



Farm First Newsletter April 2018

Liver Fluke This has been a bad year for liver fluke and the current wet weather will not be helping. This month we have seen deaths due to liver fluke in both cattle and sheep, despite treatment earlier in the winter. This has been for several reasons a) stock were re-infected as they still had access to grazing – liver fluke has a twelve week life cycle. b) stock treated at housing, but immature fluke were not killed by the product given, and c) the product given was ineffective due to resistant liver fluke. If you have any concerns about liver fluke in your stock, whether to treat them and what to treat with, please contact us at the office.

Nematodirus Unpredictable weather patterns could result in a high Nematodirosis risk in 2018. This is why it's vital this year, more than ever, to keep checking the Nematodirus forecast. Nematodirosis is caused by the parasite *Nematodirus battus* and causes intestinal damage leading to profuse, watery diarrhoea. The parasite causes disease in young lambs which have never been exposed previously and so have no acquired immunity.

The eggs on the pasture were deposited there by lambs grazing the pasture last year. These eggs survive overwinter, larvae develop in them, hatch and are eaten by the young lambs grazing in the current season making it particularly difficult to control.

L3 larvae ingested from the pasture develop into adult worms which produce eggs. This takes as little as 14-21 days. These eggs then pass out in the faeces resulting in greater pasture contamination.

These eggs will either develop into infective larvae which can infect lambs immediately or they will lie dormant until the following Spring when they can infect the new crop of lambs which have no natural immunity.

Thankfully, once lambs have been exposed they begin to develop natural immunity. However nematodirus is capable of causing a great deal of damage, and even death, before this immunity develops.

When is the risk?

Frustratingly the highest risk period will vary slightly from year to year making it difficult to predict. There are two significant factors to consider:

- 1) **Environmental conditions.** If the weather suddenly changes from cold frosty mornings to mild, warmer spring weather a mass hatching of parasites on the pasture occurs
- 2) **Lamb age/weaning.** If this mass hatching occurs around the same time that lambs are beginning to consume significant amounts of grass (6-12 weeks) then the risk will be very high

What other risks are there?

- Grazing lambs on the same pasture which they were grazed on last Spring
- Presence of other parasites e.g. coccidiosis
- Other stress, triplets, fostered lambs etc.

Clinical Signs

- Sudden onset profuse diarrhoea
- Faecal staining of tail and perineum
- Dull/depressed lambs
- Lambs which stop sucking
- Gaunt condition
- Dehydration
- Rapid loss of body condition
- Lambs congregating around water to rehydrate

Why should I be worried?

First and foremost- lamb welfare. Secondly, the cost of nematodirus is high, 5% of the lamb crop may be lost and the surviving lambs will take longer to finish.

Diagnosis

- Presentation/clinical signs
- Post Mortem
- Worm eggs counts are not always useful, as deaths occur before eggs appear in the faeces.

Treatment SCOPS recommend that, if treatment is required, a group 1 (white/1-BZ) wormer should be used. When treating lambs weigh them and dose accurately to ensure that treatment is effective and to help protect anthelmintics from resistance. Faecal worm egg counts 7-10 days after treatment are vital for determining efficacy of the treatment.

Prevention Where possible avoid grazing lambs on the same pasture on consecutive years. During the high-risk period check the NADIS or SCOPS forecast daily. Local knowledge is invaluable so keep in contact with your local vets and SQPS.

Meeting There will be a Cow Alert Open Farm Day at Usk College on 10th April from 10.30am to 2.30pm. Robert will be speaking - Heat Detection and its Importance in fertility, along with some other speakers and the foot trimmer Neil Barrett will also be giving a session. Lunch is provided, so if you are interested please ring the office on 01873 840167.

Staff News Many of you will have met Vlad Neculcea during his time TB testing with us. We are pleased to say that he will be joining us as a permanent clinician/TB tester from 10th April and we are looking forward to him joining the team.

We have been very fortunate to have had Kostas Daoutis working for us as a TB testing locum for the last couple of months. He will be with us until the first week of May when we will be having a new TB tester joining us. His name is Manel Morcillo and he has been working in this area for some time doing slaughterhouse work.

In the office we have taken on our first apprentice. Sophie Robins who has joined us on a business administration apprenticeship. Sophie is from Beaufort and has some experience with sheep and horses. You may meet her in the office or out on farm as we introduce her to some other aspects of farming.

Alpaca Jokes - we seem to be seeing more of these creatures, so thought it was about time they were recognised in the joke section.

Wanna go on a picnic? Alpaca lunch.

Q: What do you call Alpacas taking over the world?

A: The Alpacalypse.

Q: What do you call an alpaca with a carrot in each ear?

A: Anything you want as he can't hear you!

Q: What did the grape say when the alpaca stood on it?

A: Nothing, it just let out a little wine!

Q: When does an alpaca go "moo"?

A: When it is learning a new language!

Q: What do you call it when Alpacas sing?

A: Alpacapella.