I write this on a bank holiday weekend when the sun has shone for 3 days and the grass just keeps growing. A really great start to the autumn so we should be seeing sheep in really good condition for tupping – if not then please read on.

The focus this month is on using wormers and antibiotics effectively and the variety of training available at Synergy. All of this is essential to getting your ewes in the correct condition for tupping and lamb finishing.

Great to see many of you at the shows this year and we are now adding Agrifest South West which is the local specific Beef and Sheep event to our calendar. Come and see us on November 8th in Exeter and meet the team, and see what we have achieved this year and hoping to achieve in 2018.

Andy Adler

Haemonchosis

The recent burst of wet and warm weather prompts Haemonchus (barber pole worm) warnings amongst sheep farmers and vets. Haemonchus is a worm normally found in tropical or sub-tropical climates and mass hatchings often occur during summer rainfalls – with the English summers getting warmer, it is quickly becoming a parasite of concern as it can be life threatening to sheep, goats and alpacas.

Haemonchus is a blood sucking worm, and affected animals often present with lethargy, anaemia, swollen faces (oedema), diarrhoea, weight loss and sudden death. Haemonchus can be diagnosed by performing a simple faecal egg count, we have had a record result in the practice this past month with over 100,000 eggs per gram in a single faecal sample! Positive results will indicate the need for immediate worming with an appropriate product (please discuss this with your vet prior to treatment). A blood sample can also be useful to identify whether a blood transfusion is required in animals suffering from profound anaemia.

We have had a large number of flocks diagnosed with Haemonchus in the past couple of months, so please be vigilant and if you have any concerns speak to your vet about how to take appropriate faecal samples to submit to the lab for testing!

Abi Charlesworth

AHDB’s FarmBench

At the time of writing, ewe replacement prices are buoyant generating short-term optimism, but long-term scepticism regarding the future of lamb production in the UK. Future proofing your flock will be essential to ride the Brexit waves and understanding the cost of product will be important in order to make decisions about the direction to take your flock.

Last month I went on an AHDB course for FarmBench a tool for generating cost of production for sheep holdings and other enterprises from feed costs, replacement costs, vet and medicine costs and gives you the opportunity to benchmark again national averages. This is going to be an important resource for flocks going forward and one we are pleased to offer.

If you would more information data, please speak to Emily.

Ahdb's FarmBench

Top tips for data entry:

- When coming to help you, it would be helpful to have key performance information available i.e. stock numbers, lamb sales, cull numbers and cost of purchasing stock!
- Don’t worry if equipment or people are shared between enterprises on your farm, this can be budgeted for!
- One of our team can help you input data and keep costs low, for a later analysis session with your routine vet!
Antibiotics in the Sheep Flock

In May we ran our first Organic Sheep meeting of 2017 joint with our Large Flock Group looking at antibiotic usage in the flock kindly hosted by Alastair Cooper of the Sydling Estate, and flock manager Alex Thorneycroft-Taylor, and supported by the Soil Association. We were joined by a certification officer from the Soil Association. The aim of the meeting was to look at current antibiotic practices on commercial sheep flocks, to perform a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats!) and to look at what Synergy are now offering in terms of antibiotic benchmarking.

**STRENGTHS**
- Critically important antibiotics in humans not routinely used in sheep flocks
- Extensive systems- very few periods of intense housing
- Low levels of antibiotics largely
- Currently controlled levels of antibiotic usage with Synergy and working together
- Very effective (and cost effective) vaccines
- Detailed health monitoring and flock plans already on farms

**WEAKNESSES**
- Lots of movements within the sheep industry-biosecurity can be a challenge
- Indoor lambing can present challenges for infectious disease
- We do see resistances already in joint ill and watery mouth cases
- Spare time can be short. Could catching a lamb one quicker help reduce overall antibiotic usage?
- Nutrition are we performing forage analysis, are our ewes as fit as they should be? Important for colostrum quality

**OPPORTUNITIES**
- Electronic technology to help recording repeat offenders for calling for lameness, to improve calling for mastitis?
- Genetics?
- Benchmarking?
- Training and research!
- New vaccines in the future - C0DDS vaccines, ERoD vaccines, joint ill vaccines?
- Homeopathy?
- Brexit?

**THREATS**
- BREXIT! BREXIT! BREXIT!
- Developing resistance in the future?
- What is high usage masking- poor nutrition in the lambing shed? Ongoing lameness issues? Could flock planning help?
- NoSlow development of new antibiotics
- New and emerging diseases

Thank you to all flocks for their honest participation! Key things we at Synergy are doing include:
- Flock specific medicine protocols in flock plans
- Benchmarking antibiotics at flock planning
- Safe Use of Veterinary Medicines courses specific for sheep **COMMERCIAL FLOCKS**

Please speak to us about your current usage, what it could be and remember- **improving flock health will reduce antibiotic usage.**

Large Flock Package

Over the last five years we have been working with all our flocks to develop proactive, preventative health plans irrespective of flock size. We have developed a flock plan appropriate for farm assurance, organic status and supermarket contracts in addition to its more important role- a working document on farm.

More recently we have been developing a package for our higher using large flocks who given their size may be looking for more involved performance based flock planning i.e. weight analysis, nutritional support etc. The aim of the package is planning and visits at strategic points in the year to ensure optimum flock health.

We have several flocks piloting the package and visits typically are half day and cover:
1. Whole ram mob physical MOT’s and electro-ejaculation for individuals as appropriate
2. Lameness control strategies and independent mobility scoring
3. Antibiotic benchmarking and review strategies
4. Comprehensive and ongoing parasite control support
5. Weight data analysis
6. Nutritional analysis
7. Fertility planning analysis.

A further perk of uptake is a “fallen stock day” at Secanim for members (autumn time). This is an opportunity for flocks to (a) present thin ewes for screening (b) observe post-mortem of other ewes is appropriate and (c) basic PM skills for screening on farm disease status i.e. liver fluke.

Furthermore, as previously mentioned these flocks will have access to FarmBench as part of their package and the opportunity to generate their cost of production.

This package is aimed at flocks of 1000 ewes and upwards and designed to be split over four strategic half day visits.

There will also be the added benefit of savings on certain medicines including Vaccines, wormers and fly control products.

If this is something you are interested in, please speak to Emily, Charlotte or Andrew for more details.
Quarantine Drenching

Questionnaire and focus group were dosing equipment a survey, to assess the prevalence of faulty selection for anthelmintic resistance. Equipment, all inevitably leading to miscalculation and faulty dosing drenching technique, dose estimation of bodyweight, poor dosing due to either incorrect anthelmintics, including inaccurate during administration of number of issues can be present representative of England also. A of resistance; a picture likely to be demonstrating staggeringly high levels with results from research in Wales particularly prevalent in recent years anthelmintic resistance has become process takes place. The rise of detection must all come before this made. Management, avoidance and on the need to treat animals has been last newsletter, knowing your anthelmintic status is critical to effective worm control.

Mid-season drench

By now, most of our lambs in the practice will be weaned and hopefully continuing to grow like mushrooms. Lots of things can reduce lamb growth rates, but parasites and anthelmintic resistance must be considered as one the biggest challenges facing the sheep industry in our time. As talked about in our last newsletter, knowing your anthelmintic status is critical to effective worm control.

One strategy that can be implemented as part of your flock’s sustainable parasite plan is the use of a new generation wormer (Zolvix or Startect) as a mid-season drench of weaned lambs that need worming. There is currently no known resistance to these products so they will wipe out 99% of worms present, including resistant worms, preventing a build-up of resistant worms on the pasture before the end of the season.

Remember! We want to avoid unnecessary use of wormers, so only drench lambs that need treatment (based on faecal egg counts, growth rates or mucky back-ends). Also, it is important to leave a percentage of worms untreated, so leave 10% of your chunkiest lambs un-wormed, or alternatively treat all lambs, leave on same pasture and move onto cleaner grazing 48 hours later. Talk to your vet for more advice on this and sustainable parasite control in your flock.

Charlotte Moulard

Research work within the Practice — Drench Guns

Administration of anthelmintics is one of the final stages when the decision on the need to treat animals has been made. Management, avoidance and detection must all come before this process takes place. The rise of anthelmintic resistance has become particularly prevalent in recent years with results from research in Wales demonstrating staggering high levels of resistance; a picture likely to be representative of England also. A number of issues can be present during administration of anthelmintics, including inaccurate dosing due to either incorrect estimation of bodyweight, poor drenching technique, dose miscalculation and faulty dosing equipment, all inevitably leading to selection for anthelmintic resistance. To assess the prevalence of faulty dosing equipment a survey, questionnaire and focus group were carried out looking at the dispensing error of in use sheep drench of 50 clients within the practice.

The project was carried out as part of a Masters degree in Veterinary Pharmacy being completed by Alice who manages the Dispensary in Evershot. Emily has acted as a supervisor on the project providing guidance along the way.

A few key points from the work include:

- Of the 97 guns tested 6.19% of guns were not suitable for drench administration
- 3.92% of participants chose to administer drenches with a syringe
- When looking at both the error and the variation in doses dispensed from each individual gun results were significantly different from zero

In order to reduce the dispensing error guns should:

- Not be used at their maximum dosing chamber
- Not be used at their maximum dosing chamber

Thanks go to all those who participated in this piece of work, the support from the clients made the data collection aspect of this project a manageable and enjoyable experience.

Alice Geddes

Quarantine Drenching

The importance of quarantine drenching all stock moving back onto home pastures should not be underestimated. At recent regional sheep meetings movement of resistance was demonstrated by the movement of coloured balloons, passed between individuals alongside moving stock. The only way to prevent the spread is to ensure an effective quarantine treatment is administered.

Standard quarantine treatment is recommended as:

- Yard all sheep on arrival for 24-48 hours
- Treat with Zolvix &/or Startect drench to remove resistant worms
- Also treat with Cydectin 1% injection to prevent the spread of scab
- Turn stock out onto contaminated/dirty pasture

Additional precautions can also be taken to reduce the spread of liver fluke. Treatment should take place with Fasinex 5% on arrival, followed by Flukiver 5% 10 weeks later.

For small groups of stock quarantine treatments should not be over looked – individual doses can be purchased through Dispensary to prevent wasted medicines on farm.

Alice Geddes

To order doses please phone to speak to Dispensary

Charlotte Moulard

Alice Geddes
Meetings and Training

We are committed to our training services for sheep farmers at Synergy and the next quarter is action packed. If interested in any of the below please contact our office to book onto a course

**Reminders…**

In addition to our antibiotics benchmarking, we also have a new training log. Been to a lamb loss meeting, or a safe use of medicines course? Log it in your flock plan for annual signing! A necessity in other sectors!

With tupping fast approaching, remember to get your **abortion vaccine** orders in. It is important to review your vaccine protocol at your annual health plan, or have a chat with one of the sheep team before you place your order!

**Next Issue in Dec**

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**Large Flock Discussion Group Road Trip**

**Tuesday 19th September**

By kind invitation of Mr M Blythe, Didling Farms, West Sussex

Matt manages the flock of 1300 Lleyns on the South Downs. The flock is using EID on farm for management, flock health planning, weighing for performance monitoring, ewe lamb monitoring and selection and also uses a FECPAK. The day will be looking at EID use on farm, grassland management and using EID to assist parasite management. We will also be updating you about new systems for monitoring antibiotic usage on our sheep flocks including benchmarking and hopefully stopping at the Acorn in Evershot for dinner!

We are expecting high demand and places are limited-those wishing to attend you MUST RSVP to confirm your place please call our reception on 0193583682 by 1st September to secure a place on the minibus.

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**Organic Sheep Discussion Group**

"Sustainable Parasite Control"

**Wednesday 20th September 2pm—4pm**

Kindly hosted by Mr J Hancock, Trill Farm, Axminster

Jake Hancock runs a flock of 220 ewes and a suckler herd spanning Dorset and Devon. The flock has been actively involved in flock health planning and using worm egg counting and weight data to support their health based decisions.

Please RSVP as soon as possible to the office on 01935 83682 to reserve your space and a spot of cake!

**Advance warning for upcoming courses in 2018**

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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tr>
<td>Practical lambing for commercial flocks</td>
<td>6th February 2018 and 27th February 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lamb Post Mortems for commercial flocks</td>
<td>13th February 2018 and 13th March 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe use of Veterinary Medicines for commercial flocks</td>
<td>20th March 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parasite Management and Worm egg count course for commercial flocks</td>
<td>12th June 2018 and 17th July 2018</td>
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**Challenge Sheep**

To book this event please email ke.events@ahdb.org.uk or call 01904 771212

10th October—Salisbury c/o Rob and Anna Hawke

11th October—Rampisham, Dorset c/o Rampisham Estate

To understand what is happening to replacements on commercial farms, AHDB is launching its new ‘Challenge Sheep’ project. Challenge Sheep aims to understand how the rearing phase of replacement ewes impacts lifetime productivity. The project starts October 2017 and will track over 4000 replacements entering thirteen flocks this tupping season, with a similar number being tracked on the same farms from tupping 2018. More information can be found online at beefandlamb.ahdb.org.uk/challenge-sheep

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**NSA Sheep South West**

Thank you to all who came to see us at NSA South West- Emily, Alice and Kath held the sweltering hot fort and had a great show.

We had some of our published work on show - Emily’s lamb post-mortem work and cost of production posters. Brand new for this show was Alice’s drench gun work and our new demo was on display. It was a great chance to meet up with clients and network for us with hopefully lots of exciting projects in the pipeline.

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