

# White Lodge Farm Clinic

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## Welcome to our Spring/Summer Newsletter!

It looks like we might be set for another challenging year of weather conditions for both crops and stock. Last year saw unprecedented levels of worms in our livestock at the end of summer, so don't delay with worm egg counts this year, especially if you have any concerns over condition! Don't forget that resistance to many of the products we use is emerging, so please speak to one of our vets if you have any concerns about which product to use, or if you suspect a wormer may not be working as effectively as you'd hoped.



We are saying goodbye to Carly in June, who leaves us after nine years. She's been an invaluable member of the team, and wish her every success on her move to Scotland!

## SCAB UPDATE

The sheep scab project that many of you may be aware of or have been a part of is coming to an end. The project was trying to establish whether it was possible, and if so how, to eradicate sheep scab in the UK. Our 'local' results were really encouraging, with 20 cases of scab picked up on the first round of blood testing, and a year later, only one case was found!

The key messages from the project were:

- Communication, and a lack of stigma on scab are key. Prompt diagnosis if concerned, followed by communication with all neighbours and co-grazers.
- Coordinating treatments with neighbouring farms. Un-coordinated treatments lead to scab mites from neighbours quickly reinfesting your flock, and starting the cycle again.

The blood test has been a really useful tool in finding scab, as 30% of a flock can be infected before showing itching, and screening sheep coming from common grazing/at housing should be strongly considered for all farmers.

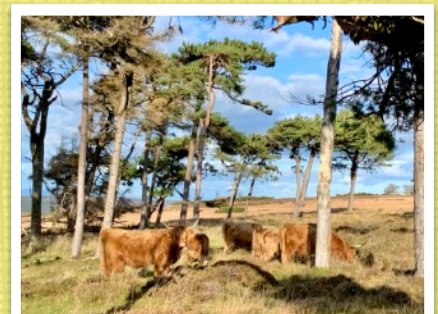
## NEW DEFRA FUNDING FOR HERD/FLOCK HEALTH REVIEWS

Imagine sitting down with a vet, discussing all of your flock/herd concerns you knew about and hadn't yet thought about, and then making a realistic plan to make the necessary improvements? And then imagine someone else is going to pay for it...

The review will cover what you decide is important to your farm, and may include:

- Looking at diseases present, that may be present or are a risk, and how best to manage them
- A thorough look at all numbers involved in the production (calving/lambing %, losses, growth rates etc) and identifying any areas that could be improved and how best to do so
- Parasites present, or potential risks and how best to manage them for animal welfare and reducing parasite resistance
- Biosecurity of the premises and stock
- Medicine usage, either preventative or medicines use to treat known problems
- Nutrition/housing/general management of animals

To see if you are eligible, visit DEFRA's website, or call and speak to one of our receptionists to discuss and book in!



## ICEBERG DISEASES OF SHEEP

### COULD YOUR FLOCK BE UNDERPERFORMING BECAUSE OF THEM?

'Iceberg' disease of sheep are those diseases that are often vastly underestimated in a flock, as the few sick sheep that can be seen are often just the tip of the problem. With all of these diseases, low level disease in a large number of animals will cause significant production losses, even though only a few animals are visibly sick.

None of these diseases can be treated with antibiotics and all will have significant economic and welfare consequences for any flock. While some of these diseases may be little heard of in Exmoor, this is likely due to a lack of testing in the area, not because they're not here!

The five diseases and the estimated prevalence of UK farms infected are:

- **Ovine Johne's disease (OJD) - 64%**
- **Border disease (BD) - 30%**
- **Ovine pulmonary adenocarcinoma (OPA) - 7%**
- **Caseous lymphadenitis (CLA) - 4%**
- **Maedi Visna (MV) - 2%**

#### Ovine Johne's Disease

OJD/Ovine paratuberculosis is a bacterial disease of the small intestine, caused by the same bacteria as Johne's in cattle. There are two strains - Sheep and Cattle; sheep are susceptible to both strains, whereas cattle seem to be resistant to the sheep strain.

The disease is normally picked up in young animals, and causes chronic wasting in sheep over 2-3 years, and unlike cattle, sheep don't generally get diarrhoea. Thin ewes are often culled with little investigation into causes, but OJD may well be worth considering in your flock if you've noticed more thin ewes than expected. There are blood and faecal tests available to look for OJD in your flock, and control measures including a vaccination programme are possible.

#### Border Disease

Border disease, also known as 'hairy shaker' disease is very closely related to BVD virus in cattle, and Border disease can also infect cattle, although mainly affects sheep and goats.

Infected flocks will suffer with abortions, barren ewes, lambs born with low birthweights, congenital deformities and poor survival rates.

Border disease can be tested for with a blood test, and although there is no vaccine, other control measures can be effective.

#### Ovine Pulmonary Adenocarcinoma

OPA, also known as Jaagsiekte is a viral contagious lung tumour. Tumours affect lung function, and symptoms include respiratory problems, weight loss, reduced reproductive performance and reduced immunity to other diseases. Most sheep showing signs of the disease are between 3-4 years old, but are usually infected as a young animal.

The testing for OPA usually involves a post mortem on sick sheep, as there is no blood test. Flock screening can then be carried out using ultrasound scanning of the lungs.

#### Caseous Lymphadenitis

CLA is caused by a bacteria that affects sheep and goats. CLA can cause the 'classic' abscesses around the head, but also causes internal abscesses in 25% of affected animals.

CLA can cause loss of condition and illness associated with abscess location in affected animals, and can also lead to high rates of carcass condemnation. CLA is diagnosed by taking samples of abscesses, or a blood test to test for exposure is also available.

#### Maedi Visna

MV is viral disease of sheep and goats. It has an incubation period of months to years, before leading to progressive loss of condition, chronic pneumonia and reduced production by 20-40%.

Often up to 50% of the flock potentially may be infected before the disease is picked up, as with other diseases, ewes may be culled without investigations.

There is a blood test available to test for MV exposure in the flock.

#### Summary

All of these diseases are likely to be present around our area at some level, and OJD and OPA have both recently been confirmed by our vets.

If you suspect any of these diseases in your flock, or do think that your flock performance is not as it should be, then please call for a chat about potential screening tests in a small number of animals.