

## PRACTICE NEWS

### Welcome to New Vet

We are delighted to announce that we have a new part time Vet starting.

Sarah Taylor will be joining the team from the 9th of June as she finishes a period of maternity leave.

She has worked as a Farm Vet for the past 10 years and will be working week-ends on call and some odd days.

She comes with a great deal of experience and is well regarded locally.

Please give her a warm welcome on your farm!



## WEANING MASTITIS CHECK IN EWES

That ewe with a slightly hard quarter, or even just a bit light on one side may well be next year's mastitis case. Many people will operate a policy of one strike and you're out on mastitis, ensuring that any ewe with clinical or sub-clinical mastitis this year doesn't get to the tup again.



However, it is less common for farmers to examine ewes at weaning to discard any before they cause a major problem.

Like many of these jobs, staying on top of it now can reap financial rewards by way of a better managed flock for the future. If you were to look at including likelihood of future mastitis as a factor in your annual culling program, what would you look for?

Firstly - during and after lambing it is worth checking the bag of any ewe who fails to do a pair of lambs well – does she have a mastitis or blind quarter?

Secondly - at weaning or some other time close to weaning in your sheep calendar when you have all the ewes together anyway, examine each animal. This will not take many seconds to complete and may be time well spent.

Look out for:

- 1) Any change in how firm the bag is
- 2) Any changes in the appearance of the skin of the bag
- 3) Any evidence of material in the teats of the ewe
- 4) Any imbalance between the two halves of the udder

Each of these signs may indicate that there are early changes in her bag and she should be considered for the barrens.

## CATTLE SCAB

Fortunately a rare condition in the UK, but one you should watch out for.. It is caused by a mite of the *Psoroptes* species; symptoms are usually seen in autumn or winter and include intensely itchy dermatitis along the back, shoulders and tail head with scab formation..

Diagnosis is confirmed by taking a skin scraping and examining it under the microscope. Please call the practice if you have any suspicions so that we can come and have a look and discuss treatment if necessary.

## BLOW FLY STRIKE

Blowfly Strike (Cutaneous Myiasis) is primarily caused by *Lucillia sericata* (the greenbottle fly) in Britain although other species are often implicated after the initial infection. The flies are attracted by the odours released by moist skin associated with open wounds, excessive wetting, urine splashing and faecal soiling.

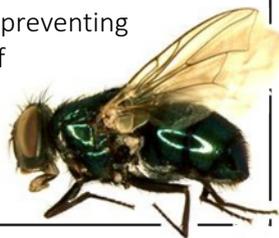
In the summer months when the weather is warm and humid, the life cycle of the fly can be completed in as little as eight days. Initially the maggots may only be present within the wool/hair but as the disease progresses they produce enzymes that break down the skin and invade the tissue. This gives rise to large open sores with active maggots around the edges of the lesion.

Struck animals are restless, spend less time feeding and move from place to place with their heads held close to the ground. They may continually waggle their tails and bite or kick at 'struck' areas of the body. The affected areas are moist with a distinct smell and have a brown discolouration. At this stage, if the disease goes unrecognised, the temperature, pulse and respiration are increased and the animal is at risk of dying from septicaemia and toxemia.

Control is managed by reducing the main risk factors:

- Shearing and dagging in sheep
- Careful management of wounds to avoid infection
- Foot trimming to help control footrot and digital dermatitis which can also attract the blowfly
- Using insect repellents or growth regulators, which interfere with the development of the maggots

Treatment of strike is aimed at killing the maggots, preventing re-infection and assisting wound healing. The use of Spot-on on lesions can help in killing the maggots and control of bacterial infections can speed healing.



## RECOGNISING PAIN

Pain is not welfare friendly, neither is it good for production. So we should all be striving to control and eliminate pain wherever possible.

A first step in being able to deal with pain and the changes it causes, is being able to identify it; taking the time to observe your animals will greatly increase the chance of picking up on some of the main indications that they are in pain:

- Isolation from the group
- Anorexia/reduced food intake
- Dullness, depression, lethargy
- Increased rate of breathing
- Grinding of teeth
- Increased sensitivity of affected areas
- Licking at wounds or lesions

These symptoms are not specific to any particular disease, so when affected animals are identified, they should be examined to determine the cause and allow for appropriate treatment.

Inflammation is often a major factor in these conditions and it is worth remembering the five cardinal signs which are pain, heat, redness, swelling and loss of function.

## DO YOU KNOW WHEN YOUR COW IS BULLING?

With the average dairy cow having been bred to show visible oestrus for as little as 20 minutes, it is not surprising that heat detection rates are poor across the industry.

And if you miss a cycle, the costs quickly mount up. Extending a calving index above 400 days costs over £5 for each additional day – or £100 for a missed heat. But what about if you misjudge when to serve her?

That will be detected by manual pregnancy diagnosis, or coming bulling again, but risks being seen as a false positive if you are using milk progesterone to confirm pregnancy in your cows.

We will revisit this topic soon, but in the meantime why not discuss with your vet how to use this very helpful tool most appropriately.

