



**nantwich
farm vets**



MAY 2016 EWESLETTER

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Hello all,

I hope you have all have plenty of lambs out grazing and I suspect a lot of you will have sent some off already! A rainy spring probably delayed your turn out.

Thank you to those of you who attended my lambing course in February. I think everyone went home with at least one new skill or piece of extra knowledge. Sarah Thompson did a good job with the food too! Please contact the practice if you know of anyone who would be interested in another one in 2017.

Amy

COCCIDIOSIS IN GROWING LAMBS

Coccidiosis should be on your list of potential problems in growing/scouring lambs. The other main one would be worms, particularly *Nematodirus battus*. Scour may or may not contain blood and mucus but there will be obvious staining of the back end of affected lambs. Lambs will lose weight and may strain and appear dull and "hunched up".

Coccidia spp. oocysts ("eggs") are picked up from the ground, often from wetter areas around troughs etc where overcrowding may be an issue. Problems may occur inside as well as out. Ewes will shed oocysts on pasture whilst not suffering from disease themselves. Oocysts from ewes and lambs have the ability to overwinter on pasture and in sheds. Once inside the gut of the animal the coccidia multiply very rapidly causing damage to the gut lining and scour. Damage will be occurring before signs of scour are seen and poor growth rates may be observed. Clinical disease is often seen in lambs between 3 and 12 weeks old.

A small number of oocysts may be tolerated by animals and enable them to mount a good immune response. Problems occur in animals which have never been exposed to the parasite and are overwhelmed by a large environmental burden of coccidia.

Diagnosis of coccidiosis requires faecal sampling. Care must be taken when interpreting results however as there are many species of coccidia which are non-pathogenic (not harmful) which may contribute to a high count. It may be worthwhile checking which species of coccidia are present on your farm for the above reason. At the moment Bayer are offering free coccidial testing. Please let me know if you would like any assistance with this.





Sheep Services at Nantwich Farm Vets:

- Monthly routine visits
- Flock health advice and plans
- Tup vasectomies
- Emergencies out of hours
- Routine screening eg. MV blood testing
- Basic post-mortems
- Skin scrapings
- Faecal egg counts
- Monitoring lamb growth rates
- Condition scoring
- Pre-breeding examination of tups



Options for treatment:

Drug name	Trade name(s)	Method of administration	Other comments
Decoquinatate	<i>Deccox</i>	Mixed into lamb creep by feed mill	Don't stop feeding suddenly during risk period
Diclaurazil	<i>Vecoxan</i>	Drench	No residual activity so timing of treatment crucial (usually 10-14d after onto contaminated area is most appropriate). 2 nd dose 21 days later may be necessary
Toltraurazil	<i>Baycox</i>	Drench	Has some residual activity so often only one dose necessary

ITCHY SHEEP

I have seen a lot of itchy sheep this spring. The two most common problems are lice (*Damalinia* spp.; *Linognathus* spp.) and scab (*Psoroptes Ovis* mites). These parasites are highly infectious and spread easily between in-contact sheep, via sheep shearing equipment, vehicles etc. Scab mites can live off the sheep in the environment for 17 days. Being biosecure will help reduce the risk of infecting your flock: double fencing, quarantine of incoming stock and treatment on arrival of incoming stock.

The first signs may be rubbing on fence posts, kicking at flanks, dirty fleeces and wool loss. Itching can sometimes cause fitting activity. On examination, heavy infestations of scab may be seen as thickened, corrugated patches of skin with nasty exuding, bleeding lesions that can then become secondarily infected and may require antibiotic treatment. Infestations are debilitating, and will affect intake and growth. Affected sheep can become emaciated and die in severe cases which is a real welfare concern. It is important to differentiate between these bugs so appropriate treatment can be administered and time and money is not wasted. There is no one product which treats both conditions simultaneously. In rare cases, both bugs may be present so don't be caught out!

Lice may be seen with the naked eye but gold standard diagnosis requires skin samples taken from the sheep and examination under the microscope (see pictures below). This can be done on farm or at the surgery.

Lice are treated with pour on preparations but scab needs to be treated with an injectable product. There are various drugs available all with different withdrawal times and length of action. Please get in contact if you need further advice on this and read the label carefully. More than one treatment is essential with certain products in order to break the lifecycle of the parasites whereas other products have residual action. If scab is diagnosed in a flock where common grazing takes place, a coordinated treatment with other farms should be undertaken. Please bear in mind that many of the treatments for scab also treat worms so be sure to use your wormers appropriately to avoid increasing risk of resistance.

Mite under microscope



Louse under microscope