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Livestock NEWS

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Inside this issue:

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XL Vets Farm

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

Staff News

We are saddened to be losing 2 valued members of the team.

Charlie Bradshaw

Some of you will be aware that unfortunately Charlie has decided to move on to a new role after her maternity leave finishes. She has taken on a new role with APHA covering the north of England.

Charlie joined us just over 6 years ago and made a fantastic contribution to the team at Paragon and the clients that she worked with. Her dedication to her clients was second to none.

I'm sure you'll all wish her well in her new role.

Jane Holland

It is with regret that Jane will be leaving us at the end of April, after 18 years service to enjoy her well deserved retirement.

Jane joined Paragon in January 2006 and has answered many clients telephone calls at Dalston initially before moving to Newbiggin to man the reception and dispensary of which many of you will know Jane from. She has been a pillar of support to both clients and colleagues and will be very much missed. Jane has been a dedicated team member and we wish her the very best for the future.

Nematodirus battus

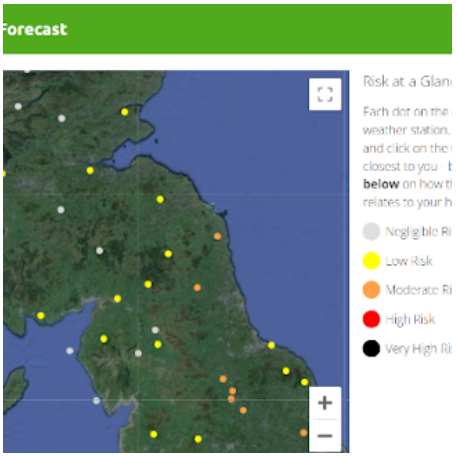
By Dan Lawson

Nematodirus battus is a nasty disease affecting lambs, which cause large numbers of mortalities and stunt the growth of the lambs, it can strike very quickly.

When is nematodirus battus seen?

Nematodirus battus is picked up by the lambs from the grass, therefore it will most commonly affect lambs that are between 6-12 weeks old. The nematodirus battus eggs that are on the grass are caused to hatch by a cold snap followed by a period of warmer weather. These specific conditions cause large numbers of the eggs to hatch at the same time therefore causing a very high burden for the lambs. These specific conditions vary from area to area and with weather being increasingly unpredictable, the SCOPS nematodirus forecast is a vital tool to help guide when your area will be most at risk.

What are the signs of nematodirus battus?



Nematodirus battus has similar clinical signs to other worms that sheep are be affected by, it can cause diarrhoea, weight loss, dehydration and death. However, the onset of disease is very quick as the lambs ingest very large numbers of the worm larvae. This can make nematodirus battus more difficult to diagnose as lambs can be very unwell and die before eggs are produced and therefore are able to be detected in faecal egg counts.

Treatment and control

Steps can be taken to avoid infection with nematodirus battus, this includes monitoring SCOPS nematodirus forecast and move at risk lambs to lower risk pastures, these are the pastures that were not grazed by lambs the previous spring. To treat, SCOPS guidance is to use a white (1-BZ) drench, this class of wormers is normally highly effective against this parasite, however it is important to monitor this and check that the treatment has been effective. If in doubt, please phone to speak to a vet for guidance.

Minimising Early Lambing Losses

By Mollie Rudd

Lamb losses have a huge impact on farm production, welfare and farmer morale. Lamb mortality is wasted money and it is estimated by AHDB that lambs dying in the neonatal period can cost farmers up to £20-25 per lamb.

No two farms will have identical problems for losses and it will be dependent on your individual farm, production system and season. Major risk factors for losses are often interlinked which include: birth-weight, colostrum intake, dystocia, genetics, hygiene and litter size. Good management on-farm will allow specific areas to be targeted in order to see direct improvements.

Three major target areas for reducing early lambing losses include:

1. **Hygiene in the lambing shed**

- Good hygiene practices can go a long way in reducing losses through infections such as watery mouth, joint ill and scours. These infections are caused by bacteria entering the lamb either through, ingestion, the navel and tailing or tagging wounds**.**

Focus on:

- Dip navels twice with 10% iodine - once when they are first born and again 4-6 hours later when they have been licked dry.
- Clean and dry bedding is vital as most bacteria thrive in damp, dirty straw, which can easily infect a newborn lamb and cause disease. The communal area should be bedded down at least once a day and deep cleaned between batches. Individual lambing pens should be properly cleaned between each ewe and include lime with the bedding. All afterbirths should be removed as quickly as possible.
- Disinfect all equipment used between feeding, rubber-ringing and tagging every single lamb.
- Wear gloves when assisting lambings, administering colostrum or doing any management tasks with newborn lambs. Lambs have no immunity when they are born so being careful to avoid faecal contamination from ewes into/onto lambs is important.

2. Colostrum Management

- The gut lining closes 6 hours after birth meaning after this point lambs are not able to absorb the desired immunoglobulins. So, if a lamb is not up and feeding within this time it is essential that colostrum is supplemented. **Lambs must receive 50ml/kg of good quality colostrum within 4 hours of birth** (Aiming for 200ml/kg within 24h).
- Colostrum quality can be tested using a Brix refractometer. **Aim for 26.5% IgG for lambs and if possible over 30%.**
- Defrost all frozen colostrum gently at room temperature.
- Sheep colostrum is superior which is ideally obtained by milking the dam hygienically by hand, or another ewe lambed within 4 hours. If this is not possible, alternative substitute sources are using goat or cow colostrum. Ideally it should be from animals on the same farm, disease free and vaccinated with a clostridial vaccine.
- Due to the lower levels of energy an extra 30% of cow colostrum should be given to get the same energy levels.

3. Ewe Nutrition

- Performing forage analysis allows you to plan your ewe ration ahead ready for the lambing period. This will ensure high colostrum quality and quantity whilst also ensuring lambs are born a healthy weight and full of vigour.
- Inadequate nutrition reduces the quantity of colostrum and milk produced, delays the onset of lactation and increases the thickness of colostrum, which the lamb may find more difficult to extract from the teat.

TOP TIP!

Collect your ewes colostrum (>26.5% IgG) using an ice cube tray and freeze it straight away.
You will then be able to pop out the required number of cubes to defrost at room temperature to make up 50ml/kg colostrum to the lamb.
So, if one ice cube = ~30ml, a 4.5kg lamb will require 7-8 ice cubes to give it the required amount of colostrum.

Metabolic diseases in ewes

By Catherine Davies

As lambing season approaches and is underway for many, sheep farmers face various challenges in ensuring the health and well-being of their flock. Metabolic issues are a common concern during this critical period, impacting both the ewes and their new-born lambs. Here are some metabolic issues to be aware of and some preventative measures to help mitigate their effects.

Pregnancy Toxemia (Twin Lamb Disease): This is a metabolic disorder of primary concern during late gestation, especially in ewes carrying multiple lambs and poor body condition ewes. It arises from an energy imbalance, demanding more energy than the ewe can consume. This condition can manifest as lethargy, lack of appetite, and eventually, recumbency.

Preventative Measures: Ensure a balanced diet rich in energy during the last weeks of gestation, supplementing with concentrates if necessary. Separating singles, twins and triplets to feed according to the number of lambs they are carrying. Frequent body condition scoring aids in identifying at-risk individuals early on.

Hypocalcemia (Milk Fever): This is commonly known as milk fever, it can occur at any stage from a few weeks before lambing, until several weeks after. It is a result in a mismatch between the supply and demand of calcium in the ewe. Around lambing the maternal calcium demands are maximal due to the skeletal mineralisation of the lamb and the onset of milk production in early lactation. Clinical signs can be similar to twin lamb disease, they can have difficulty walking, lie down, be depressed and may develop bloat.

Preventative Measures: Avoid feeding high-calcium diets during late pregnancy, as this can reduce the ewe's ability to mobilize her own calcium when needed. Supplementing appropriate minerals in the ration during pregnancy and try to minimise stress especially in later stages.

Hypomagnesaemia (Grass Staggers): This can occur in ewes two to eight weeks post-lambing, particularly in animals rearing multiple lambs. It is most often seen in animals grazing rapidly growing pastures, especially during the

spring. Lush grass is low in magnesium and as a consequence you can see signs of shaking, convulsions and sudden death in your ewes.

Preventative measures: Magnesium lick tubs can help supplement the lack of magnesium in these spring pastures.

Metabolic issues in sheep around lambing are challenges that can impact the health and productivity of the flock. By understanding these issues and implementing preventive measures, farmers can help ensure the well-being of both ewes and their new-born lambs. Regular monitoring, proper nutrition, and a well-managed lambing environment are crucial elements in successfully navigating the metabolic demands in this critical period. We are all at hand during this busy period if anyone has any concerns or questions regarding these issues. Pre-lambing metabolic bloods can be taken to understand if your flock is receiving suitable nutrition and identify at risk groups.

Freeze Branding

Over the past 6 months our Vet Tech Team have been developing a new freeze branding service with . Now we are confident with the procedure and technique that we are now able to offer freeze branding as a Vet Tech Service.

By Karen McNeil

With herd sizes increasing it is becoming harder to identify individual animals in large groups which makes freeze branding an essential management tool enabling the farmer to easily/quickly identify bulling, sick or calving animals and maintain accurate records.

Advantages

- Freeze brands don't fall off
- Suitable for all ages and breeds
- Ideal identification in milking parlours for milk recording.

For more information regarding numbers, pricing and availability please speak to a member of our team

TB Update

DEFRA have recently opened a consultation on the future of badger control and additional measures regarding cattle movements to enhance TB control. The consultation is open to vets and farmers and it is important to have as many voices inputting as possible especially from the LRA. I would encourage as many people as possible to complete the survey using the link below.

https://consult.defra.gov.uk/bovine-tb/bovine-tb-consultation-wildlife-cattle/

Client Information Forms

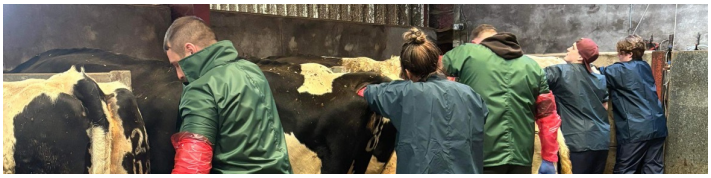
Over the last couple of months we have been sending out client information forms. We would be grateful if you filled out and returned to form in person or via the number provided on the form. All forms received by the end of April will be entered into a prize draw for a chance to win a hamper.

Please let us know if you have not received yours or need another copy

Training Courses

AI, Foot Trimming and Mastering Medicines

Please contact the practice for further information



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