



Sheep News

Lambing is well under way now and I have been involved in three cases of lambing problems where the farmers have wanted to use antibiotics on all their lambs to prevent Watery Mouth. This creates a bit of a dilemma as this would be viewed as prophylactic use of antibiotics which is currently being outlawed by the EU. If you feel you are getting Watery Mouth then please speak to our vets. Good quality colostrum and plenty of it, along with good hygiene is often sufficient to stop Watery Mouth.

Hopefully the weather will now continue to be dry and the lambs can get outside. Once it warms up and the grass grows the lambs will start to thrive. In the meantime watch out for Magnesium deficiency - occurs 2-4 weeks after lambing in sheep and is often associated with frosty mornings.

Andy Adler



Apr 2016

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The Case of the Missing Sponge

Earlier this month a call came in from a client concerned about a missing vaginal sponge in one of their maiden ewes that they were synchronising. It's not unusual for the odd sponge to fall out on its own and usually a quick visit and 'physical exam' is all that is needed to double check that the ewe is sponge free.

However after a quick history it was clear the story didn't quite fit that of a dropped sponge. The client reported that the string was in place and had pulled like normal, but when tugged slightly harder all that came was a spongeless string! A small animal speculum was used to try and visualise the sponge and remove.

There are a handful or cases of stuck or lost sponges each year. These sponges potentially lead to ewes out of synch, may interfere with AI/ET protocols and would need a statutory withdrawal period if relevant i.e. 28 days.

To help avoid an out of synch ewe and a long withdrawal period it is worth keeping the following top tips in mind:

1. Always follow the datasheet
2. Record any ewe that was more difficult than usual at sponging time
3. Record any ewe with no sponge at removal time and

seek veterinary advice if concerned

4. Any sponge that doesn't come easily seek veterinary advice as it's easier to retrieve sponges with strings
5. And practice makes perfect so if new to sponging or want a refresher then why not come along to one of our sponging courses
6. If sponging maiden ewes , talk to a vet first about how to avoid retained sponges



Josh Swain



Seasons Tweetings

Emily has joined the "Twitterati" over the last month so a new feature of the newsletters will be Seasons Tweetings of top tweets. To follow Emily search for @Em_the_SheepVet or follow the main practice on @SynergyFarmVets



Emily Gascoigne @Em_the_SheepVet · Mar 9
 Today on this #, a twin lamb disease workup. A timely reminder that condition score is crucial #colostrumfoodoflife #dlwg #everylambcounts



Alasdair Moffett @asmoffett · Mar 5
 Pic of tonight's little lamb and one from set of twins lambed Thursday night @synergyfarmvets #everylambcounts



CCN in Lambs

CCN (cerebrocortical necrosis) is a severe brain disease of sheep that normally affects weaned lambs aged 4-8 months but can affect all sheep.

It is caused by Vitamin B1 (Thiamine) deficiency. Vitamin B1 is produced by bacteria in the sheep's rumen. If anything occurs to upset the balance of rumen microbes (e.g. sudden intakes of energy-rich feed or even less severe changes of diet), the amount of B1 produced can fall, leading to CCN.

Clinical signs that we see with affected sheep are:-

- Initially behavioural changes- separating off from the group
- Blindness rapidly develops
- Sheep become ataxic (wobbly) and eventually

- cannot stand up
- "Star-gazing" with the head pointed straight up occurs
- In the later stages sheep lie on their sides, seizure and die

If caught early, the condition can often be successfully treated by repeated vitamin B1 injections. The prognosis is better if the first dose is given in the vein.



If animals respond well to treatment then this strongly suggests a diagnosis of CCN. The disease is definitively diagnosed on post-mortem examination. Areas of dead brain tissue are sometimes seen and

the removed brain can fluoresce when UV light is shone on it (see the pictures below).



A post-mortem diagnosis is important to rule out other causes of neurological disease (e.g. the later stages of some clostridial diseases and nematodirus worm infections, Listeria, middle ear infections and some toxicities). During outbreaks of CCN, where significant numbers of animals are affected, a change to a forage-only diet helps to reduce the number of sheep that become ill as fibre in the rumen stimulates Vitamin B1 production.

Emily Gascoigne

Training

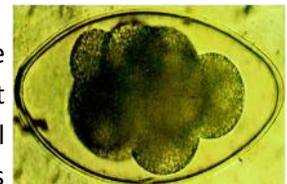
We have a busy few months with training offering lambing and worm egg counting courses.

The worm egg counting courses were a success and sold out on both days. We want to run another course so if you would be interested, please let Abbie in the laboratory at the practice know on 01935 83682.

When we have numbers we can confirm a date.

The course will look at (a) sustainable worm management strategies, (b) equipment care, (c) the techniques involved and (d) ongoing support. It is a full day course, with a practical afternoon.

The course is aimed at commercial producers who will have a high throughput of samples. If you are unsure and would like further information, please contact Emily at the practice on 01935 83682.



DORSET County Show are pleased to be introducing a new Dorset Flock Competition this year. The competition is for breeding sheep, including both commercial and pedigree flocks.

The Judge, Mr A. Elford, and a Society Steward will visit your farm at a date to be arranged in June or July. There are three classes: 1-50 ewes, 51-300 ewes and 301+ ewes. The prizes for each class are £125 for the winner and £75 for the runner up, along with two complimentary guest tickets and

badges for the Dorset County Show and great gifts from the sponsors. The competition is kindly sponsored by Fram Farmers and McVeigh Parker.

For more details or to enter contact Rebecca Cox on 01305 264249 or competitions@dorsetcountyshow.co.uk

Top Tips for Coccidia Management

Coccidiosis is a common and potentially crippling disease affecting young growing lambs that presents as scouring, dullness and weight loss. While it is possible for coccidia to occur at pasture it is generally a disease encountered with intensive husbandry such as in the lambing shed. The severity of the disease is directly proportional to the amount of coccidia that is allowed to build up in the environment making management of the environment still by far the most important factor. Lambs between 1 and 2 months old tend to be those affected and will start shedding eggs into the

environment a few weeks after being initially infected. This shedding of eggs into the environment causes levels to build up over time and puts even more pressure on lambs born towards the end of the lambing period.

Tightening up your lambing period should have a noticeable effect on this problem, complete cleanouts to reduce coccidia buildup will also benefit massively – beware though that not all cleaning products will be effective against coccidia. Bioocyst is just one product specifically designed to kill coccidia. Other medicines that can be used to

combat coccidiosis come in the form of drenches for treatment (e.g. Vecoxan) as well as in feed medication (e.g. Deccox) which can be used as prevention when there is a known high risk. While diagnosis tends to be based on the typical signs it is useful to be certain of its involvement before investing in its prevention. The easiest way of diagnosing is to send in faecal samples from those scouring for our lab to examine or alternatively a dead lamb for post mortem.

Any queries please contact us.



Ben Barber

Events

Lameness Meetings: Beyond “Trim or not to Trim”

Flocks are invited to two post-lambing meetings looking at infectious lameness management

For discussion:

1. A revision of key changes in lameness advice
2. How pasture tactics can help reduce lameness
3. Latest developments in CODD research for treatment
4. The Five Point plan and Footvax From our sponsors (Mark Dallyn from MSD Animal Health)

**Pub Quiz
Format**



10th May 7:30pm

Royal Oak, Bere Regis

Or

23rd May 7:30pm

Eagle Tavern, Chard

Organic Sheep Discussion Group Inaugural Meeting



Wednesday 25th May 2-4pm
BH20 5JH complete with
organic cheeseburger and a
cuppa!

*Please bring disinfectable
footwear.*

Flocks are invited to our first discussion group meeting targeted at Organic Sheep flocks **but conventional producers are welcome**. The first meeting will be supported by the Soil Association Certification.

The first meeting topic will be based on looking at alternative strategies for worm control and include a tour of the host farm plus hands on session. Find out how you could reduce your dependency on wormers whilst maximising growth rates, ewe lambs fertility and beyond!

The meeting will be held courtesy of Andrew and Claire Head (Rempstone Farm, Corfe Castle).

Want to come? Please RSVP to the office on 01935 83682

The Lamb Loss Survey

With continuing interest from an increasing number of flocks, we are running our lamb loss survey again, with this year's entry form on the back of this newsletter.

Why should you be involved if not previously?

- 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 lamb mortality between the first and second year of data inputting and interpretation. Many other flocks also demonstrated reductions.
- **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 data. Data recording is an essential part of Farm Assurance.
- Interactive meetings pre-tupping!



Synergy Farm Health Benchmarking 2016

Please complete the following form for your flock and return to us by August 1st 2016. *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. tailing, 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	

Definitions

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.

Next issue in July