

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 (01935 83682). Please note that some of our upcoming courses are being held at our new centre at Mole Avon, Axminster.

Safe use of Veterinary Medicines for commercial sheep flocks

17th September
10.30—2.30 at Mole Avon, Axminster (£66 + VAT)

"How do we realise full potential from our investments in medicines?" and "How to use them effectively and safely".

It is now a Red Tractor Recommendation that one person from each farm has attended a course on the handling and administration of veterinary medicines.

Our course satisfies this recommendation and is aimed at commercial shepherds and members of the team administering or handling medicines. Lunch included.

Certificate for Flock Plan at end of course

Lameness in Your Flock

8th October **NEW!**
10am –2pm at Mole Avon, Axminster (£66 + VAT)

** For commercial flocks **
Brand new course reviewing the latest advice for infectious and non-infectious causes of lameness. There will be a particular focus on sustainable antibiotic use and how to tailor the AHDB Five Point Plan on Lameness to suit your flock. In the afternoon we will be visiting a nearby sheep farm to practise mobility scoring.

Welfare of Sheep and Humane Slaughter Course for Commercial Flocks

Please let us know if you have an interest in attending a Welfare of Sheep and Humane Slaughter Course for commercial flocks. We ran a course last year with the Humane Slaughter Association, which included captive bolt use and maintenance, including a wet-lab practical session. If there is suitable demand we will arrange another course for this year.



Dispensary Updates

Please seek Veterinary/SQP advice from Synergy Farm Health. Other products available to suit your needs.

ABORTION VACCINES

We are currently taking orders within dispensary for this year's abortion vaccines.



Cevac Chlamydia
To reduce abortion caused by Chlamydia abortus in susceptible breeding ewes



Toxovax
To reduce the effects of infection by Toxoplasma gondii, namely early embryonic death, barrenness and abortion.

These vaccines can often take time to come into stock, please contact the dispensary to inform them of the date you will be needing to use them on farm, and to prevent delay in getting your order. Telephone: 01935 83682.

For more information, please speak with your routine veterinary surgeon.

QUARANTINE TREATMENTS

Upon arrival on the farm, the risks posed by anthelmintic resistant roundworms, sheep scab and liver fluke must be fully recognised. All purchased sheep, especially rams must be subsequently treated.

After treatment, the animals must be left on hard standing pens for 48 hours to prevent pasture contamination with potential resistant roundworm eggs.

The following products can be administered together, as treatment for new sheep- please speak to your vet directly or contact Synergy on 01935 83682 to discuss with one of our SQP's.



Solantel 1L - £30.43



Zolvix 2.5% 1L - £154



Cydectin 2% Injection 50ml - £18.21

All of these prices are EX VAT (Offer expires 30th December 2019). Individual doses can be provided when necessary.

Next issue in December



Sheep News

It has been a busy couple of months for us all. Eight week weights were generally up across the board and with the exception of *Haemonchus* outbreaks, worm egg counts have been pleasingly low. You will see from Charlotte's piece that fluke surveillance is now underway on her screening farm- could you consider a similar programme on your farm before the need to use Triclabendazole). Our "Future Proofing" meetings looked at

the importance of knowing your Cost of Production especially in turbulent times as we currently face and the impact of disease on efficiency. Please feel free to speak to Charlotte or I about FarmBench. We hope you will participate in our lamb loss survey this year which will cover some broader issues very relevant to speak to dispensary about quarantine dosing for purchases or getting abortion vaccines in place in time for tupping.

- Sheep Rounds from the Future of Production Meetings for Beef & Sheep
- NSA South West Sheep Show
- RAM Fertility, the 5 T's
- XL Vets Liver Fluke Sentinel Project
- Vaccines Update
- Teasers Reminder
- Dispensary News
- Meetings & Training
- Top Tweets

Happy tupping!

Emily Gascoigne



Sheep Rounds from the Future of Production Meetings for Beef & Sheep



With the uncertainty surrounding Brexit and #teamsheep and #teambeef held a series of meetings dedicated to 'future proofing' our flocks so that they can adapt to the changes that may be just around the corner. Its certain to say that no one quite knows what the future will bring but an important take home message from all 4 speakers was that small gains across the board on a farm are just as important as one large gain in only one area.

David Pett from AHDB and Dan Knight from Evolution ABS Accountants spoke at both the meetings about the ease of performing regular farm benchmarking using the online tool 'Farm Bench' from AHDB and the importance of information in the decision making process. Whilst optimum lambs per input cost is important, so is controlling cost of production of the lambs as shown during AHDB's scenarios. Thank you to all four of our speakers: AHDB, Evolution ABS, and Synergy's very own Ben and Emily.

For those that were not able to attend the key points from both Ben and Emily's talks were as follows:

- ✓ Marginal gains across the board may achieve as much if not more than progress in a single area (think of the GB Cycling team in 2012!).
- ✓ Ben highlighted that the biggest threat to calf rearing (and highly applicable to lambs) is pneumonia and subsequent losses based around the disease. Reducing pneumonia is all about hygiene, feeding appropriately, ventilation, vaccination. The lost potential earnings is significant in the veal industry, and even more if they are going to become replacements. Similar impact has been demonstrated in the Spanish housed lamb industry.
- ✓ Emily considered the possible losses in performance leaching from sheep businesses and their impact on a business achieving its "potential" with examples of the impact of resistance, lameness and abortion to name a few. When looking at flocks with triple resistance, Synergy has 50,000 breeding ewes on the books, and potential loss of earnings due to worms could exceed £500,000, reminding us of the potential savings to be made from a sustainable parasite control plan

Sheep Specialist Emily Gascoigne shortlisted for Farmer's Weekly Award, set to be youngest to win Livestock Advisor of the Year Category

Synergy are proud to announce that our very own Sheep Specialist and Consultant Emily Gascoigne has been shortlisted for Livestock Advisor of the Year at the 2019 Farmer's Weekly Awards on 3rd October. If she progresses to winning, Emily will be the youngest entrant to have gained this award. We know you will join us in congratulating Emily on reaching the finals and wishing her the best of luck at the Awards Ceremony on 3rd October!

We will be running a course at Evershot on 12th September on how to get to grips with this program. Your records will only be seen by you and will no doubt be a very useful session to understand where you could be making small gain in your flock. For more information please speak to your vet or one of the sheep team.

Beth Reilly



NSA South West Sheep Show

Despite the wet weather, Team Sheep had a great day out at the NSA southwest sheep event in June, taking “Hu”, Synergy’s new show trailer out for a spin on her first maiden voyage! The hosts this year were Bryan and Liz Griffiths, in Umlerleigh, Devon. The weather seemed to bring in the punters, and we were able to offer hot drinks and cake and some shelter from the rain. It was a fantastic event, and was great to see so many familiar faces as well as meeting new ones.



Upcoming Lamb Loss Meetings

Our winter Lamb loss meetings series returns for the sixth year with three evenings organised in December.

The theme for this year will be castrating and tailing. As an industry we need to reflect on whether current routine practices are still appropriate in 2019, or whether there are ways we can refine, reduce or replace them. Looking at the pig industry for example, tail and teeth clipping are no longer routine practices and individual farms must apply for a derogation and provide evidence for why they should perform them. We’re really hoping we can have an active group discussion on the topic. We will also review this year’s lamb loss data, for which we will need your lamb loss surveys returned ASAP.



Please see ‘April Sheep News’ or contact the practice for a new copy. As always we welcome new faces to the meetings and find that those who submit their data for anonymous benchmarking tend to get more out of the evening. Please RSVP on 01936 83682; we look forward to seeing you there!

RAM Fertility—the 5 T’s

An underperforming ram can lead to a poor lambing percentage and disappointing results. One study found that 12.9% of rams examined were unsuitable for breeding on pre-mating clinical examination. Our recommended advice is that every ram should have a pre-tupping physical examination every year and then that rams with an abnormal physical examination or in a high pressure situation (such as single sired) should be considered to be presented from electro-ejaculation. Ram clinical exams are a good way to identify and get on top of any issues before the tupping season. It is important that these are carried out at least 6-8 weeks prior to breeding to allow time for treatment and improvement. Consult your sheep vet for further information.

breeding season. Lameness can also reduce semen quality

Teeth: *Any jaw malalignment (overbite or underbite), missing teeth or molar abscesses?*

Any issues that prevent him eating could lead to unwanted loss in condition before or during the season.

Tone: *How is his body condition score?*

Rams will lose condition over the breeding period so it’s good to start them with slightly more coverage. Aim for 3.5-4.0 at the start of the breeding season. Rams that are too fat or too thin could have decreased fertility and compromised libido

Toes: *Is he sound when he walks? Any problems with arthritis or his feet?*

A lame ram may struggle to mount and mate with the ewes during the

Testicles: *Are they smooth, firm and large enough?*

If a ram’s testicles are too small, he may struggle to make enough sperm to inseminate all the females in a

larger group. If his testicles are enlarged, inflamed, uneven or too soft, it may be a sign of infection or underdevelopment and his ability to make viable sperm may be decreased.

Treat: *Has he been adequately vaccinated, sheared and treated for parasites?*

Treat is often the forgotten T! Ensuring your ram’s wellbeing is very important, anything that makes him feel unwell will decrease his desire ability to breed with the females. Particularly don’t forget Clostridial and Pasteurella vaccination boosters for the boys and ensuring lameness vaccinations are up to date.

Speak to your sheep vet today to book in ram examinations. Flock Health Advisory Package (FHAP) members may wish to consider using one of their included visits for this purpose.

Imogen Rogers



Sheep Scab—An Update

A seasonal reminder for all flocks that unfortunately we have already had two sheep scab outbreaks in the practice. This is uncharacteristically early and we hope isn’t too much of an indicator of the season ahead. Please remember that scab risk in your flock cannot be assessed by visual inspection (scab is often dormant). Whilst we can scrape itchy sheep flocks can assess scab risk by running blood tests on home bred lambs to assess exposure to scab. This test costs £86.40 for 12 lambs. See below for our price for individual ram quarantine doses. Annually, we have a flock breakdown attributable to an individual ram introduction so remember new rams as well as incoming ewes.

Vaccines Update

Chlamydial abortion still accounts for the most common cause of infectious abortion in sheep in the UK with main rain factors for spread including the introduction of carrier sheep as replacements. At last year’s lamb loss meetings we discussed how our survey results suggest the practice average is <1% of tugged ewes (which is half of the intervention target) but despite this annually we do have Chlamydial outbreaks. You may also be aware that this area of disease management is under the looking glass with it nationally accounting for a significant usage of antibiotics in these affected flocks as flocks have historically tried to manage abortion in this way. Whilst this is a practice we rarely use at Synergy, until recently there have been no alternative strategies for use in the face of an outbreak. We know that the impact of chlamydial abortions are broad: abortions, weak

lambs, ill thrift and metritis in ewes. HIPRA have launched a vaccine in the UK called IMEVA which is an inactivated Chlamydial vaccination which can be used in pre-tupping sheep but also in pregnant sheep which may be used to help reduce spread in the case of abortion outbreaks or where sheep are purchased too late pre-mating. This means there is an alternative strategy available for those who find themselves on the receiving end of an abortion outbreak. Speak to your sheep vet to discuss biosecurity with reference to purchasing of replacements and implementing a control strategy on your farm. HIPRA have also got a mastitis vaccine licensed for use in sheep and goats. VIMCO cover Staph aureus mastitis (the most common cause of contagious mastitis in ewes and nannies). Whilst the vaccine with

Seasonal Reminder—Teasers

For anyone thinking about putting teasers in this year, a seasonal reminder that it is gold-standard to have teasers examined every year to check they remain sterile. Regaining fertility is rare but not impossible. Speak to your sheep vet today.

cover clinical mastitis, its main role is in limiting the impact of sub-clinical mastitis i.e. subtle changes in the udder which are not obvious on clinical examination but would be detectable on milk culture or cell count. The vaccine is given pre-lambing annually and where there is a risk of sub-clinical mastitis, reduces the impact on disease improving milk yield and subsequently lamb growth rates. For anyone with concerns about clinical mastitis or disappointing milk yields, speak to one of our vets to discuss mastitis investigations. Remember, Maedi Visna can also exacerbate mastitis, subclinical mastitis and poor lamb growth rates so you may wish to consider running a cull ewe screen.

Emily Gascoigne



XL Vets Liver Fluke Sentinel Project



This year, XL vets are undertaking a liver fluke surveillance project across the member practices. The main aims of this study are to raise awareness of serological testing to monitor/forecast fluke infection on a flock level and to get the farmers and vets talking more about fluke. At Synergy we have one flock enrolled with the project and we are two months into the study. It involves blood sampling 6 new season lambs at the start of each month, every month until November, or until we see positive results. So far, the flock has tested negative. The blood test works by identifying antibodies to liver fluke and can pick up infection from two weeks after exposure, so is the most sensitive tool we have

available to us. Another extremely useful tool for monitoring liver fluke is abattoir feedback of lambs. If sending lambs through the summer and autumn months we can monitor when or if “active liver fluke” are identified at the abattoir and can make informed, timely treatment decisions at this point. To give you a rough estimate of costs, the blood test costs around £50 for six lambs, plus the sampling fees. This needs to be measured against the potential production losses fluke will cause in your flock. Chat to your vet for more information.

Charlotte Moulard



Quarantine reminder

When buying in replacement ewes or rams this autumn, remain extremely vigilant for scab. Remember, infected animals can appear clinically normal for months, whilst mites hide in crevices of skin or ear canals. If in any doubt about consider quarantine treatment or blood sampling to establish scab status of incoming stock. There have been confirmed cases of resistance to the injectable scab treatments, so plunge dipping is the gold standard. Please contact the practice for the contact number of a Bimeda approved contract dipper.