

Staggers Risk! Now that we've finally had some rain hopefully grass growth will improve, provided things warm up a little. As it does so, think about your magnesium supplementation for cattle at grass, as the staggers risk increases with fast grass growth. Give any of the vets a ring if you have any questions.

Sheep abortion/stillbirth investigations



Each year, subsidised blood testing is available under the MSD Flock Check and CEVA Assure Ewe schemes for Toxoplasmosis and Enzootic abortion. If you have experienced abortions in your flock, or weak/stillborn lambs, and you don't currently vaccinate, it could be worth doing some blood testing on the affected ewes to see if either of these two infections are responsible.

Enzootic abortion and Toxoplasmosis represent the two most common causes of abortions, still-births, and barren ewes in the UK. Under the schemes, half a dozen ewes can be blood tested with the lab fees covered by the drug companies. There will still be a charge for the visit and for taking the samples, however this offers a good saving on testing fees. The schemes are available until the end of June for any farms with over 50 breeding ewes. If you would be interested or would like more information, please contact the office or any of the vets.

Entropion

We have been seeing a lot of cases of entropion in lambs recently. This is a condition where lambs eyelids are in turned (often the bottom one), affecting one or both eyes. The in-turning results in the eyelashes/hair rubbing on the surface of the eye which is very painful and quickly leads to very serious ulcers. Prompt identification is vital to allow treatment before the eye is damaged. The first sign is usually that lambs keep their eyes only part-open. This then progresses to tear staining, before the eye develops some quite nasty ulcers and can even result in the eye being permanently damaged.

There are a few treatment options, and some will respond to just having the eyelid pulled down, turning back out, however many recur. In unresponsive cases, we inject a small amount of antibiotic into the eyelid, causing it to swell and lift away from the eye. Michel clips can also be used to hold the eyelid back until they settle into the normal position.



Farms often experience 'outbreaks' of entropion and these can usually be traced back to a new tup as the condition is hereditary. It should be considered whether to use this tup in future years if one is found to be responsible. If you have a lot of cases, we can come and train you to performing the injections yourself – it's fiddly the first few times! So you can treat them rapidly.

To assist with cases of entropion - amongst other things - we have decided to run a drop-in 'Problem Lamb Clinic' at Whaley Bridge on Wednesday May 12th between 12.30 and 3pm. Lambs with entropion will be injected as appropriate, and other issues tested or treated as required. There will be a £15 fee per lamb (plus any drugs required), which offers a considerable saving compared to having a vet out to the farm, particularly for single lambs.

If you would be interested in bringing any lambs along, give Julia a ring at the Whaley office on 01663 732564 to book your slot.

Turnout blog

Over the last few months, we have been working with Chelford Farm Supplies to provide a veterinary input to their blogs published online, and hopefully help highlight some ways to make your farms more successful. Last month Janis assisted with their blog covering spring turnout, and how to get it right, from electric fencing through to fly control. The blog can be seen at the website below.

<https://www.chelfordfarmsupplies.co.uk/blog/preparing-for-the-big-spring-turnout>

We assisted with their lambing blogs earlier in the year, and hope to continue working together with them, supporting your farms, and making them as successful as we can. We're sure that between us we can probably get hold of anything and everything you might need for your livestock.



TB Testing Matters

Go paperless!

We are committed to reducing the use of paper, so we can do our bit to protect the environment. Therefore, we ask from all of you with access to the internet to consider getting your TB certificates via e-mail instead. You will be able to get your results without having to wait for the post and there will be less paperwork to store. Have a think about it and next time your animals have a TB test please let us know your preferences. Thank you for helping us to do our bit to make a difference (and reduce the size of your paperwork pile!)

Information about the TB situation in our farms:



At the moment we have 19 farms under restrictions with 4 new breakdowns occurring in the last month. The number of herds with TB incidents has been more or less stable for over 7 months, which would give us some hope that the situation is improving slightly.

Worming in lambs

Why is worm control in lambs important?



An effective worm control strategy for growing lambs can help develop resilient lambs, avoiding stunted growth and deaths, and improving financial returns as lambs grow more efficiently. A worming strategy can also slow down the development of wormer resistance on farm. Wormer resistance means certain wormers stop working effectively, as worms have been over-exposed to them and evolve to become resistant.

Nematodirus

Nematodirus is a worm which has a unique life cycle - it is passed directly from lamb crop to the following year's lamb crop, and does not tend to affect ewes. Pastures grazed by young lambs in the previous year carry the highest risk for harbouring Nematodirus. Outbreaks can occur suddenly in Spring (April/May) and mass hatches tend to occur in warm weather preceded by a cold snap, as this aids the development of the worm egg.



Outbreaks can be deadly if the start of warm weather coincides with lambs being at the right age.

Guarding lambs from Nematodirus outbreaks is best achieved by planning grazing so that young lambs do not graze pasture grazed by lambs last year. Worm egg counts do not predict Nematodirus outbreaks, as the immature worms which cause the most damage do not produce eggs until a later stage. Nematodirus forecasts can be found on the SCOPS website (<https://www.scops.org.uk/forecasts/nematodirus-forecast/>) and can help predict if a wormer treatment is needed, or speak to one of our vets.

Lambs at the greatest risk are 6-12 weeks old, on pasture grazed by lambs of a similar age last year; weaned, in mixed age groups with coccidiosis burdens.

If unable to avoid pasture grazed by lambs last year, lambs are high risk - use a white wormer as it is still very effective in Nematodirus. Timing it in April/May with information from Nematodirus forecasts and your vet can help ensure efficacy of treatment. Only lambs would need drenching rather than ewes as well. Ideally worm egg count 7-10 days later to check efficacy, you may need to repeat drenching depending on age groups/weather.

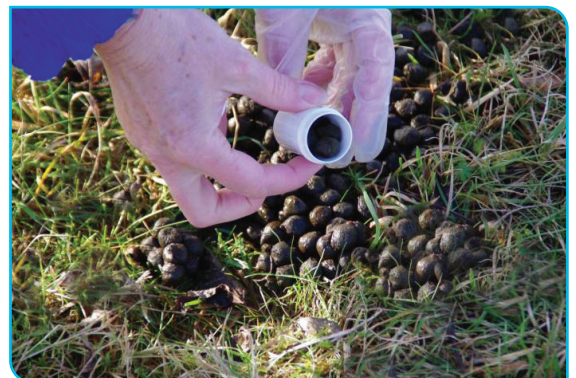
Worm egg counting

Sheep gradually build immunity to worms as they grow older, as they are exposed to them when they start eating grass. This means lambs tend to have poorer immunity against worms and tend to be more greatly affected by worm burdens (e.g. poor growth, scouring). Historically lambs are wormed a few times over spring and summer to control these negative effects - however a more targeted approach can be taken.

Instead of worming on a set schedule throughout the grazing season, regular worm egg counts before deciding to use a wormer throughout summer can help target your wormer use. As a rough guide, carrying out a worm egg count on lambs 2 - 3 times from around March - September helps monitor worm burdens when they are at the peak levels on the grass. Worm egg counting ensures wormer is only used if it is needed and prevents worming a group of lambs when not required.

A worm egg count gives a rough estimate of the worm burden lambs are carrying. A worm egg count can be done by dropping in a poo sample into the practice and results can be returned within 24 hours, often the same day. A fresh poo sample is required - putting the group of lambs you wish to sample onto a clean yard or small paddock for an hour, then picking up a good handful of droppings left in that time is a simple way of doing this. An airtight container such as a plastic sandwich bag or ice cream tub is ideal for a poo sample. A sample can be collected from each management group of lambs to monitor each group separately.

Our vets will test your sample, counting the number of worm eggs present. Over a certain number of eggs, indicating a higher worm burden, your vet can recommend an appropriate wormer and discuss your lambs' grazing history and progress. Worm egg counts can also be used to check if wormers are still working effectively on your farm, monitoring wormer resistance.



Worming is a complex topic and there is no 'one size fits all' approach to worming on different farms. Have a chat with your vet about worm control and how this may be best done on your farm, so that a tailored worm control plan can be put in place.

FARM OFFICES

Lower Withington

The Barn, Holly Tree Farm, Holmes Chapel Road,
Lower Withington, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 9DT
Tel: 01477 571000 Email: hollytree@wmvets.co.uk

Whaley Bridge Farm Branch

Block B, Ringstones Industrial Estate,
Whaley Bridge, High Peak, Derbyshire, SK23 7PD
Tel: 01663 732564

 Like us on Facebook for up-to-date news and the latest events! Search 'Wright & Morten Farm Animal Services'

