

February Newsletter

Fluke in Sheep & Cattle

We are still seeing problems with Fluke in both cattle and sheep.

Fluke in sheep could start to cause secondary problems including twin lamb. Flocks traditionally free of fluke and with very dry land are also experiencing the disease. Remember to treat ewes before lambing.

Treatments Factsheets are on the website or available from the Office. Feel free to contact the Office to discuss any problems.

Lepto & BVD Vaccination

Many of you will be thinking of administering booster doses for Leptospirosis and BVD vaccines at this time of year. Replacement heifers should complete both primary courses (two injections 4 weeks apart) before they go to the bull to ensure protection for the unborn calf. Heifers can be vaccinated for BVD from 8 months of age.

Remember that Leptospirosis is a zoonotic disease which means that it can also affect people.

Please contact the Office if you would like to discuss your vaccination protocol.

2009 Barren EweCheck

Barren EweCheck is Intervet/Schering-Plough's complimentary diagnostic service which aids the diagnosis of whether *Toxoplasma gondii* is a cause of empty or aborting ewes.

An early diagnosis allows us to put in place control programmes to reduce further losses.

Please contact the Office to discuss any problems you may be experiencing, especially unexpected scanning results. We also have copies of "The Flockmaster's Guide to Abortion & Vaccination".

Orf Vaccination can boost lamb returns

For flocks struggling with an Orf problem, strategic vaccination of newborn lambs this spring can easily make the difference between profit and loss. Vaccination provides the best route to effective disease control and is increasingly becoming a marketing aid for flocks troubled by the disease.

Often a flock's first experience of Orf is at a time when the peak lamb sales period is approaching and if lambs become infected these dates can be missed. This can be highly costly, not only will the lambs have to be kept for longer they will also drift away from ideal conformation and fat class. It is generally found everywhere sheep and goats are farmed.

Orf is caused by a virus commonly seen in young lambs around the mouth or gums and nostrils. And because of the classical position of the lesions, it often threatens to cause mastitis in ewes as well as limiting a lamb's ability to suck.

The Orf virus itself is tough and extremely resilient. It can survive for a long time on the skin and in bedding or on pasture. It can also strike out of the blue in closed flocks with no history of a problem.

If you've never seen Orf in your flock, your aim should be to maintain disease free status by carefully selecting rams and replacement ewes from known Orf-free premises. Bought-in stock should be isolated from the main flock and examined for any signs of disease. In addition, it makes sense to practise good pasture management with the emphasis on controlling thistles.

If Orf does break out in your flock, consider a vaccination programme. As well as delivering Orf prevention on an on-going annual basis, the Scabivax Forte vaccine will also help reduce the severity of the outbreak and protect animals not yet infected.

Call into the Office for your FREE Orf Starter Information pack, which includes a wealth of information on the disease and its control.

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Pet Insurance

Given the current financial climate it is probably more important than ever to get your pet insured. It is understandable that pet insurance seems the last thing on your mind when your pet is well and healthy, but if things change having pet insurance can:

- Increase the chance of using more expensive treatments and/or diagnostics. Not only one-offs like surgical procedures but long-winded treatments where the cost quickly mounts up, for example diabetes and skin problems
- Decrease the stress upon you. When your pet is unwell it is upsetting enough without having to worry about money
- Lets you choose the way you want to diagnose or treat a problem without it being ruled by purse-strings
- Speed things up. It can mean that decisions about treatment can be made quickly
- Give you peace of mind, there is less "what if?"

It isn't just referral or specialist treatments that are costly. Many of the conditions we commonly treat are probably more expensive than you would imagine. It makes sense to get pet insurance!

A selection of leaflets for a variety of companies are available in the Office.