

It's not Fluke... it's Worms



Vets are being presented with ill-thriven lambs by farmers who are concerned that liver fluke is the problem.

So far, we have not found any evidence of fluke, but their worm burdens have been high enough to cause both ill-thrift and death.

Trace element deficiency is common in autumn and around here, and elsewhere, lambs are most often short of cobalt. However, since the start of September, low selenium levels have been found in 83% of liver samples tested in Scotland. XLVets practices around the UK have also reported unusual cobalt and selenium deficiencies in ewes and lambs, possibly linked to the dry summer. Large numbers of worm eggs being deposited on pasture in late autumn/winter could lead to higher-than-expected larval challenge in these fields in late spring/early summer.

On this basis we would recommend that:

- **Worm egg counts** of ewe lamb replacements and store/fattening lambs are checked as soon as possible and then monthly.
- **Trace element status** is assessed especially if concentrates are not being fed.
- **Blood sample lambs for liver fluke** to give the earliest indication that exposure has occurred.
- **Post-mortem examination** of any deaths in ill-thriven lambs.

• • • CALF PNEUMONIA • • •

Weaned calves are particularly at risk, especially those that go through suckled calf sales. Pneumonia is caused by a complex of different pathogens, including viruses and bacteria. So, what measures can we look at to reduce the risk of BRD in our cattle? The three areas we must look at are the animal, the environment, and the pathogens present.

Animal Factors

- Immunity of the calf against the pathogens
 - Good nutrition to support a healthy immune system
- Grouping animals of the same age and size

Environmental Factors – housing and ventilation

- Housing design allowing for drainage of moisture to give dry warm beds
- Ventilation allowing free flowing fresh air without causing a draught

The Pathogens

- Test cattle using blood samples, nasal swabs or tracheal washes to allow us to find which pathogens are already present on a particular farm
 - Bovine Viral Diarrhoea Virus (BVDv), if present on farm, can impact immunity and cause many other problems – we are still providing Government-funded screening for all herds for the presence of BVDv through Gwardu BVD
- Buying in stock – are we bringing in new pathogens that may affect the original stock?

Vaccination is a good way to increase our herds' immunity against the pathogens causing this disease complex. A tailored vaccination protocol is usually only part of what we can do to help a disease status on a farm. Environmental changes may be required to increase air flow. We can use special smoke bombs in calf sheds to see if there is enough airflow to clear the smoke. Calf jackets on baby calves will help to provide extra warmth in the cold Welsh winters and provide plenty of bedding so that calves can nest and maintain their body temperatures.

A targeted herd health team approach is important to provide your herd with the best chance of avoiding pneumonia this winter, so please call us for more advice.

LAST CHANCE FOR FREE BVD SCREENING



Current funding for free Youngstock Screening and financial support for PI Hunting through Gwaredu BVD ends on 31st December 2022.

If you have not screened your herd yet in 2022, call us today and we can arrange your next screen ASAP. If you screen

negative, you will receive a Gwaredu BVD certificate in the post. Alternatively, if you screen positive there is financial support available for PI Hunt funding, if a PI Hunt is recommended.

Let's work together to create a BVD-free Wales! It is possible to eradicate BVD, if we all work together. Scotland and Ireland are currently well on their way to BVD freedom, **let's add Wales to that list.**

Call today to book your **FREE** visit

FORTHCOMING NADIS MEETINGS

BVD

7pm - Thursday 10th November

Monmouthshire Livestock Market

Learn about the clinical signs, transmission, diagnosis and monitoring of BVD.

A hot meal will be provided, so please contact the surgery to book in.

Sheep Parasite Control

7pm - Thursday 17th November

VENUE - TBC

Learn about the current situation with Sheep Scab including the welfare and economic impact. The main focus will be on effective biosecurity, appropriate treatment options and the importance of veterinary consultation.

You must be registered with Farming Connect. To book your free place or for further details please contact the office.

*** STAFF NEWS ***

Many of you will remember Jose Iranzo, who worked with us as a TB tester. He has now decided to return to us, after a spell working back home in Spain, so we will look forward to seeing him in November.

We have also just employed Eleri Williams who will train up to be our first ATT, or lay TB tester. ATT's have proved to be very successful in England and now we are able to employ them in Wales. There is quite a long training period, so many of you will meet Eleri being supervised by other vets for a few months to come. Further details of the roles and responsibilities of our ATT will be sent out soon.

WINTER FORAGE STOCKS



Unfortunately, the drought in parts of the country this summer has left a significant number of farms short of winter forage. If forage stocks are a concern on your farm, it is difficult to know what to do for the best. The key is to forward-plan now; analyse the forages you have on farm, calculate how much Dry Matter you have, and how long you can feed your herd or flock for this winter. If this does not take you comfortably into the grass growing season in spring 2023, then act now:

- 1) Reduce stock numbers.** For dairy herds, now is the time to look through your cull lists and remove those empty cows with high cell counts or chronic lameness problems. Suckler herds should be scanning and removing empty cows prior to housing, and sheep flocks should remove empty ewes after scanning.
- 2) Use forage replacers.** If you have access to by-products, arrange regular deliveries through the winter. Taking a load of brewer's grains every fortnight through the winter will preserve forage stocks and make it easier to guarantee deliveries in February/March, when everybody is chasing supply. Dry dairy and suckler cows in good body condition can be predominantly fed straw until the last three weeks of pregnancy, provided an appropriate source of protein is provided. A kilo of straw in the milking cow ration now could buy an extra week of forage supply at the end of the winter housing period.
- 3) Look after the precious stocks you have.** When forage stocks are tight, it is even more important to ensure that waste is kept to a minimum. Always use a shear grab (or similar), work across the face as quickly as possible, keep the shoulders tidy and only roll the plastic back as much as absolutely necessary.
- 4) Maximise use of Dry Matter in the field.** Think carefully about the Dry Matter you have outside. At the time of publication, most cattle will already be housed, but if ground conditions allow, regular body condition scoring can facilitate keeping cattle out longer provided that they never drop below BCS 2.5 out of 5. Keeping sheep on tack is a great source of Dry Matter for ewes and can make a huge difference to forage stocks on a sheep farm. That said, if you have cattle and are short of conserved forages, then this would not be a good year to have sheep on tack.