



# Sheep News

It has been an interesting quarter with strong trade for both hogget and lamb and buoyant early breeding sales providing some smiles but fluctuating to stress due to drought and then again torrential rain, we are certainly being kept on our toes. My May was dominated with phone calls about mastitis in ewes, coccidia in lambs, and Pasturellosis in lambs likely all exacerbated by stress in grazing and extreme environmental conditions. Increasing average daily temperature will bring the fly strike season in briskly so ensure you speak to our dispensary regarding appropriate product choice, application and pricing. In this edition,

Bella outlines approaches to resistance testing from introductory steps, through to comprehensive protocols for those further down their testing journey. We also hope to run some worm egg counting courses for commercial flocks in the summer. These courses have historically been very well attended, so please do speak to our training team at Evershot to get your name on our list. Lastly, please see enclosed this years "Lamb Loss Survey"- you will notice some additional questions about farm software which will help us canvas what is most used within the practice!

## Summer 2021

- Anthelmintic Resistance Testing
- Putting Lameness on the Calendar
- #Leadon Campaign by NSA
- Pre Breeding Soundness Exams
- Vet Tech News
- Dispensary News
- #TopTweetsBleets
- Lamb Loss Survey and Benchmarking 2021

Keep smiling!

Emily Gascoigne



## Anthelmintic Resistance Testing

Anthelmintic resistance is the ability of worm populations to survive a standard dose, correctly-administered treatment with anthelmintics (wormers) and there is evidence 98% of sheep flocks have some level of resistance to one or more classes of wormer. Inevitably, this leads to production losses in sheep flocks as parasites are not effectively managed.

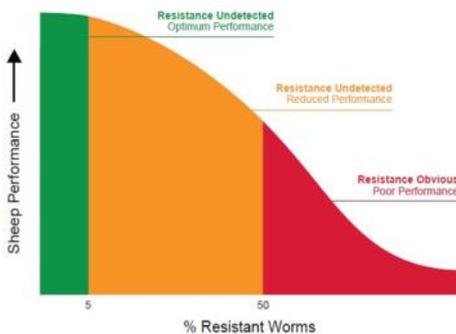


Image courtesy of SCOPS website

But how can you find out if resistant worms are affecting your lamb growth rates? If we don't test for anthelmintic resistance, then we may not notice the lack of effectiveness of our treatments until performance is seriously compromised and I miss the opportunity to make more appropriate choices for worm control.

**OPTION 1 "Post drench checks"** or post-treatment faecal egg counts are the simplest

and cheapest way to start to investigate anthelmintic resistance in your flock and arguable should be done after every worming. Faecal samples should be taken from 10 animals at a set number of days after the treatment is given (see table below), for a pooled faecal egg count (FEC). If the product used has worked effectively, then the drench test would give a negative result: no worm eggs would be seen. If the samples come back with a higher egg count, then this would make us suspicious of resistance to that class of wormer and further work needed.

**OPTION 2: Reduction testing** Post-drench checks can be improved by taking samples from 10 sheep for a pooled FEC on the day of dosing – this will confirm if there is a significant worm burden in that mob before the treatment is given, as well as allowing us to roughly estimate how much the treatment has reduced the egg count. This is an inexpensive and useful way to start investigating anthelmintic resistance.

Anthelmintic actives		Days post-treatment for checking efficacy
Colour	Symbol(s)	
Yellow	2-LV	7 days post-treatment
White, clear, orange, purple	1-BZ 3-ML 4-AD 5-SI	14 days post-treatment

Timing of post-treatment FECs for each anthelmintic group. Courtesy Moredun.org.uk

**OPTION 3:** The gold standard for diagnosis of anthelmintic resistance on farm is the **Faecal Egg Count Reduction Test (FECRT)**. In this test, we can investigate multiple anthelmintic classes at the same time. Sheep are allocated to groups for each class of wormer to be tested (as well as a control group to remain untreated) and individual pre-treatment FECs are performed. Then, at the appropriate time following treatment with the anthelmintic, individual FECs are carried out again on the same animals. The percentage reduction in egg count can be calculated. Anthelmintic resistance is suspected if the percentage reduction is <95%. Carrying out a FECRT is more expensive than using drench tests, because it requires more samples to be analysed. However, it is useful for thorough investigations on farms with suspected multiple resistance issues and more accurate.

Please ask any of us for more information about testing for anthelmintic resistance in your flock.

Bella Lewis



## Putting Lameness on the Calendar

**Seasonal Alert-** as many of us approach weaning, remember this is a really important **CRITICAL CONTROL POINT** for lameness in the sheep production year. Some top tips to make this most of this opportunity.

- Our aim is to get a clean group of sheep with minimal infectious lameness within the mob to do this we need to consider the following:
- Once you have identified your cull ewes, remove them from the main mob ASAP- they are increasing stocking and risk of transmission and are a potential source of disease.
- After dry off, create a session where you proactively try to identify any sheep with lameness OR active lesions. This may involve inspection.

Treat and isolate any animal with lesion or lameness (consult your flock plan for appropriate treatments). This is time consuming but a worthy investment for those focusing on reducing lameness.

- Sound animals with no lesions should be put through a foot bath to disinfect their feet and put on pasture which has been sheep free to 30 days as we think scald and footrot can survive this duration. Reinspect, treat and isolate any who need treatment in this time.
- Revisit any treated sheep in isolation and retreat if needed. If clinically cured with no history of lameness, consider footbathing and returning to the flock. If a repeat offender or delayed return to normality- consider culling.

- If you are considering using Footvax- implementing when lameness levels are low but in anticipation of a high risk window such as tupping will maximise benefit by minimising ongoing levels of disease. Remember to protect replacements and rams.

Pulling a pen of lame sheep to one side at a vet visit is recommended- CODD can be confused with foot rot if not seen before on farm, but our treatments of choice differ. This is a good use of a FHAP visit if you are a member or tagged onto the end of a cattle visit or your flock health planning meeting.

Remember our Vet Techs are there to help with vaccinations. Please speak to dispensary for more information.



*Emily Gascoigne*

## #Leadon Campaign by NSA

You may have noticed in the farming press and social media, that the National Sheep Association has been running the #Leadon campaign promoting awareness of the importance of dogs on leads walking through livestock and the social responsibility of those enjoying the countryside. We have participated in this campaign which has prompted lots of discussion on farm and between vets.



The consequences of sheep worrying are seen far too frequently within the practice, from individual animal wounds, stressed sheep at key times of production or mismothering as a result of ewe and lamb disturbance. We have certain flocks in the practice who are particularly "hounded" with this challenge. On my travels I do speak to shepherds who have become despondent with the issue and I wanted to share some advice in case it helps those in the face of an attack.

- ✓ It is really important that all incidences of dog attack or worry are reported. Whilst you may not have identified the dog, the owner or observed the incident, notifying your local constabulary logs the case. Nothing may come of this case log immediately, however, very importantly it builds a picture for the police of hotspots, promoting resourcing in these areas. Remember when a crime is in progress, ring 999 and for non-urgent support ring 111. If the police don't know, they cannot help.
- ✓ Grazing footpaths for many is an essential part of many grazing plans but are there things you can do to promote positive engagement with the general public i.e. promote a sense of social responsibility and invest

locals in your flock. Examples might be signs notifying the locals when the



flock is arriving, anticipated leaving date, a sign with information about who owns the flock, encouraging them to 'do your bit'. For the obstinate offender, it may have limited impact, but might encourage a fellow dog walker to remind them to get their dog on a lead.

As a practice we see severe wounds associated with dog attacks, often on the hindquarters (but not exclusively). They are at high risk of infection and flystrike. If wounds do require veterinary attention, please let us know asap. Dogs carry lots of bacteria in their mouths, which can promote infection and further damage i.e. the success rate will be higher with faster intervention. Contact the practice to speak to a vet, we can log our discussion and decide on an action plan for the individual animals.

Do get in touch if you are having a challenge. We are likely to know if there have been issues in the area. I am on the NSA South West committee and can communicate with rural crime teams to support you.

For more information about the law around sheep worrying and the #Leadon campaign please visit <https://www.nationalsheep.org.uk/>



*Emily Gascoigne*

## Pre Breeding Soundness Exams

Having a good team of tups, capable of achieving high conception rates, is vital for flock profitability. A sound ram should get 85-90% of a group of 60 ewes in lamb in the first (17 day) cycle. An annual pre-breeding soundness exam (PBSE) for every ram, 6-8 weeks before tupping, is vital to address issues and give you the time to plan for the breeding season.

A basic MOT includes a thorough check of the ram's teeth, feet and legs. The target body condition score at tupping is 3.5 to 4 (a well-covered spine). Thin rams should be supplemented well in time. However, an over-conditioned ram will have excess fat in the neck of the scrotum, which interferes with thermoregulation and results in poor semen quality. Excess scrotal wool should be removed and scrotal mange addressed. Other areas of the body should also be examined, with special attention to the brisket for sores. The tups should be up to date with all vaccines and parasite treatments.

A closer look at the reproductive organs is a vital aspect of any PBSE. Both testicles should be of equal size with the consistency of a flexed biceps,

without palpable abnormalities and they should be able to move freely within the scrotum. Research performed on 280 rams showed 22% had a scrotal circumference below the 36cm target and 7.5% had testicles that were too soft. Semen samples collected through electro-ejaculation showed rams with undersized testicles or with a palpable abnormality produced semen of questionable quality in 41 to 86% of cases, with the likelihood of sub- or infertility depending on the site of the abnormality.

Semen examination through electro-ejaculation is therefore a good way to confirm any doubts on an underperforming ram. More importantly it can also strengthen your trust that a ram is in tiptop condition to reach good conception rates. This is extremely important in high pressure situations, such as single sire groups, high ewe to ram ratios or where ewes have been synchronised. Speak to your vet if you would like to organise a PBSE session.

*Charlotte Debbaut*



## Vet Tech News

We are approaching our busiest time of year for “#TeamSheep- the VetTech Division” with clostridial vaccination in lambs, FootVax vaccination of whole flocks and abortion vaccines approaching mid-summer. We have been delivering this service for a range of flock sizes up to many thousands of breeding ewes.

If you would be interested in knowing more or considering using us for your vaccination strategy this summer, please speak to the office, or mention to dispensary at the time of ordering vaccine.



*Andrew Cooke  
Vet Tech*



## NEW Mobile Plunge Sheep Dipper Unit, now based with Synergy

We are delighted to announce a Joint Venture Partnership with Neil Fell Mobile Sheep Dipping. Our new plunge sheep dipping lorry has been built and is now based in Dorset, being operated across the southwest and Wales, by our experienced vet tech Andrew Cooke who has been trained by Neil. Many of you will have met Neil and Andrew at our farm meeting pre-COVID and through their work. Our team is seeing Scab cases rise in the region, reflecting the national trend. The control of Scab using plunge dipping is highly effective and offers prompt relief for sheep. The design of the innovative wagon delivers low stress dipping for sheep and safety to sheep and operators. In addition to Scab plunge dipping is effective against fly strike and ticks. For more information or to book, please call 01935 83682.



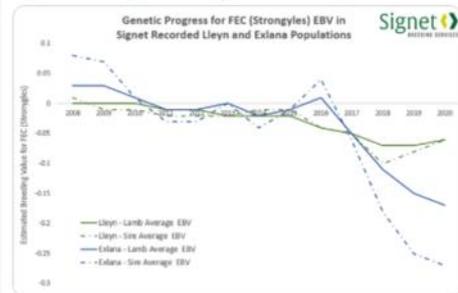
## Dispensary News....

We are currently running **Seasonal Promotions** on a range of products. Please see our Dispensary Offers insert, or contact our RAMAS in dispensary on 01935 83682 for further information.

## #TopTweetsBleets!

Samuel Boon  
@SamBoonBreeding

@AHDB\_BeefLamb are tweeting about worm control strategies. A good moment to show we are starting to make progress in our breeding programmes to enhance worm resistance. I also posted a #SCOPS inspired mini-review online [signetdata.com/technical/gene...#FEC#IgA](http://signetdata.com/technical/gene...#FEC#IgA)



AHDB Beef & Lamb @AHDB\_BeefLamb · May 10

Take a virtual seat at this year's Sheep Breeders Round Table which is taking place Monday 15 - Friday 19 November! The move from a face-to-face event to its virtual sphere this year, means that the programme will run over a week. Register for free today [bit.ly/3bftAF](http://bit.ly/3bftAF)



**Next issue in  
September!**

# The Lamb Loss Survey 2021

With continuing interest from an increasing number of flocks, we are running our lamb loss survey for the eighth consecutive year.

lamb mortality between the first and second year of data inputting and interpretation. Many other flocks also demonstrated reductions.



## Why should you become involved?

- Novel data which can slot straight into your flock health plan
- Being involved in monitoring/benchmarking against other similar flocks
- Interactive meetings pre-tupping!
- Anonymous and only directly shared with your routine vet
- Two flocks saw a 20% reduction in

## • You can't manage what you don't measure

- ◊ More lambs reared, spreads input costs- more profit per lamb!

## Why should you continue to be involved?

- As you continue to accumulate data we can look at trends- is performance improving, or does the data suggest an underlying change?
- Will help keep your flock plan up to

date. Data recording is an essential part of Farm Assurance.

- Interactive meetings later in the year

## Synergy Farm Health Benchmarking 2021

Please complete the following form for your flock and return to us by the **1st September 2021**. *Please don't give percentages as it will complicate our calculations. Results will be presented as percentages so that flocks are anonymous.*

Your name and farm name: \_\_\_\_\_

Indoor or outdoor lambing? (please circle) \_\_\_\_\_ Month of lambing: \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of ewes to the tup	
Total number of rams	
Total number of ewes scanned as singles	
Total number of ewes scanned as twins	
Total number of ewes scanned as triplets	
Total number of ewes scanned as quads	
Total number of barren ewes at scanning	
Total number of ewes who aborted*	
Number of lambs at end of lambing i.e. turnout	
Total number of lambs weaned	
Age of weaning	
Total number of ewes died between tupping and weaning	
Total number of rams died between tupping and weaning	
What farm software is used on farm?	
What type of weigh crate is used on farm i.e. manual, automatic FarmIt crate?	
What type of EID reader is used i.e. none, Psion, Agrident?	
What type of weighhead i.e. Trutest XR5000?	

\*Abortions: the loss of a pregnancy before full term i.e. in comparison with lambs dying during lambing. Please record the number of ewes who aborted.

Thank you for completing this form. The results will be collated and we will have an evening where results will be presented **anonymously**. These results will be shared with your regular veterinary surgeon.