Lamb parasite control

Nematodirus season is upon us and the challenge is forecast to be high. Young lambs from 4-12 weeks old are at greatest risk and will present with signs of severe diarrhoea, loss of appetite, tucked up appearance and significant levels of mortality.

The SCOPS forecasting tool on their website will give the best guide as to when Nematodirus will be a threat. SCOPS guidelines recommend reducing the risk of infection by not grazing young lambs on pastures where pre-weaning lambs grazed last year. Fecal egg counts are not particularly helpful in the diagnosis of Nematodirus as the lambs are sick in the pre patent phase of the infection, i.e. before eggs are being produced. Nematodirus shows little resistance to Benzimidazole anthelmintics so we use these white drenchs to help control Nematodirus. Aim to treat before lambs start to have reduced DLWG.

The other main parasite which can present in a similar way to Nematodirus is coccidiosis. This can be diagnosed by sampling feaces and looking for sheep specific pathogenic strains of coccidia. The lab in Hartford can usually deliver results on the overall cocci count in less than 24 hours which is a great aid to diagnosis. Control of coccidiosis generally involves high levels of hygiene to reduce the challenge. Where necessary there are a couple of drenches available to treat infected groups of lambs.

Both these issues can present in the same way and in similar groups of animals so it is important that you speak to your vet before just deciding to treat for one or the other.

We are able to offer this service including drugs at the following rate:

<50 calves = £7.00 per calf INCLUDING ALL DRUGS (EX VAT)
>100 calves = £6.00 per calf INCLUDING ALL DRUGS (EX VAT)

If you are able to provide extra members of staff and reduce our time on farm, we can further discount this rate.

This is a service which has developed within our seasonal block calving herds, and is becoming very popular. To find out more or to book a trial session, please speak to your regular vet, or phone Jonny Duncan for more details.

SHEEP MEETINGS

Wednesday 25th May 2016

Different meetings to be held at Lunchtime and Evening featuring

Kate Hoovers 30 years experience as a sheep vet and past president of the Sheep Vet Society

More details to follow
Every month we have a couple of cases in the practice where someone has reaped the rewards of increasing their surveillance for BVD. One of the simplest ways of doing so is to use BVD check tags in new-born calves. Not only do you establish from the outset if you have a BVD PI in this year’s calf crop you also establish if the mum could be a PI or not.

One recent case in a beef suckler herd showed virtually every calf in the group having a high temperature and unwillingness to suck from birth. A lot of hard work and diligent care meant that none of the calves died but they certainly weren’t thriving even a couple of weeks later. Testing revealed a PI calf in the group which was acting as a reservoir of infection for the rest of the cattle in contact. This one PI was causing a massive loss in productivity across a group of over 20 other calves not to mention the increased work load in caring for calves that are slow to suck.

Another case highlighted the impact of a PI on fertility. A group of maiden heifers were tested after poor fertility results and lots of repeat inseminations. One PI was identified and removed. Breeding was suspended in the rest of the heifers for 4 weeks while they were vaccinated to protect their future pregnancies.

BVD check tags are available through Beeston Animal Health and can be used as part of the official identification tags for registering a calf or can be bought ad-hoc as a third tag for management purposes or just to test for BVD. Speak to your vet or Mark Pass at BAH for more information.