



FARM FIRST VETS

MARCH NEWSLETTER 2021

Lamb scour Lambs may scour (have diarrhoea) at any age and for a variety of reasons: bacteria, viruses, parasites, nutritional issues and many other factors. The cause of the scour cannot always be easily diagnosed for rapid specific treatment. All animals that are scouring will be losing fluids as well as vital electrolytes. Fluid therapy that addresses these electrolyte imbalances as well as the fluid losses, is an important part of supportive therapy. **How can you treat a scouring lamb?**



- Identify and prevent the cause, if possible
- Assess and correct dehydration
- Address acidosis/electrolyte imbalances
- Maintain energy supply

Any scouring animals that are too weak to stand or have lost their suckle reflex should be assessed by your veterinary surgeon as intravenous fluids may be necessary.

Keep scouring animals on milk- It has been recognised for a number of years that removal of milk from scouring animals does not encourage recovery. Continued milk feeding allows all of the benefits of milk, especially its high energy levels, to be utilised by the scouring animal.

Choosing an oral rehydration therapy (ORT) There are numerous oral rehydration therapies available and not all are equal. An ORT must supply the following in the correct amounts, in order to be of maximal benefit to the animal: **sodium, glucose, alkalising capacity (as scouring animals are often acidotic), potassium and energy.** Many ORT products contain high levels of bicarbonate or citrate as alkalising agents, but these can affect milk clotting and therefore should be fed separate from milk (ideally by 2 hours).

Rehydion Gel is designed to be fed with milk or if an animal is suckling, given directly into the mouth using our **NEW Dosing Pump.** **Rehydion Gel** addresses the issues of electrolyte imbalance effectively whilst allowing recovery, repair and growth to continue as the lamb is still receiving milk (either by suckling or being bottle fed).

One bottle of Rehydion Gel = 160 doses for a young lamb (2ml per dose). Dose each lamb 2 times a day until scour stops at approximately 0.5 - 1ml per kg. It is important to note that the animals will continue to scour until the gut is healed, so they may appear clinically well but still have loose faeces.

The information above is also relevant to **calf scour**, and Rehydion is an excellent product for the treatment of calf diarrhoea.



Mastitis Tubes The dairy farmers amongst you will be pleased to hear that we now have a greater variety of products available and your first-choice tube may now be back on our shelf. So next time you need to put an order in, please ask to see what we have available. We also have a few vouchers for free milk sampling or Farming Connect money available for bacteriology testing. This will help us make decisions on how to reduce the mastitis risk and the best treatments in your herd.

MastDecide- On farm culture test for evidence based mastitis treatment decisions

These are on-farm test kits which enable the farmer to take and test a mastitis sample and get a quick result. A simple test kit is provided (set up takes 5 minutes) and the sample is incubated in a cheap egg incubator for 8-14 hours.

The result will indicate whether the mastitis is caused by a gram negative or gram positive bacterium.

gram-negative bacteria – Action: no treatment with antibiotics necessary, if cow is well in herself;

gram-positive organism – Action: treat quickly with antibiotics to improve the chance of a cure.

The tests cost just over £9 each and some farms have found that they are able to reduce the number of antibiotic tubes that they are using and improve cure rates on gram positive cases. Please contact Jane if you want to know any more about these tests.

Liver Fluke Risk In general we have not seen much liver fluke this year, with many of our screening tests coming back negative. This has meant that many farmers have saved the cost of unnecessary treatments. However, we have seen deaths on some farms, so the risk is there, especially on the hill farms with wet ground. In Scotland at the Dumfries VI centre the SAC diagnosed liver fluke as the cause of ill thrift and/or death in sheep from 3 flocks at the end of February. All carcasses were anaemic with large numbers of mature fluke in the liver. There was evidence of submandibular oedema in some. In all cases there was a history of treatment with triclabendazole in autumn 2020 and January/February 2021. Undiagnosed liver fluke in late gestation ewes can lead to problems with metabolic disease and effects on colostrum quality/lamb viability etc. Some points to note are as follows:

- For monitoring in flocks, these fluke burdens could easily be picked by carrying out a bulk fluke egg count or coproantigen test on the group.
- We would recommend this for flocks as soon as possible, particularly if they have used triclabendazole as their flukicide during the autumn and winter.
- Post mortem examination of any deaths that occur is also useful for diagnosis and considering differential diagnosis.



Enzootic Abortion Vaccine Offer

There is currently an offer on Cevac Chlamydia vaccine that goes out of date on 5th June (20 dose packs) or 2nd October 2021 (50 dose packs). So, if you have some yearlings that you want to get vaccinated the offer is buy **3 packs get one free**. Please ring us if you want to take advantage of this deal.

Staff News We have employed a locum to help with the work load this spring. Carlos Megias is a Spanish vet who has lived and worked in the UK for a number of years. He is based in the West Country where he used to work in farm animal practice, so he will be staying in this area whilst he is working with us.

Jokes

A bloke on a tractor has just driven past me shouting, "The end of the world is nigh"

I think it was Farmer Geddon.

Thanks to Christine Cleaton for this next one:

A farmer, having just won a million pounds on the lottery is asked what he intends doing with his big win. He replies "keep on farming until it's all gone".

