as runny eyes and noses, or on post mortem where lungs are often dark red-purple and show visible signs of pneumonia. Lab tests can provide confirm that pasteurellosis is the cause.

### What to do?

It is often worth having a post mortem performed for cases of sudden death, but particularly if you have a spate of them. Losses can still occur in flocks that vaccinate against pasteurella and so it shouldn't be assumed that if this is not the cause.

*Bethany Collins*



Well the grass just seems to be keeping on growing, though now the rainfall seems to be trying its best to catch up with what we have missed out on. Even though there may be not a great deal of nutritional value in the new growth, it'll certainly maintain animals. With the variability of the weather we have seen several cases of sudden death in fattening lambs, which is commonly associated with *Pasteurella septicaemia*. It's important to investigate these cases, if not just to confirm a diagnosis, then to determine that nothing else is going on. Most people are now familiar with the term 'co-morbidities' and that applies in many cases and veterinary medicine. The more hurdles we can remove for an animal to jump over in life, the healthier they tend to be. Finances put this into sharp focus and dead lambs at the moment look like a lot more of a loss than they have been in the past.

Calf pneumonia has also been increasingly diagnosed, still relatively early in the autumn season. We have been granted financial support by a drug company to help us investigate the causes of pneumonia as they affect your farm individually. We can offer heavily subsidised lab fees to investigate the viruses that your cattle have been exposed to. This lowers the financial barrier to finding out what is going on, with a view to determining the need for and likely effects of a vaccination strategy. Also, the doors to a discussion of how to best prevent this condition on your farm will be opened. Almost always something can be done to improve the situation.

*Richard Knight*



## Changes to Red Tractor Farm Assurance

As most of you will be aware, Red Tractor is the UK's largest farm and food standards scheme, covering animal welfare, food safety, traceability and environmental protection.

The Red Tractor logo applied to product packaging demonstrates to consumers food and drink that has been produced to high quality standards across the whole length of the food chain, driving confidence and trust and leading to wider markets for sale and better prices. The Red Tractor standards have recently been revised and the new versions go live 1st November 2021 so if you are accredited it is worth making sure that you are aware of these changes. If you have any questions, or would like us to work with you to help keep your red tractor status, then please contact us at the surgery.



### **Beef & Lamb**

NEW -Tethered housing systems, for stock of any age, will not be permitted on Red Tractor Farms. In the short term, derogations will be offered, and visits will be made to the small number of members still tethering their cattle.

NEW -Farms will be asked how they are taking action to eradicate bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD). This needs to be documented in a health plan and implemented. This new recommendation will become a full standard from October 2022, allowing members a lead time for a change in system or testing routine, where necessary to control endemic disease.

NEW -All farms with workers must have a written Health and Safety policy – this is a slight advance on the legal baseline which only applies to businesses with more than five employees. Given high fatality figures in the industry Red Tractor believes it is essential to check policies are in place and communicated to workers.

NEW -Efficient and meaningful health planning builds on management techniques for continuous improvement and encourages a move to a proactive management system. The health plan now needs to be signed, dated and reviewed annually by a nominated vet who should visit the farm at least once a year.

NEW -At least one member of staff on each beef and sheep farm will need to attend a medicine course. **Please contact the office to express your interest in this course and we will put together some date options**

### **Dairy**

NEW -Tethered housing systems, for stock of any age, will not be permitted on Red Tractor Farms. In the short term, derogations will be offered, and visits will be made to the small number

of members still tethering their cattle.

NEW -In 2020 Red Tractor consulted on proposed standards to ensure the industry delivers on a commitment to eliminate the routine euthanasia of calves by 2023. A new standard is focused on a written breeding and management policy.

NEW -Efficient and meaningful health planning encourages a move to a proactive management system. A health plan now needs to be signed, dated and reviewed annually by a nominated vet, who should visit the farm at least once a year.

NEW -All farms with workers must have a written Health and Safety policy – this is a slight advance on the legal baseline which only applies to businesses with more than five employees. Given high fatality figures in the industry, Red Tractor believes it is essential to check policies are in place and communicated to workers.

*Rebecca Howard*

### Flock Health Club Meeting:



Monday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at  
7.30pm in the Kendal meeting room.

Food provided by the lovely Jacquie.

We will be looking at:

- Nutrition through pregnancy
- Itchy sheep- is it lice or scab?

Please could you email the following information to: [judith.lee@westmorland-vets.co.uk](mailto:judith.lee@westmorland-vets.co.uk) if possible by Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November

- Haylage/silage analysis- usually feed companies will do this FOC but if you are struggling get in touch
- Ewes to the ram tugging 2021
- Scanning results 2021, if available

Let Bridget know you are coming either by email or calling the practice.

Email: [bridget.cottam@westmorland-vets.co.uk](mailto:bridget.cottam@westmorland-vets.co.uk) or Tel: 01539 722692