



FARM FIRST NEWSLETTER



APRIL 2022

CHANGES TO FARM ASSURED WELSH LIVESTOCK SCHEME



Measuring antimicrobial use on farms is to become part of the Farm Assured Welsh Livestock Scheme (FAWL). From May 1st, members will be asked to work with their veterinary surgeons to calculate the average amount of antibiotics used on the farm as part of the drive to tackle the global problem of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

WLBP is meeting the challenge by creating a software platform to collate and benchmark data on antibiotic usage across the beef, dairy, and sheep sectors. The result is expressed as **milligrams of antibiotic used per kilogram of animal**, a measurement accepted by government and supply chain alike. WLBP General Manager, Iestyn Tudur-Jones, said, "The data gathering process requires minimal input by farmers. It can be done as part of their annual health and welfare review, and no additional record keeping will be needed." To help farmers and vets, WLBP has developed an antimicrobial (AMU) calculator to gather and standardise data, as well as a new website specifically for this purpose.

Iestyn continued, "We believe that farmers are using antibiotics responsibly, but we need the evidence to verify that assertion. This process, based on vets and farmers working together, will take us far down that road. We need to be proactive in persuading government and consumers that Welsh farmers are acting conscientiously when using farm medicines."

We would like our clients to be aware that when they sign up for membership of WLAB they are giving permission for us to access the data required and to submit this data to WLAB, which includes stock numbers on farm using CTS records and medicine sales. We are finding the reports produced by the AMU calculator very useful as we can easily see the progress each farm is making in reducing the use of antibiotics and pinpoint the problem areas on the farm.

Opening of Reception

We are pleased to announce that we shall be re-opening our doors after Easter. However, as Covid rates are still very high and this is our busiest time of year, entry will be limited to a maximum of 2 people at a time and clients will be asked to wear masks. Pre-ordering will still be necessary and there will be a collection point for those who just want to 'pick up and go'. We really look forward to welcoming you back into the building.

... TB NEWS ...

Welcome to Dragos Poghirc, our new trainee TB Tester, who will be joining us on 19th April.

Due to increasing postal costs and for environmental reasons, we will soon be trialling sending TB results via email

Subsidised Blood Sampling of Barren or Aborted Ewes

We appreciate that you may be in a hurry to sell your barren ewes with current prices being as high as they are. But don't miss the opportunity to find out whether a preventable disease was the cause of the reproductive loss. We can blood-sample the ewes and the lab fees to test for Enzootic Abortion and Toxoplasma will be paid for by one of the drug companies. For Welsh farmers, Farming Connect funding is available to look for other causes such as Border Disease.

If you would like to book your ewes in, please give us a call.

WORMING DAIRY COWS

When and why do you worm your dairy cattle? Do you just do what you have always done, is there a plan, and importantly, are you happy with the result?

With increasing pressure on the use of anthelmintics because of resistance and environmental concerns, now is the time to challenge what you have always done and draw up a **parasite control plan** with us. This will maximise parasite control and productivity within your herd, whilst potentially decreasing costs.

How can we help? Recent work done in France with over 6,000 cows has provided data to select the herds and cows within those herds that will benefit from treatment. This work demonstrated a potential boost of up to 1.8kg of milk per day for up to 5 months when the correct animals were targeted. The key criteria are: herds that utilise grazing and within those, cows that are less than 200 days in milk and lower yielding than their cohort.

Use Eprecis - a low dose, injectable eprinomectin product that allows accurate Targeted Selective Treatment within your herd. Eprecis is easy to inject and, with high bioavailability, is cost effective. Speak with your lead vet or visit www.beprecise.org/uk for further information.



FOND FAREWELL

As some of our farmers may be aware, our valued and much-admired vet Andrew Maxwell will be leaving us at the end of April to pursue a career in academia at The University of Glasgow Veterinary School. We are sure you will join us in wishing Andrew and his lovely family the best of luck for the future!

JOKE TIME!!!

Why did the cow cross the road?

To get to the udder side...

Worming Ewes at Lambing Time



We are well into the lambing season now and our thoughts turn to growth of the young lambs. Lambs become challenged by gastrointestinal parasites as soon as they start grazing significantly; usually from about 6 weeks of age. The number of parasites that a lamb will meet depends on the level of pasture contamination with worm eggs. This varies from farm to farm and year to year. Factors such as the winter weather conditions, previous grazing history of the lambing paddocks with last year's lambs and the worm burden of the freshly lambing ewes.

We have recently carried out a large number of Faecal Egg Count (FEC) tests on healthy twin and triplet-bearing ewes in the last few weeks of pregnancy. The results have varied enormously from zero to 1500 eggs per gram of faeces. The ewes with high FEC were not necessarily in poor body condition and did not have soft faeces or dirty tails. From this we conclude that it is difficult to predict which ewes need worming at lambing. Well-nourished ewes which are not under the strain of pregnancy or early lactation generally have good immunity to gastrointestinal parasites and do not require worming. However, in some ewes this immunity drops in the period around lambing and worms are allowed to develop inside the ewe and they start to shed eggs. This phenomenon is referred to as the Periparturient Rise. In most single-bearing ewes the Periparturient Rise does not occur and they are little affected by worms. The exception to this would be very old, very young and sick ewes.

Instead of worming all ewes at lambing time it is better practice to target treatments to those that need it most; usually twin and triplet-bearing ewes plus the old, the very young and any thin ewes. The aim of this treatment is to reduce the ewes' worm egg output in the weeks after lambing and keep pastures as free of worm eggs as possible. Another way to reduce the parasite challenge for young lambs would be to turn them out onto the cleanest pasture possible. This may be fields grazed only by cattle/horses in the autumn and winter or a new grass ley.

Choosing which product to drench ewes with can also be a challenge. Ideally, a drench will be selected based on the results of a recent Post Drench Test carried out 2 weeks after worming lambs with a high FEC. A good rule of thumb would be to avoid using a white (Benzimidazole) drench as few worms are susceptible to these products. The other product to avoid is Cydectin Long Acting (2%) injection. This product is marketed by some as a good treatment for in-lamb and lactating ewes, however it has been found to speed up the development of wormer resistance to the clear (ML) drenches. This occurs because it is concentrated in the ewe's milk and the lambs receive a very low dose of Cydectin every time they suckle. This low dose is only capable of killing the very weakest of worms and allows the more Cydectin resistant worms to survive. Clearly, this is a very undesirable situation and leaves the farmer with few choices of products to use in the future.