

Hello and welcome to the May Newsletter – hard to believe when it has been so chilly in the last week or so, especially overnight. Lambing is coming to an end – I hope you have all had success this year. Calving is now taking over.

When you pick up drugs from us, there have been two distinct steps taken – *prescribing* the drug and *dispensing* the drug. Many of the drugs that we dispense are prescription only medicines (POMs) – which means that they have been prescribed by a veterinary surgeon based on need. We only ever dispense medicines when we know the general management on a farm, and the ability of the farmer to use drugs responsibly. In order for us to dispense POMs, we need to have been to your farm within the last 12 months, and need to know what is going on with the management of your stock up to date, and be able to assess which drug is most appropriate and advise on dose, frequency etc. This is why our lovely ladies on reception always have to check with a vet before dispensing drugs – so pre ordering drugs will reduce your time hanging around at the office waiting for prescription.

Last month, Tom did a refresher course on parasitology in Carmarthen VI centre – see a summary of interesting points later. This month, Russ is going on a trace element refresher course, particularly for beef & sheep farms. We will ask him to do a short summary for us next month.

Good luck to anybody competing and showing at the Spring Fair in Builth at the end of the month, I hope you have a very enjoyable time.

Mary

### To Post-Mortem or not Post-Mortem, that is the question

We often get phone calls to the practice to say an animal has died and is it worth a post-mortem examination (PME)?

If the animal is insured and you will be making a claim, then yes you will need a vet certificate for the insurance claim. Easy answer.

For an un-insured, commercial animal the answer is often not so simple and will involve the value of the animal and the size of the problem to the individual farmer – it has to be economically viable. On average we would expect to reach a diagnosis at PME in 96% of cases but this may involve further testing.

Is the carcass fresh and intact? There is little to be gained from a PME on a rotten or partially eaten carcass. The fresher the carcass the better, really within 24 hours of death and there's certainly no point if it's already bloated. To check for something like milk fever, grass staggers or twin lamb disease, we use the fluid from the eye, meaning if birds have pecked these we are severely limited in our testing. Sometimes the best animal to examine is not the one that is already dead but rather euthanase the one that is seriously ill to perform the PME on as fresh a carcass as possible. However an animal that has been sick for a long time and treated with various different drugs is often not the best one to take samples from to identify the original cause of the problem as there are usually secondary invaders and the medication is likely to affect the results.

We will ask you lots of questions before even picking up a knife - because a full history is an important part of the process. This means if you send someone else to the practice with the carcass it is worth having a full conversation with the vet in advance.

Cont. PTO

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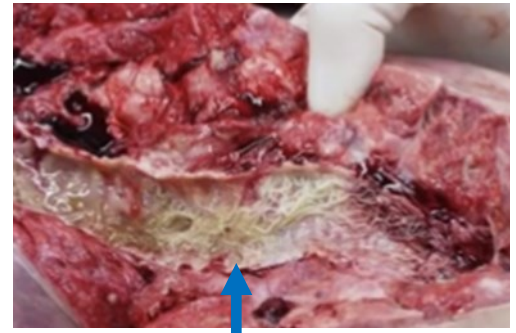
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Common problems and how we find them:

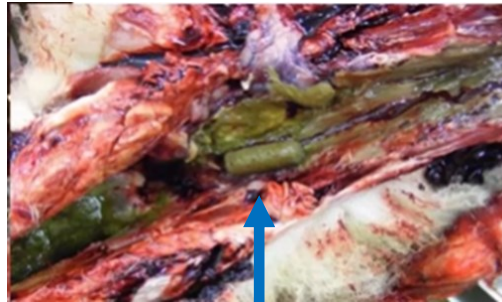
- Larynx and trachea – we can examine for signs of laryngeal chondritis (Texel throat), Pasteurella or bolusing injuries as well as respiratory problems in cattle e.g. IBR
- Lungs – Pneumonia and lungworm are fairly obvious but we can also detect conditions like OPA in sheep
- Heart – We look here for signs of Pulpy kidney in sheep as well as actual heart issues like tyre wire or endocarditis
- Liver – Black disease (Clostridia), copper toxicity, fatty liver and it's always worth checking for fluke (acute or chronic)
- Kidneys – often where you find stones if too much mineral in the diet
- Stomachs/gut – Some conditions can be detected grossly such as abomasitis or ulceration but often further testing will be required for conditions such as coccidiosis.



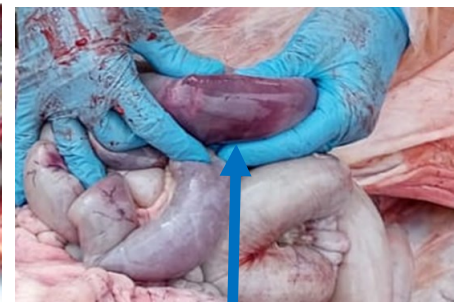
Lungworm in trachea



Discoloured liver & kidney with copper toxicity



Bolusing injury

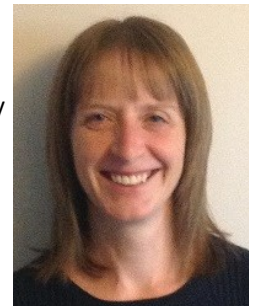


Intestinal blockage

Sometimes the absence of gross signs is significant information in itself e.g. if there are no signs of fluke it is likely that the others are clear too.

As always if you would like to discuss a case or PME, contact us at the surgery we are happy to help.

This month's author was Sian Fuller



## Tom's Parasitology CPD

A full day in Carmarthen VI Centre recapping internal and external parasites predominantly in sheep but also in cattle. Plenty was discussed but the following were key areas:

- Reiterated the importance of worm egg counts to aid timing of treatments in lambs and ewes. With follow up counts to confirm the product has worked.
- Discussion over collecting of samples (equal amounts from individuals) and how it can skew results at interpretation. We do our utmost to process samples and homogenise them in the practice to reduce these errors.
- All 15 vets in attendance had seen confirmed ivermectin resistance in sheep gut worms
- Neil Paton was present and discussed a new initiative being rolled out in May; Gwaredu Scab. A fantastic opportunity to make head way in to scab control in Wales. Watch this space!
- Utilisation of worm egg counts can be harder in cattle, partly due to the volume of faeces they produce. They can be useful when carried out properly (submitting individual samples is better) to aid timing of treatments and to look at current control methods.
- When dealing with external parasites (lice and mites) in cattle do not always reach for ivermectin, synthetic pyrethroids are available. We can always confirm lice/mite type under a microscope to guide which product is best for the issue the cattle have.

Much acknowledgement was made to the SCOPS and COWs websites with plenty of the course content pulled from these resources:

[www.scops.org.uk](http://www.scops.org.uk) and [www.cattleparasites.org.uk](http://www.cattleparasites.org.uk)

## Office opening hours

Monday – Friday (Except Bank Holidays)

8.30am - 5.30pm

## Emergency out of hours service

Weeknights 5.30pm - 8.30am

Saturday & Sunday all day