

## Coronavirus Update

We continue to work to the best of our abilities in these challenging times and are grateful for the help you have all provided in maintaining safe distance and working conditions. Some jobs may end up taking a little longer however we are trying our best to come up with innovative ways of doing certain jobs that would usually involve being close together.

Our stock levels are much the same as usual however, due to driver shortages, our deliveries are arriving less frequently than usual. If we need to order something in, it may take slightly longer, so please bear with us. We are still operating collections from the Hollytree office from the box next to the front door; we are however trying to reduce the number of clients collecting from Macclesfield. As such, we aim to try to drop orders off where we can, or to arrange another way to get your items to you. To make this process easier, please try to order in advance if possible, as this makes it easier for us to plan a route of drop-offs. We would also ask you try to ring ahead if calling to Holly Tree for items, so we can have them dispensed and placed in the box ahead of your arrival.

## Mastitis Tubes

We currently only have 2 mastitis tubes available and this looks likely to continue for at least another couple of months. As well as the tubes which have production issues it is worth noting that Ubro Yellow is no longer being made so will not return.

We will soon have access to a new rapid diagnostic kit to allow us to differentiate mastitis bugs so we can target treatment more successfully. Speak to one of the vets about problems with clinical mastitis cases or high cell counts before just ordering tubes as normal so we can make sure you get the right product.

## Fly Control

We all know how irritating flies can be when you're out and about, and the same goes for livestock. As we get into May, flies are likely to start to rapidly increase in numbers and even without fly strike, just the irritation can lead to quite significant drops in production. Some research in the USA found that suckler calves weaned 5-10kg heavier from mothers which were treated with fly control. There are also several problems that flies can spread, such as Summer mastitis (August bag) and Infectious Bovine Keratoconjunctivitis (otherwise known as Pink eye or New Forest Disease).

Fly strike is the main problem we see associated with flies in sheep. This can cause huge problems and is often fatal and prevention is 100% much better than trying to cure it. It's a good idea to try and avoid grazing fields where flies are prominent – often those near water sources and with a lot of tree shelter.

Choosing the correct product for fly control is vital for success, as is using it correctly.

### Cattle:

We usually recommend using a spot-on product in both dairy and beef cattle. Care must be taken to note of the withdrawal periods. **Spotinor**, stocked at the practice has zero milk and 17 days meat withhold.

### Sheep:

For sheep, the spot-on products are only licensed for the treatment of fly strike, not its prevention, so we need to use something else. There are several options, depending how long you need protection against flies for. **Ectofly** is the product kept on the shelf at the office and offers 6-8 weeks protection. It's important to note that all the sheep sprays only work on the part of the body they are applied to, they don't spread around the fleece.

If you have any questions, please just give us a ring to find out what product is best for you.



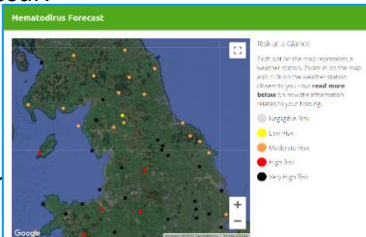
## Worm Control in Lambs

With many of you turning lambs out now and some with lambs getting to around 6 weeks old, it is only a matter of time until worm control becomes more important. However, it is important to do it correctly. Blanket treatment or treating at regular intervals is an outdated and dangerous approach, likely to lead to the rapid development of resistance to the wormers. Careful product selection and correct timing of treatments is the best way to maintain the function of the anthelmintics in the future, protecting future lamb crops.

*Nematodirus* usually strikes first between 6-12 weeks of age when the lambs start grazing significant amounts of grass and if weather conditions are right. Unlike other worm species whose larvae develop in the lamb, the *Nematodirus* larvae develop in the egg, whilst on pasture. The eggs are very resilient and will easily over-winter, spreading the worm from one lamb crop to the next. As temperatures rise, the eggs hatch – in huge numbers – leading to a massive intake of larvae by the lambs. If this coincides with having young lambs on that pasture, it leads to big problems. When infected by *Nematodirus* lambs don't always scour. The more common signs seen are sudden deaths, or very ill and weak lambs. This is because the larvae cause massive amounts of damage to the intestine.

To control *Nematodirus*, we recommend using a white wormer to protect the other 2 products, which generally have lower levels of resistance. But when should you treat? That is the tricky part. Because the hatch depends on weather conditions, we need to treat at a different time of year each season. You can keep track of the *Nematodirus* hatch through the SCOPS *Nematodirus* forecast (<https://www.scops.org.uk/forecasts/nematodirus-forecast/>). SCOPS use MET office data to predict when the hatch may occur.

Our nearest weather Stations are near Knutsford and Leek. These provide a useful reference for the lower and higher altitude



farms across the practice area. Due to the recent weather most of the practice is thought to be high or very high risk, so keep a close eye on lambs if they fall in the 6 - 12week age bracket. You also need to consider the ground which your lambs are grazing – did it have lambs on it last year? – if so, it is high risk too.

It's also worth noting Coccidiosis looks almost identical to *Nematodirus*, so checking a muck sample is advisable, particularly if problems persist despite worming.

At around 2 months old it is unlikely that your lambs will need wormed for roundworms, however it will not be long. The best way to keep track of worm burden is through regular egg counting and tracking the results. We know that in many cases, regular (weekly or fortnightly for best results) can be difficult practically and financially. The advantage of this means that you can detect a significant worm burden before the scour appears, meaning you avoid any damage to the intestine and as a result less of a check in weight gain. AHDB found that an alternative is to monitor weight gain instead. If you regularly weigh lambs (again weekly/fortnightly ideally) it is possible to see when the weight gain drops and treat at that point. There is also the benefit that with individual animal weights you can just treat those animals that need it – slowing the development of resistance further. Again, this isn't practical on some farms, and many don't have the equipment needed. As a halfway house, we recommend keeping a close eye on your lambs, watching for mucky back-ends. When an odd lamb start getting mucky, we advise taking a sample from a selection of lambs to check their count.

However you decide to approach it, we still rarely advise treating the entire group, as this rapidly accelerates the development of



resistance. We aren't aiming to get rid of all worms but to keep them at a low level, to allow the lambs to develop their own immunity. Routine worming means they don't develop this immunity, and when they do come across worms, they can become dramatically ill and lose a lot of condition. Careful and selective treatment promotes immunity and leads to a more resilient lamb, as well as reducing the rate of resistance developing.

It can sound like we are always harping on about wormer resistance, but it really can be a significant problem, and it is much better to act before than try to pick up the pieces later. Some ground in Australia has had to be abandoned by sheep farmers due to the level of resistance in the worms on the pasture. There are currently no new wormers on the horizon, so the 4 or 5 ingredients we have now are what we have for the foreseeable future. If you want to know more about your levels of resistance, or to set up a plan for worming this summer, just give us a call.

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