



Sheep Newsletter

Late Spring/Early Summer 2009

Endell Veterinary Group, 49 Endless Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP1 3UH - 01722 333291

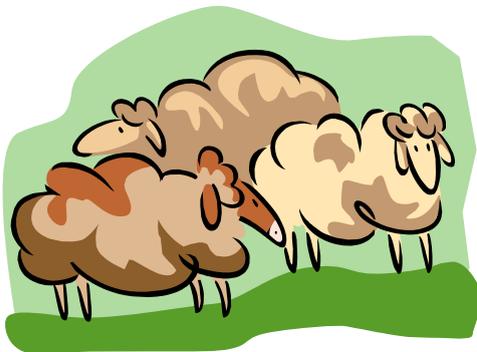
Flystrike

Blowfly populations are on the increase from May onwards and are greatest during the summer months. Blowflies require warmth and humidity and when conditions are optimal the entire fly life cycle can take as little as ten days. Flies are attracted to moist or soiled fleece, as well as open wounds and dead animals, where they will lay their eggs. These eggs hatch into maggots within twelve hours. The maggots then feed on body tissues as they mature before falling onto the ground where they develop into mature flies. Maggots are often found around the tail in lambs with worms, but can be found anywhere on the body including the feet in sheep with severe foot rot. Affected animals will separate from the group and appear to nibble at themselves. You will see a reduction in grazing and they may stamp their feet.



Sheep blowfly (*Lucilia sericata*)
© University of Bristol

If you find a sheep with flystrike it should be treated immediately by washing away all the maggots and cleaning the affected area vigorously. In some cases, the fleece should be clipped out to allow this. The wounds should then be sprayed with antibiotic spray and fly preventative treatment applied to the fleece of the sheep (**not** directly onto open wounds). The affected animal may need injectable antibiotic cover if the wounds are deep.



As with everything, prevention is better than cure. We would therefore advise that all sheep are treated with preventative products such as Spot On, Crovect or Dysect Sheep Pour-on. This will also form an essential component of your Bluetongue prevention strategy, along with vaccination.

Please contact Daniel in our dispensary now to place your order.

Barren ewe check

For many of you, lambing is coming to an end and it is now that we should start considering how this year's lambing has gone. Lambing percentages can be a useful guide, but it is equally as important to look at the conception rates and with that the barren ewes. Ram performance should also be analysed to ensure that all are working optimally. The drug company that makes vaccinations against enzootic abortion and toxoplasma are funding laboratory analysis of barren ewes to help flocks find out whether these conditions are circulating in a flock and contributing to a high number of barren ewes. We can visit and take up to eight blood samples from barren or aborted ewes. This will be charged at normal rates, but the laboratory tests will be free to you. Now is the time to do this investigation before the next year cycle begins as vaccinations, if found to be necessary, should be given before the ewes are put to the tup again in the autumn.

If you would like to discuss your flock's performance or have some samples taken, please contact one of the vets at the surgery.



Bluetongue - Current Situation

We have already seen a good uptake in vaccine against BTV-8 from our farmers this year and orders continue to come into dispensary daily. If you have not ordered your vaccine yet, you should be advised that the midge season is fast approaching and therefore the risk of BTV-8 entering the country is ever increasing. Some of you may have heard of another Bluetongue strain that has been found in Northern Europe - BTV-1. Whilst there are plans for a multivalent vaccine, ie: one that protects against BTV-8 and BTV-1, it is not thought that this will become available until the latter part of the year. For this reason farmers are being advised not to wait for this to come out, but to vaccinate against BTV-8 now. Other strains of Bluetongue have also been causing disease outbreaks in parts of Europe. These include BTV-6, BTV-11 and BTV-16. Although BTV-8 was not found circulating in the UK last year, it certainly was in France and for this reason we must not be complacent and vaccinate as there is a serious risk that midges could spread the disease across the channel.

Vitamin B1 injection now available without special European licence

Some of you will know that in the early part of the year, we were struggling to source pure vitamin B1 injection, which is used in the treatment of CCN, or cerebrocortical necrosis (a neurological disease in sheep). This was a result of having to have a specific European prescription/licence for us to be able to purchase it. You will therefore be pleased to hear that this is no longer necessary and that we have plenty in stock should you require it.



Staff News

Saturday 25 April dawned bright and clear, if somewhat breezy; perfect for blowing wedding veils about. And so during the early afternoon Amy became Mrs Avery. Mingled amongst the many family and friends present at Bramshaw Church to witness the start of Amy and Alex's married life were clients (including the church organist) and many vets. Stephen gave one of the readings and Janneke, all the way from Holland, was one of the bridesmaids.

After a week in the Peak District (many people mistakenly thought Amy and Alex had gone to the Lake District for the week and the earthquake that occurred there during that week was no coincidence!), Amy is now back at work but is due to leave in the middle of June to travel extensively through the southern hemisphere. How plans will change during this time and what the future will hold, no one can be certain about, but we have made our position clear to Amy. We hope she will return. Equally, Amy has promised to keep in touch and to discuss her future with us when she does return.

A message from Amy ...

Many of you are aware I am leaving the practice at the end of June to go travelling and work in New Zealand for a year. I would like to thank everyone I have worked with over the last three years for all the support you have given me. I have really enjoyed working at Endells and much of that has been down to the people I have worked with (ie: you!), so thank you. I hope I gain plenty of different cattle and sheep experience, which perhaps I may bring back in a couple of years' time.

All the best to everyone, Amy.

Pieter, after two and a half years with us (an almost record period of employment in his career so far!) is also leaving at the end of June. Pieter is going to join a friend in a much smaller practice in Cumbria where he hopes to be able to spend more time working with sheep, his main veterinary passion, and less time travelling to Yorkshire to indulge his other great passion.

We would like to thank both Amy and Pieter for the valuable work they have done for both us and you over recent years. Recruiting new vets, especially farm vets, is not easy but we have been very fortunate on this occasion to secure the services of two farmer's sons.

Will Sheppard comes from a dairy farming family based in Wallingford, Oxfordshire, and is due to qualify from the Bristol University Veterinary School (like Keith, Stephen and Amy) within a few weeks. During his training, he has seen most of his practice with the Larkmead Veterinary Group, a practice we know well and who spoke very highly of his abilities. (Their exact words were; 'If we had a vacancy we would have no hesitation in employing him immediately.') Will's main area of interest is in dairy herd health and production, especially fertility, mastitis and lameness. In his personal statement he wrote: 'I believe that farm animal veterinary work will continue to be a vital part of the veterinary profession as disease surveillance becomes increasingly important and consumer demands put extra pressure on producers. It is also clear that farm vets will have to take on an advisory role focussing on herd level care rather than the individual animal. I would like to get involved with carrying out more frequent herd health studies and analysis to give constructive feedback and advice to the producer.' We are hoping that Will will be able to take up his position with us during the second half of July.

Stewart Barr, who trained at the Glasgow University School, comes from a mixed beef and arable farm (he is an experienced combine driver) on the Essex/Cambridgeshire border. He has spent time with the Willows Veterinary Group, a large and well known cattle practice in Cheshire and has experience of the cattle industry in both Canada and New Zealand. Like Will, his major interest is in cattle fertility and, in the dairy herd, mastitis and cell count control. We hope Stewart will begin working for us in mid-September when he finishes his current summer job (driving the combine on the family farm!).

In order to bridge the gap between Amy and Pieter leaving and Will and Stewart starting we have decided to offer a short term position to Kristina Dykes. Kristina is from New Zealand where she already has considerable experience of farm animal practice, not only with dairy cattle but particularly with beef cattle and sheep. She has come to England to further her veterinary experience and to travel. We hope that Kristina will be able to start with us before Amy and Pieter leave and that she will stay until Will and Stewart are firmly in place to ease this transition and provide as much continuity of service as possible.

