



**nantwich
farm vets**



OCTOBER 2015 EWESLETTER

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For those of you who vaccinate against clostridial diseases make sure your breeding ewes have had their primary course of 2 injections before tupping before they need their booster in the pre-lambing period!



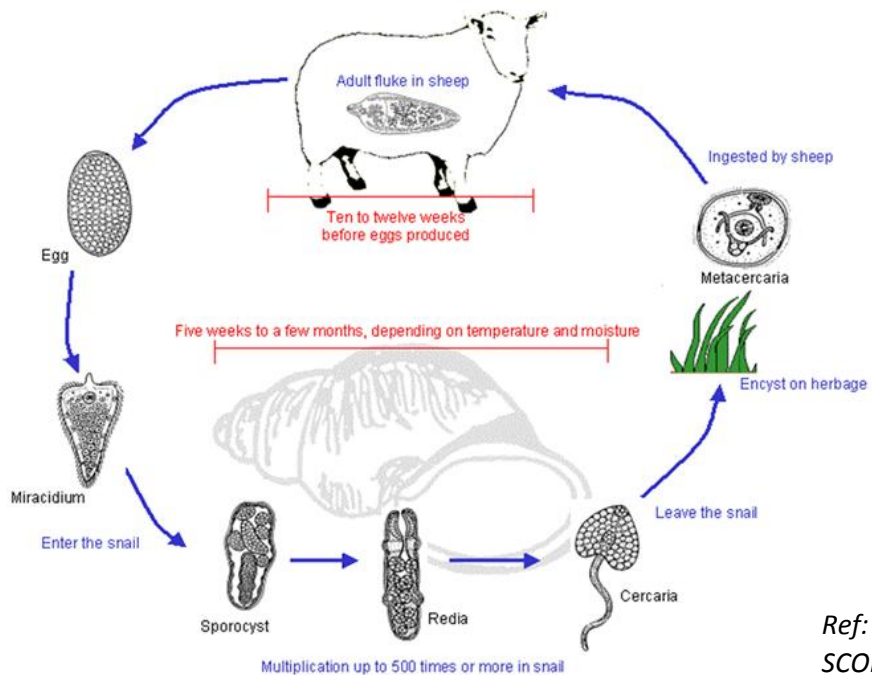
Hello all, it would seem winter is fast approaching, I know some of you have put your tups in already. As mentioned in previous newsletters ensure they are in best health to avoid poor results at scanning time.

This ewesletter is focusing on fluke as I know it is a confusing topic and knowing when to treat at optimal time can be difficult. We are expecting a bad year for fluke with problems starting any day now.

Amy

LIVER FLUKE

Fluke is caused by a trematode parasite called "*Fasciola hepatica*". Its immature form tunnels through the liver tissue and the adult form resides in the bile ducts, both causing damage. The life cycle is complex and involves the mud snail "*Galba truncatula*".



Ref:
SCOPS

The snail prefers a wet, muddy, slightly acidic environment and will multiply quicker when temperatures are >10°C. Fluke eggs will also only hatch when climate conditions are ideal: >10°C. For example in wet summers large numbers of miracidia enter the snails which multiply rapidly releasing large numbers of cercariae onto the pasture which are then ingested by grazing sheep in late summer/early autumn. This is the time when we see most acute cases of liver fluke infection caused by large numbers of immature fluke destroying the liver. Clinical signs might include:

- Sudden death
- Anaemia
- Dullness
- Difficulty breathing
- Fluid in the abdomen (ascites)
- Painful abdomen



Sheep Services at Nantwich Farm Vets:

- Monthly routine visits
- Flock health advice
- 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

If there are any specific courses you would find useful please let me know. If there is enough demand I would be happy to run some.

This is seen less commonly in the spring as a result of snails being infected with miracidia in the autumn then halting development over the winter whilst the snails hibernate. The cercariae then emerge onto the pasture in the spring when snail development recommences.

Chronic fluke infestation is seen late winter/early spring where disease is caused by adult fluke in the bile ducts of the liver. Clinical signs may include:

- Submandibular oedema (swelling under jaw)
- Progressive weight loss
- Anaemia
- Diarrhoea
- Ascites

Black disease is caused by *Clostridium novyi* and is usually seen where fluke have already caused damage in the liver. It is invariably fatal. There are vaccinations available for prevention of clostridial disease.

Diagnosis

Aside from clinical signs diagnosis of fluke may be achieved through faecal egg counting. This may be too late in the course of acute fluke however. Fluke may also be detected on post mortem, and blood tests in the live animal (increased liver enzymes/low protein).

Treatments available for fluke:

Product	Trade name(s) (not exhaustive)	Activity
Triclabendazole	<i>Fasinex, Endofluke, Tribex, Triclafas</i>	All ages of fluke
Albendazole	<i>Albenil, Allverm</i>	Fluke 10w old+
Nitroxylin	<i>Trodax</i>	Fluke 10w old+
Closantel	<i>Flukiver,</i>	Fluke 7w old+
Oxyclozenide	<i>Zanil</i>	Fluke 7w old+

NB. There is no persistent action of any fluke product

NB. ONLY triclabendazole will kill immature fluke responsible for acute infestation

NB. Higher dose required than for worms

It is important to choose the drug most appropriate for the clinical situation, the history of the farm, the topography and fluke forecasts. Please seek veterinary advice if you need further guidance on this. Triclabendazole resistance has been reported in the UK so it should only be used where necessary with other products being involved in the control program where possible. Try and avoid combination drugs because you may be treating for worms or fluke unnecessarily at an inappropriate time which will only encourage resistance.

Environmental control

Identification and containment of snail habitats may be useful as part of a control programme where fluke is a problem. Measures may include drainage, keeping stock off wettest pastures, fencing off wet parts of fields. Be aware snails may travel considerable distance from here however.

If stock are suffering from fluke ideally move them off the affected pasture at the same time as treating them.

Quarantine

Fluke treatments should be used as part of quarantine measures; remember assume all incoming sheep are affected with fluke which may include resistant strains. Sheep can pass fluke eggs for 3 weeks after the adult fluke are killed therefore keep the sheep off "flukey" pasture for 4 weeks after treatment.

Please contact us if you would like any more information on fluke control in your flock.