

South Wales Farm Vets

Ty Newydd

Groes Faen

CF72 8NE

Tel; 01443 223751



Our Team



Mary Walters



Rhian Matthews



Morgan Richards



Tom Searle



Russell Fuller

Living And Working In Your Community

July 2020

Hello and welcome to the July newsletter. Bit of a mixed bag weather wise over the last month – think we've had enough rain for the moment though. I think most people have managed to do their silage – probably disappointing yields but maybe the quality will make up for it in part.

We're continuing to work in two separate groups in the office in order to avoid a complete shut down with track and trace. We are doing our best to protect our clients – we tend to feel that we are more risk to you than you are to us, as we are all travelling around from place to place. The masks are quite hard going in the heat. All we can ask is that you keep your distance – although I know it's really easy to forget!

Tom has put together a short film outlining what to do when looking to purchase a new ram. It is on our Facebook page, and on the website. There are some basic steps to help you pick a good one. Ram sales are going to be a bit different this year and you may be buying off farm so this guide may be quite a help.

Hope you don't miss the Royal Welsh Show too much – we will all have to make the most of all these events when things are back to normal – hopefully sooner rather than later.

Mary

Sudden death in growing lambs

After what might be described as quite an arduous lambing season, it is wonderful to see ewes and lambs out at pasture under bluer skies. At this time of year focus is shifted elsewhere, however it is important to keep tabs on lamb productivity as the introduction of diseases into your flock can severely affect growth rates and ultimately lead to lamb losses.

Nematodirus & Coccidiosis

As both these diseases affect young lambs the risk period for them is now largely over. They are both caused by parasites and are indistinguishable without conducting tests.

Nematodirus battus is a gut worm that survives on pasture through the winter and hatches under specific weather conditions meaning it's risk period can be predicted using the NADIS parasite forecasting website. Prevention of the disease includes using different 'nursery pastures' year on year. Treatment is drenching lambs with white (1-BZ) wormers when forecasts suggest a risk.

Coccidiosis is caused by protozoal parasites and so require a different treatment to worms. Sheep develop a strong age related resistance to the disease caused by coccidia but the oocysts (eggs) are very resistant and can survive in the environment for years.

Clostridial diseases

The group of bacteria called clostridia are found naturally, occurring in sheep gastrointestinal tracts and in the soil, where they can survive for long periods of time. Deaths will often be related to a stressful event such as a change in the diet or severe weather. Clostridial diseases tend to affect the larger, best lambs and are invariably fatal.

There are different types of disease caused by different clostridial bacteria ranging from tetanus to black disease to black leg. Each disease tends to affect a specific age group under specific conditions. For example, lamb dysentery tends to be seen in lambs less than 2 weeks of age and causes bloody diarrhoea, rapidly followed by death - one of the reasons booster vaccination of ewes pre-lambing and colostrum management is so important.

Pulpy kidney is seen in older lambs, often those fattening well and near fit. The bacteria can exist in small numbers in healthy lambs, however movement to new or better pasture can lead to bacterial growth and release of toxins. This results in destruction of the kidneys, though the animal is simply found dead.





Sian Fuller



Rachel Davies



Laura Grey



Sian Lloyd



Helen Dando



Tracey Huntley

There are 8 different combined vaccines which cover multiple, different strains of clostridial disease. Vaccination requires two injections 4-6 weeks apart as a primary course then yearly boosters. Breeding ewes should receive a booster 4-6 weeks before lambing to ensure passive immunity of lambs through colostrum.

Pasteurellosis

Pasteurellosis is the most common cause of death in lambs between the months of August and December. There are 3 types of bacteria which can cause the disease which are normal inhabitants of the upper respiratory tract of healthy animals. There are many risk factors: stress such as weaning, poor weather conditions, nutrition or housing in poorly ventilated airspaces, can trigger these bacteria to multiply and invade the lungs. The disease can present as septicaemia (sudden death), pneumonia, or occasionally mastitis in unweaned ewes.

Control is based on vaccination, which can be combined with the clostridial vaccine. In flocks who have a known disease risk an extra vaccination, on top of the primary course, can be performed 2-3 weeks prior to the expected seasonal outbreak.

Liver Fluke

In late summer older lambs grazing wet pasture can be at risk of ingesting large numbers of fluke which they migrate through the liver tissue cause widespread destruction and haemorrhage. This can cause anaemia, abdominal pain and sudden death. Fluke forecasting via the NADIS website, knowledge of individual pasture risk and abattoir reports can be used to indicate fluke levels and treatment and prevention plans.

The causes of sudden death in sheep are many and varied and far outweigh the space of this newsletter. It is important to keep an open mind and treat for the correct condition so if lamb losses are adding up contact the surgery or consider a post-mortem examination to determine the cause and therefore treat appropriately.

A brief review - Consider Slow Flow Teats in Calf Feeding Systems.

Studies in recent years have shown benefits of a slower teat feeding system compared to that of teats that allow free flow of milk. A teat mimics the natural suckling method in comparison to bucket feeding. However, it has also been shown, that the speed of milk flow has an affect on the calf. Speed of teat influences post feeding cross suckling in groups of calves i.e those fed on a slower teat were less likely to suckle on other calves udders. Cross suckling can affect the development of the juvenile udder if the teat ends are damaged or the keratin plug removed prematurely.

The slow teat also helps to curdle the milk in the abomasum (the functioning stomach in young calves) more so than the free flow fast teat. The longer it takes for the calf to suckle the more saliva produced. This helps with digestive development in replacement heifers but also any other calf. It is also thought to help with the function of the abomasal groove, allowing the milk to bypass the other three stomachs that are not needed in the young calf. This resulted in better daily live weight gain in the slow fed groups.

More studies are needed but the theory is that if a slower teat helps in milk digestion it could help with preparation of the digestive tract to process future feeds.

Table 2: Clostridial diseases causing sudden death in sheep

Disease	Cause	Summary
Pulpy kidney	<i>Clostridium perfringens</i> type D	Fast-growing lambs after waning of maternal immunity Outbreaks can occur after a change to a better diet Sporadic cases in adult sheep particularly tupes
Lamb dysentery	<i>Clostridium perfringens</i> type B	Lambs up to three weeks of age Unvaccinated dams High milk intakes can predispose Outbreaks can occur in unhygienic conditions Older lambs may show signs of abdominal pain and/or haemorrhagic diarrhoea before death
Black disease	<i>Clostridium novyi</i>	Migration of liver fluke predisposes to infection Pale area(s) of necrosis in liver surrounded by a darker ring
Abomasitis/ metritis	<i>Clostridium sordellii</i>	High milk intakes can predispose to infection in four- to 10-week-old lambs. Older lambs/adult sheep can be affected but show less severe changes postmortem Abomasal wall can be emphysematous and oedematous (Fig 6) Also reported to cause periparturient lamb death and fatal metritis sometimes following vaginal prolapse
Blackleg	<i>Clostridium chauvoei</i>	May follow an injury or assisted lambing (perineum swollen and oedematous). Affected areas of muscles appear dry and are dark in colour
Braxy	<i>Clostridium septicum</i>	Causes abomasitis possibly after ingestion of frosted forage
Struck	<i>Clostridium perfringens</i> type C	Uncommon clostridial enterotoxaemia causing a haemorrhagic enteritis mainly of adult sheep

VACCINES

- Blackleg
- Ovivac P + - PK, tetanus, braxy, blackleg and pasteurellosis
- Lambivac – PK, LD, struck, tetanus
- Heptavac P + and Covexin 8 cover major disease in sheep, EXCEPT *C.sordellii*. Also Covexin 8 contains *C. haemolytica* against bacillary haemoglobinuria which Hep P does not, Hep P includes Pasteurella vaccination.
- Bravoxin 10 and Covexin 10 are essentially the same and contain Covexin 8 plus *C. sordellii* and *C. perfringens* A

