

Farm Newsletter

January 2018

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR CLIENTS

Hopefully you have all come through the festive season unscathed, without any animal-related problems to spoil the partying! Now it's back to more normal working hours and time to look towards jobs for the spring.

Due to the sustained cold weather during December, we feel that this year most young fluke will have been killed off so (unlike last year) we would advise that you implement what most health plans should say regarding fluke treatment—treat with non-triclabendazole-containing products now to prevent resistance to triclabendazole which is heavily relied upon to kill young fluke in the autumn. Our standard approach is **Flukiver** for sheep now (unless they have been housed since at least two days before being treated with triclabendazole) which fits in well at scanning time. As the withdrawal period is long (42 days), beware of treating empty ewes that may be culled. For cattle, we normally use **Trodax** injection now unless they have been housed since at least two weeks before Fasinex treatment in the autumn. Steve has uncovered a triclabendazole resistance problem recently on one farm so if you would like to check for the presence of fluke, or resistance to drugs, the copra-antigen test on faeces is the most accurate tool.

We now have a waiting list for the **lambing course** near Belford on Tuesday 20th February, 10am-3pm. The cost is £50 per person including VAT, lunch, course notes etc. This involves lectures in the morning with a practical on-farm session in the afternoon. Please contact Pam at Wooler ASAP if you would like to be added to the list Tel. 01668 281323.

We may sound like a broken record, but **BVD** is high on the agenda again. Please see over for details of our farmer meeting on 22nd January regarding the BVD Free England campaign, the new BVD vaccine and Maedi Visna in sheep and let your local surgery know if you can make it. In the meantime, please contact your vet to arrange blood testing five calves from each group of 9-18month old homebred cattle. In vaccinated cattle, the test must be performed before Bovidec / Bovela is given to heifers and at least three months after Rispoval 4 is given. As this topic has been done to death in the past, below is a brief summary as a refresher on how important this easily-eradicable disease is. If you haven't yet ordered your **Bovidec** for this season, please let us know as we're down to the last few hundred doses.

Unfortunately, there has been another farm affected by **sheep scab** from bought-in ewes. All neighbours have been informed and coordinated treatment is planned but please don't let your biosecurity slip—treat all new arrivals, escap-

BVD Control – How to Check its Working – Hannah Church (RVC student)

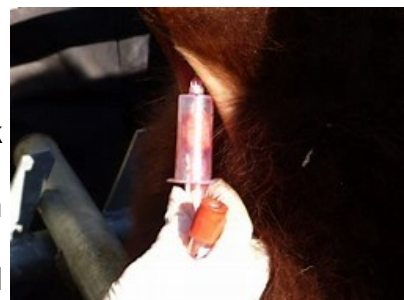
The control of BVD is focused on knowing the disease status of your herd, identification and removal of persistently infected animals, strict biosecurity and vaccination to keep the disease out of the herd.

So has implementing control worked for you? Ways to check include:

- Tissue tagging or blood sampling calves when they are born to check for PI's
- Blood sampling at least five calves 9-18 months old from each management group to check that the animals have not be exposed to BVD infection
- 'Tag and Test' monitoring – where tissue samples are collected when the calf is tagged and this is tested for BVD
- Monitoring the general health of the herd specifically fertility, calving, abortions, and calf health.

Ensuring control measures put in place are maintained such as:

- Good biosecurity – Keeping animals three meters away from other farms' stock and having new animals quarantined
- Knowing the BVD status of animals brought in and testing and quarantining them before they are added to the herd
- Vaccination programmes (animals are vaccinated before they conceive) and boosters are given each year or as required.



Low Scanning Rates in Ewes - Pam Brown

1. Toxoplasmosis - This is caused by *Toxoplasma gondii*, a protozoan organism. Sheep are infected when they ingest feed contaminated with oocysts shed in the faeces of cats. If infection takes place early in pregnancy, early embryonic loss occurs, this may only be seen as a high barren rate when it comes round to scanning time. If infected in mid pregnancy, ewes may abort, or give birth to small weak lambs close to term. Aborted foetuses are often mummified.

Prevention: If cats are present on the farm, neutering is advisable as this reduces the rate of shedding. Feed should be stored in vermin-proof bins to avoid access from cats. Aborted material and dead lambs should be disposed of as to prevent cats being able to access them. This is important as the infection is not transmitted between sheep, cats are needed to complete the life cycle. Vaccination is also available (Toxovax). This needs to be done at least three weeks prior to tupping, and usually lasts the lifetime of the ewe.

Investigation: At this time of year, our investigation involves blood sampling six to eight empty ewes for *Toxoplasma*, for which the lab fees are paid. False positives may occur when sheep have been exposed in the past and still have antibodies present. However, this is a great way to rule this out as a cause of empty ewes.

2. Trace Element Deficiencies - Rather than causing embryonic loss, trace element deficiencies such as selenium, copper, cobalt and iodine, tend to affect the ewe's ability to cycle and conceive.

Prevention/investigation: We recommend annual testing of six ewes from each separately managed group around weaning time so that any problems can be corrected well before tupping time. However, when blood samples are taken at scanning time, information on trace elements can still be useful as it reflects the mineral status of the farm and allows planning for the following year.

Obviously there are plenty of other reasons for low scanning rates such as low body condition, ram problems, immature ewe lambs etc. and these should all be considered as part of the investigation.



FARM CLIENT MEETING

Monday 22nd January

The Coquetvale Hotel, Rothbury
Buffet and drinks provided - at 7pm sharp



Come along and meet some of our newer vets and hear about:

- **Maedi Visna** disease in sheep in our locality
- The latest information on BVD in cattle
- How to join the **BVD Free England Scheme**.
- How to use the new one-shot Bovela **BVD vaccine**.

All farm clients and their staff are welcome. Please RSVP to your local branch by Friday 19th January.

Kindly sponsored by Boehringer Ingelheim, the makers of Bovela.



Don't Forget to Use...

- **Dysect** or **Ectofly** at scanning for ewes in areas with Tick Borne Fever.
- **Flukiver** to kill fluke in sheep.
- **Trodax** to kill adult fluke in outwintered cattle, or for housed cattle not treated in the autumn
- **Mydiavac** for gimmers not previously vaccinated against Enzootic Abortion.