

Hello and welcome to the November Newsletter. I hope the end of your harvest went well and that you are now all planted. This month, Sian is giving us a small taster of a course that she went on in October about parasites in sheep – interesting reading, possibly an eye opener for some.

Exciting news this month also – following the departure of Dom back in June, we have secured a new vet – Sarah Woollatt. Sarah comes to us from the University of Bristol Farm Animal Practice where she has been for the last 3 years, farm animal vetting and teaching final year students. Prior to that, she worked at Endell Vets in Wiltshire – again, fully farm animal. We will ask her to do an introduction in next month's Newsletter. Please join us in welcoming her.

Next month, all farmers sending products of animal origin (POAO) to the EU will need a veterinary declaration of an animal health visit. Often, you do not realise that your cow/ewe/pig sent to the abattoir has by products (hide, offal etc,) being sent to the EU – even if you are slaughtering animals for your own consumption or meat boxes. It is likely that abattoirs will not accept animals without one of these declarations as they will have to go to further expense to dispose of these parts. For any of you who are already part of a farm assurance scheme such as FAWL or Red Tractor – this counts as your veterinary declaration. For anyone in any doubt, please contact the office.

You have probably seen in the farming press in the last month that Bluetongue Virus (BTV) has been found recently in the Netherlands and France, and that Epizootic haemorrhagic disease (EHD) has been confirmed for the first time in Europe last month, in Italy. Both viruses are spread by midges and they are causing clinical signs in cattle and sheep. Please have a look at the two links below to familiarize yourself with the symptoms. Hopefully, with the colder weather now, we won't be seeing either disease but as always, rapid detection helps. There is a vaccine available for BTV – not all the strains currently of concern though.

[www.gov.uk/guidance/bluetongue](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/bluetongue)

[www.gov.uk/guidance/epizootic-haemorrhagic-disease](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/epizootic-haemorrhagic-disease)

Small request – please may we ask that any of you visiting our office are mindful of how clean you and your vehicles/trailers are – you are coming onto a working farm.

Mary

### Parasites update

Our knowledge of parasites is continually evolving; as we learn more, we experience climatic changes and the parasites themselves adapt. So to stay current we are constantly seeking the most up-to-date information in order to pass on the best advice to our clients. Hence I took a trip to Builth Wells for a day sat inside a classroom and here is a little of what I learned.

### Liver Fluke

With the changes to the seasons we are experiencing, hotter summers and milder winters, we need to think about fluke differently. Rather than automatically giving a pre-topping, or autumn, dose we need to consider what the weather has been like through the year. The hotter, drier spring/summers can mean the livestock are infected with fluke later than was previously the case, meaning this dose is too early to be of benefit. Farmers that tested for fluke last year to time the dose correctly found that animals first tested positive for fluke around Christmas, meaning treatments before this would have been a waste of money and can encourage resistance

P.T.O

### Directors:

Mary Walters

Rhian Matthew-Davies

Morgan Hanks



South Wales Farm Vets

Ty Newydd

Groes Faen

CF72 8NE

Tel; 01443 223751

development. There are no new fluke treatments being developed so it's important to keep the current drugs working for as long as possible.

## Sheep Coccidiosis

Coccidia (cocci) are single celled parasites that infect the gastro-intestinal tract of many different animals. They are found everywhere but only a small proportion of them actually cause disease. They are host specific, those that cause disease in calves won't affect lambs. The eggs, called oocysts are incredibly hardy, resistant to drying, freezing, pH changes and low oxygen levels, meaning they can remain infectious for more than a year in buildings and on pasture. Even hay made on contaminated pasture can contain large numbers of oocysts for more than 8 months.

Disease is usually seen in lambs 4-8 weeks old. Symptoms are diarrhoea (sometimes containing blood or mucous), often with straining, pain and weight loss.

The aim in preventing clinical coccidiosis is to allow the lamb to develop protective immunity by exposing them to small amounts of oocysts while avoiding an overwhelming challenge. So how do we achieve this?

### Hygiene

Indoor lambing:

- start with clean buildings
- avoid overcrowding,
- ensure good ventilation and drainage
- provide regular clean bedding (avoid faecal contamination)

Cresol-based disinfectants will kill oocysts, however the building should be clean first in order for the disinfectant to contact the oocysts. Some of you may already have these disinfectants but you will need to check the active ingredient as other disinfectants may not be effective.

Outdoor:

- keep water and feed troughs clean
- avoid poaching ground
- minimise stocking density
- group lambs on an age basis-don't move lambs so that younger follow older lambs

### Colostrum

Plays an important protective role, ensure adequate ewe nutrition to maximise colostrum quality and quantity. Higher milk yields fed to lambs is also beneficial, as they start grazing later, ingesting lower levels of oocysts before immunity has developed. Malnutrition will inhibit the lamb's immune system, increasing their susceptibility.

Traditionally many of our farmers would request a prescription for Deccox used in buckets or feed for ewes to reduce their oocyst shedding. **We now know this approach is contra-indicated.** This is because the ewes will be shedding low numbers of oocysts that are beneficial to the lambs developing immunity. These buckets will not prevent exposure to cocci as the oocysts will have overwintered on pasture, and possibly feed. Medicating the ewes does not remove this.

Oral drenches (diclazuril or toltrazuril) are commonly used for treatment. Timing of treatment is important, the aim being to prevent the adverse effects of disease, whilst still allowing the lamb to develop immunity. A dose given too early can prevent the development of immunity and allow disease to occur in older lambs. These drenches should be used carefully as an over-reliance on medication without attention to prevention has caused widespread resistance in the poultry industry and has allowed it to develop in lambs in some European countries.



Deccox can be used as a treatment in lambs however the timing of the treatment is important, the same as for the drenches.

If you are not sure if your disinfectant contains cresol, or if you would like us to recommend a disinfectant then please contact the practice. Similarly, if you would like any further information on the topics covered, contact us.

For information on the other updates Sian received please ask for her specifically.

This month's author was Sian Fuller



Images courtesy of NADIS



### Office opening hours

Monday – Friday (Except Bank Holidays)

8.30am - 5.30pm

### Emergency out of hours service

Weeknights 5.30pm - 8.30am

Saturday & Sunday all day