

Newsletter June 2010

Blue Tongue Update

Importing infected livestock presents a bigger bluetongue risk to the UK than midges. In the past 2 years the number of animals imported into the UK has increased sharply. The latest figures for the first quarter of 2010 were 5000 animals imported. This is more than in the whole of 2008 – 4000 animals imported.

All imported animals are blood tested 5-7 days post import into GB. Animals that have very recently been infected may be missed by this blood test. A small number of pregnant animals could be carrying a BTV infected foetus but themselves be negative to the blood test. The newborn animal could then infect the local midge population and restart circulation of BTV disease in the UK.

So vaccination is still recommended this year. Whether it will be needed again in 2011 depends on the level of disease seen in Europe this summer.

It would be best not to import cattle during the high-risk period when midges are active. It is not advisable to import in-calf animals. If unavoidable the cattle should be vaccinated and blood tested before leaving the farm of origin.

Be vigilant, BTV can vary widely in the symptoms seen and it can look like other things. Remember there are 24 strains of BTV and BTV1 appeared near Le Havre last year. Report any suspicious looking animals even if they have been vaccinated against BTV8. It may be BTV1

Sheep Topics

Flock profitability can be affected by many factors. By establishing exactly what your flock is achieving currently we can begin to point to the areas where veterinary assistance will improve profitability. Are losses occurring due to poor conception rates, lameness, abortions and still-births, lamb deaths in the first few days or poor growth rates of lambs? We can help you to assess your records and gauge your flock performance against industry standards. Please call for one of us to help assess your flock.

Nematodirus Forecast

The forecast for Nematodirus gut worm is higher than average this year. Lambs are most at risk especially when grazing pasture where lambs were raised in previous years. The obvious signs are scour, weakness and death, but poor weight gains of all lambs will be occurring. The advice is to treat all susceptible stock at the earliest signs of scour.



The other gut worms may also cause scour and weight loss problems so dose with effective anthelmintics at the earliest signs. The best advice is dose stock and move onto clean pasture. If clean pasture is not available, be ready to re-dose as often as needed.

Remember that gut worms are not the only cause of scour. Coccidiosis problems are also regularly seen. A faeces sample sent to the lab will establish what is causing your scour problems then appropriate treatments and preventative measures can be discussed.

