CATTLE WORM PROBLEMS

Lungworm season is upon us again with multiple cases diagnosed and treated across the practice already this year. Lungworm aka husk or Dictyocaulus viviparous to give it its formal name, can quickly effect whole groups of animals.

Clinical disease will most likely be seen in young-stock and symptoms can range from coughing through to severe breathing difficulties, very sick animals and even death. Adult cattle can also be affected, most commonly sub-clinically causing loss of production such as decreased milk yield but clinical disease can also occur. The presence of lungworm larvae in a faeces sample will confirm infection.

Prevention takes the form of either a vaccination programme (using Huskvac) commenced prior to turnout or a suitable timetable of anthelmintic treatments that allow low level exposure to lungworm larvae and development of some immunity.

‘Gut worms’ e.g. Ostertagia ostertagia can also be a problem through the grazing season especially during warm wet weather like we have been seeing lately. Clinical disease in younger animals causes diarrhoea and weight loss and sub-clinically there will be production losses. Examining faeces for the presence of worm eggs will show how heavily infected animals are based on the number of eggs per gram of faeces. This is performed in our on-site lab giving quick results. Control and treatment of infection involves use of an appropriate anthelmintic at appropriate times.

Testing bulk milk for antibodies to both lungworm and O. ostertagia can be a useful way to track how heavily the herd is infected and can help with timing of treatments.

For more information, diagnosis and to discuss treatment options or to set up a preventative strategy please speak to one of the Willows team.

FAECAL EGG COUNTS

Faecal egg counts (FEC’s) are routinely used to aid diagnosis of nematode (worm) infestations and aid in determining whether sheep need treating. This should also be used in conjunction with farm grazing history, and historic farm data.

FEC’s give an indication of worm burdens (and coccidiosis) but it should be understood that some worms eg Nematodirus and Haemonchus can cause disease before the adult worm lay eggs (low egg counts).

Understanding the risk for that season by looking at the SCOPS website (www.scops.org.uk) will aid treatment decisions. Willows can undertake FEC in-house, meaning a quick turnaround for prompt result and treatment advice. Together with a Flock Health Plan, they ensure you use wormers responsibly and reduced the risk of resistance on your farm. Studies have shown that over 80% of farms have resistance with white wormers, whilst some farms have “triple resistance”, to three classes of wormer.

As a general rule for strongyle egg counts, above 5-700 epg are considered high and treatment is recommended. Other worms have different cut-offs and discussion with your veterinary surgeon or Suitable qualified person (SQP) will guide you on your own farm situation.

Treatment

Treatment involves the use of an effective anthelmintic. The five major anthelmintic groups, defined by the active chemical, comprise:

- 1-BZ benzimidazoles, probenzimidazoles (WHITE)
- 2-LV imidazothiazoles, tetrahydropyrimidines (YELLOW)
- 3-ML avermectins, milbemycins, (CLEAR)
- 4-AD monepantel (ORANGE)
- 5-SI derquantel and abamectin (PURPLE)

Anthelmintic treatment based upon FEC

- This approach is a compromise between reduced selection pressure for anthelmintic resistance and maintaining lamb growth rates.
- Anthelmintic treatment is generally recommended when the mean worm egg counts of faecal samples collected from 10-12 lambs are greater than 500-700 epg.

Selecting the most appropriate anthelmintic at weaning

- Testing for the presence of wormer resistance is an increasingly important part of maintaining an effective worm control strategy.
- The cheapest and simplest way is to perform a drench test to check on anthelmintic efficacy.
- Collect FECs both prior to worming, and again at either 7 days for 2-LV, or 14 days for 1-BZ and 3-ML wormers post-treatment.
- If mean FECs have been reduced by <95% then resistance is suspected.
- Where AR is an issue, the Sustained Control of Parasites of Sheep (SCOPS) group advises that products containing group 4-AD or group 5-SI wormers, should be used strategically and where necessary, and they should not be left in reserve for when all other groups have failed on a farm.
- With the recent re-licensing of the 4-AD monepantel to POM-VPS, vets, SQPS and our clients need to work much more closely on parasite control.
- Follow SCOPS recommendations by leaving some lambs untreated and monitor treatment efficacy by performing a drench test post-treatment.
EYE CONDITIONS

Recently we have seen a lot of animals suffering with bad eyes. Most commonly this is caused by a condition known as New Forest Eye or Pink Eye, which is worst in the summer months. This is related to the heavy fly burden we’re seeing at the moment. Regular fly treatment is key in prevention and management of the symptoms as flies are able to transmit the bacteria from cow to cow spreading the disease. Common signs include a watery discharge from the eye, closure of the eyelids and clouding over the surface of the eye. Commonly these conditions can be managed effectively with antibiotic injections, pain relief and topical eye ointment. Isolating infected animals where possible will also help reduce spread of the disease.

If you see any of these signs then we would advise to contact your vet for further advice.

Nantwich Show

Thank you to everyone who visited our stand at Nantwich Show and help us to raise £200 for the charity Send a Cow by throwing wet sponges at our vets in the stocks. XLVets Farm practices around the country are raising money for this charity which gives families and communities in some of the poorest countries in Africa the hope and means to secure their own future from the land. This starts with education but leads onto growing crops to feed their families and communities and ultimately to owning their own cow.

www.sendacow.org

Dates for your diary...

We would love to see you all at our next two events:

THE FLINT AND DENBIGH SHOW - 17th August
THE CHESHIRE PLOUGHING MATCH - 27th September

Hartford Office
267 Chester Road, Hartford, Northwich, Cheshire CW8 1LP
Telephone: 01606 723200

Alsager Office
The Point, Crewe Road, Alsager, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 2GP
Telephone: 01606 723200

Mold Office
Unit 16, Mold Business Park, Wrexham Road, Mold, Flintshire CH7 1XP
Telephone: 01352 748525

Hampton Vets
Post Office Lane, Hampton Heath, Malpas SY14 8JQ
Telephone: 01948 820345

Manor Court Vets
Church St, Tarvin, Chester, Cheshire CH3 8EB
Telephone: 01829 740216

Charter Farm Vets
16 West Road, Congleton, Cheshire CW12 4ER
Telephone: 01260 291037