

The Lamb Loss Survey 2020

With continuing interest from an increasing number of flocks, we are running our lamb loss survey for the seventh consecutive year.

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 date. Data recording is an essential part of Farm Assurance.

- Interactive meetings later in the year



Sheep News

Many clients that I have recently spoken with comment that lockdown for farmers has not changed much about day-to-day life. And in a lot of ways that is true. You continue to work long hours, outdoors and self-isolated! But being separated from friends and family, without rugby or skittles or whatever your little escape is can make difficult times even more challenging. Keep an eye on your family, friends, coworkers and importantly yourself for warning signs of mental health issues – it seems very unlikely the Covid-19 situation is going to go away overnight. Yellowwellies.org has some useful information about spotting



As courses and meetings are not able to go ahead currently, we would like to try something hi-tech and invite you to a virtual sheep meeting on Wednesday 1st July at 7.30pm. The topic will be "BIGGER IS BETTER – PUSHING UP YOUR WEANING

mental health issues, coping strategies and where to seek external support.

We're very pleased to introduce two new members to our Synergy Sheep Team in this edition – Charlotte Debbaut, who is working on the North of the practice and joined the practice in April and Louise Silk, who joined the practice in February and is working on the East. They both come with lots of sheep experience and I'm sure you'll join us in welcoming them into the Synergy flock

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Summer 2020

- Toxoplasmosis: costs, risks and prevention
- Benzimidazole resistance in Nematodirus battus
- Are your medicine records ship shape?
- Dispensary News
- New Team Sheep Members Charlotte and Louise
- Meetings and Training
- #TopTweetsBleets

WEIGHTS". The meeting will be held online and what we ask from you at this stage is to register your interest in the meeting with the reception team. Also, the lamb loss survey is back for its seventh year; please find the form on the back page of this newsletter to fill in and get back to us, we're always very pleased to hear from first time participants.

Charlotte Moulard



Synergy Farm Health Benchmarking 2020

Please complete the following form for your flock and return to us by the **1st September 2019**. 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	
% of lambs tail docked 2019	
% of male lambs castrated 2019	
% of lambs tail docked 2020	
% of male lambs castrated 2020	
Total number of ewes died between tupping and weaning	
Total number of rams died between tupping and weaning	

*Abortions: the loss of a pregnancy before full term i.e. in comparison with lambs dying during lambing. Please

Toxoplasmosis: costs, risks and prevention

Lambing is always an eventful time of year, and this spring we have seen several large outbreaks of toxoplasmosis, caused by the parasite Toxoplasma gondii. Depending on the stage of pregnancy, this parasite will cause ewes to either absorb early embryo's (resulting in disappointing scanning results), abort, or give birth to dead, mummified or weak lambs with ongoing losses.

The total cost of toxoplasmosis is estimated to amount to a staggering £12 million per year to the UK sheep flock but at a flock level:

- A flock of 400 ewes and scanning 180% (720 scanned lambs)
- If 10% of lambs are lost through abortion (72 lambs-higher losses likely)
- If neonatal lambs cost £25.62 variable costs alone to produce to the point of birth
- The cost of the outbreak is likely to be in excess of **£1844**

Lost costs and reduced sales are the obvious cost, but there is more. Treating and time spent nursing weak lambs, treating sick ewes and ewe losses, fallen stock costs, keeping barren ewes and buying in replacements contribute to a growing bill.

Ewes get infected with toxoplasmosis from the environment, water or feed contaminated with faeces from an infected cat. The presence of cats on farm is a major risk factor, young cats are most likely to spread it, as they need time to build up immunity after first getting infected through eating rodents and birds. Consider neutering resident cats to avoid kittens on the farm. Other risk factors are: feedstores that are not cat or vermin proof, feeding the top bales of hay (where cats like to sit) to pregnant ewes, and grazing sheep close to the home farm or residential areas where cats are likely to roam.

Prevention is challenging, but have no fear, a cost-effective vaccine is available to offer help. But we need to reach a diagnosis first, **so if your abortion or barren rate is over 2% it is time to screen your flock.** Flock Check 2020 is running now: MSD is subsidising the lab fees for 6-8 barren or aborted ewe blood tests, to check if toxoplasmosis or enzootic abortion are present. When a diagnosis is made, we can proceed to setting up a vaccination plan for your flock. For those on a health package this is a good use of a visit. Speak to the Sheep team to make an appointment.

Charlotte Debbaut



Benzimidazole resistance in *Nematodirus battus*

For many years now, *Nematodirus battus* (*N.battus*) has appeared to be somewhat different to the other worm species when it comes to the sheep farmer's nemesis – anthelmintic resistance. Benzimidazoles (white drenches), long since redundant on many farms for the main season worms such as *Teladorsagia* and *Trichostrongyle* species, have been the anthelmintic of choice for the treatment of *N.battus*. In recent years however, there have been isolated reports of the emergence of anthelmintic resistance to benzimidazoles in *Nematodirus battus*. Further research work has been carried out to identify how widespread this anthelmintic resistance might be in the UK and how this might affect our selection of wormers going forwards. Work published this year has found that the mutations needed for resistance and increasing in the population. but that this was at an early stage. In other worm species anthelmintic resistance has been detected at such a late stage in its emergence that managing it has been extremely challenging i.e. the horse has bolted. This new data shows, when looking

at hundreds of farms across the UK that the genetic mutations responsible for benzimidazole resistance in *Nematodirus battus* were present in 12-27% of *N.battus* populations. Overall, however the mutant genetic material was present in 2% of individual worms. This is a **very low level** compared to the level of mutant genetic material, responsible for anthelmintic resistance, present in other worm species populations. The take home message from all this is that whilst, yes, resistance to benzimidazoles has been detected in *Nematodirus battus* populations in the UK, the levels are still very low and we have identified this problem early on, thus considerably improving our opportunities to manage this appropriately. At Synergy Farm Health we strongly recommend that, as a minimum, a post-drench faecal egg count check is carried out **10 days following administration** with a benzimidazole wormer. This is used to confirm that the treatment has been fully effective and will help us to detect if



benzimidazole resistance is starting to become a problem in the *Nematodirus battus* population on your farm at an early stage. Remember the importance of drench gun calibration and dosing for the heaviest animal in the group. It is important to remember that whilst we would absolutely continue to recommend the use of Benzimidazoles (white drenches) for the treatment of *Nematodirus battus*, it is extremely important that if you suspect a treatment has not been effective, you report it immediately to your vet for further investigation. In the majority of cases anthelmintic treatment failures are linked to incorrect dosing or other administrative issues such as poor storage conditions or incorrect administration technique but, since these are all factors that contribute to the development of anthelmintic resistance within a worm population, it is important that we address any problems promptly. Speak to one of the sheep team if you have any queries.

Louise Silk



Are your medicine records ship shape?

In what seems to be the season of farm assurance visits, we wanted to remind you of what is required by Red Tractor with reference to your medicine book. The following applies to flocks of all sizes and irrespective of flock function. The principle of a medicines book is such that if there was a product recall on a medicine, that the supply chain would be able to trace where every dose of that medicine had ended up. That means as a veterinary practice we are required to record batch numbers, volumes dispensed and dates dispensed and as a farmer you are required to record where volumes are dispensed so that if animals treated needed to be traced, this would be possible.

In your medicine purchase records you need to record and retain for five years:

- ✓ Identify of medicine
- ✓ Name and address of supplier
- ✓ Quantity of medicine
- ✓ Batch number (s)
- ✓ Date of purchase
- ✓ Expiry date (s)

In your medicine administration records you will need to record and retain for five years:

- ✓ Identity of medicine used
- batch to the purchase records
- ✓ Quantity administered
- ✓ Identity of the animal or group treated
- ✓ Batch number administered to that animal which can be linked
- ✓ Number treated
- ✓ Date of administration

- ✓ Date treatment finished
- becomes fit for human consumption
- ✓ Length of withdrawal period
- ✓ Name of the person administering
- ✓ Date when the animal
- ✓ Reason for treatment

Reason for treatment, number treated and volumes given is also really helpful for antibiotic auditing i.e. why are we using antibiotics relative to a given cause. Your medicine book is also a valuable tool for auditing lameness records and identifying those who may need culling for repeated cases of lameness.

Lastly you are required to maintain a medicine disposal record for those medicines out of date or exceeded broached deadlines. **This should include**

- ✓ Identity of the medicine
- ✓ Quantity
- ✓ Date of disposal
- ✓ Route of disposal

Remember we do have **yellow bins available for sale** and cost of purchase includes cost of incineration:

Sharps Containers:
 1L- £4.34 + VAT 6/7L- £11.64 + VAT
Pharmaceutical Waste Bins:
 22L- £31.27 + VAT 60L- £49.38 + VAT



Emily Gascoigne



Dispensary News....

Please be aware that due to formulation changes of Alamycin LA, the withdrawal period for sheep will be increasing from 9 days to **24 days**. Please see below a comparison chart for our two injectable oxytetracycline products for sheep, new formulation Alamycin LA* and Engemycin 10%.

Product	Alamycin LA*	Engemycin 10% (DD)
Dose rate	1ml/10 kg	For the prolonged action dose is 2ml per 10kg which can be repeated once at 48 – 60 hours if required. If needed to be used as a short acting dose use at 1ml per 10kg and repeated up to 4 times at 24 hour intervals. e.g for a 80 kg sheep, 24 hour dose = 8ml; prolonged action dose = 16ml
Administration Route	Deep intramuscular injection – maximum 5 ml at one injection site	Intravenous or intramuscular injection
Sheep Withdrawal Period	24 days meat 7 days milk	14 days meat Not for use in sheep producing milk for human consumption.

SEASONAL PROMOTIONS



ECTOFLY
 2.5L £33.70
 5L £58.90



CLIK EXTRA
 2.2L £105.00
 5L £190.00



HEPTAVAC P PLUS
 25 doses £21.85
 50 doses £40.45
 125 doses £87.60
 250 doses £165.00



OVIVAC P PLUS
 50 doses £30.80
 250 doses £126.50



BRAVOXIN 10
 50ML £17
 100ML £28

For large volume orders and a full list of promotional items please speak to our SQPs on **01935 83682**.

All prices EX VAT.
Offer ends 30/06/20.

New Synergy Sheep Team Members Charlotte Debbaut and Louise Silk



Welcome to **Charlotte Debbaut**, our newest addition to team sheep. After qualifying as a vet in Belgium in 2012, she moved to the Welsh mountains of Snowdonia where she spent 2 years amongst lots and lots of sheep, looking mainly after extensively kept flocks. After that she spent 5 years in Gloucestershire working as a farm vet before joining Synergy Vets in April. Charlotte enjoys working with flocks of all sizes, with a main interest in infectious diseases and care around lambing. She is convinced there is no better way to start the working day than by lambing a ewe.



Louise Silk qualified from Cambridge in 2007 and worked in farm animal practice in the Salisbury area for a number of years, where she developed an interest in sheep production and flock health. Following some time out to start a family, she has since taken up a position with Synergy Farm Health to help further expand the East region of the practice. In recent years she has been involved in farmer education, sheep discussion groups and the NSA. She is studying for a post graduate certificate in sheep health and production. Louise enjoys all aspects of farm animal work but is particularly keen on working proactively with flocks and herds to optimise their health and productivity.

Meetings and Training

Due to Covid-19 our training and courses are currently cancelled. We hope to provide these services again soon when it is safe to do so.

Virtual Sheep Meeting

Wednesday 1st July 2020 7.30pm

In lieu of our summer sheep campaign, we are running an online sheep meeting for our commercial flock—“**BIGGER IS BETTER – PUSHING UP YOUR WEANING WEIGHTS**”

The focus will be on ewe and lamb factors that influence pre-weaning growth rates, what to do with small lambs and how to reduce the growth check at weaning. We hope you are able to join us virtually for this session. Please log your interest with the reception team on **01935 83682** and Charlotte Moulard will be in touch with details on how to access the meeting online.

#TopTweetsBleets!

AHDB Beef & Lamb @AHDB_BeefLamb · 15 May
 Alongside faecal egg counts, assessing pasture risk, weather & farm history, another indicator of parasite burden is #lamb growth. Aim for 250 g/day from birth to 8 weeks of age. Find out more about growing and finishing lambs here #teamsheep #lambing2020 ow.ly/SqR50z534T



Next issue in September!