

August 2026

NEWSLETTER



How are your lambs doing?

While some lambs may have already left the farm, it is important to continue monitoring lambs and lamb growth, and consider, **what may be limiting lamb performance?**

Trace Element Status

Trace element deficiencies often present as poorly grown lambs during late summer or early autumn. Adequate cobalt supplementation is crucial for lamb performance. Cobalt (vit B12) deficiency may be further complicated by parasitic gastroenteritis (worms) which causes scour and thereby interferes with the absorption of vitamin B12.

As lambs cannot store cobalt, oral mineral drenches only provides cobalt for a very short period of time (<7d). Longer term cobalt supplementation can be provided by injectables or boluses.

Worms

Worms are the most important factor limiting sheep production in the UK. In lambs, which have yet to develop any immunity, a worm burden will cause:

- Decreased appetite, and therefore reduced feed intake and growth
- Damage to the gut, and therefore reduced absorption of nutrients and reduced growth
- Decreased protein metabolism, and therefore reduced muscle growth and carcase quality
- Impaired mineral retention, resulting in a small skeleton and exacerbating trace element deficiencies



Worm egg counts can be used to monitor worm burden and identify upward trends, as well as checking efficacy of worming treatments. To get the most out of worm egg counts this summer:

- Monitor each group, every month. Remember not to discount a stockman's eye and investigate sooner if any concerns.
- For pooled samples, include separate dung samples from at least 15 animals, although the more the better (ie 20-30). Please keep samples separate!
- Provide us with fresh samples! Please take samples as soon as possible before you drop them in to us, ideally the same day, and keep them in the fridge in the meantime. Keeping samples cool prevents worm eggs from hatching, which can lead to a falsely low WEC results.

Targeted Selective Treatment (TST) uses a daily live weight gain cut off to determine the animals not growing well enough which should be dosed, this is assuming nothing else is holding back growth such as trace element status or nutrition.

Nutrition

To maintain good growth rates, lambs require a high quality, high-protein diet. There are different ways in which this can be achieved, whether that is providing creep or grazing lays with high protein constituents such as clover, lucerne, chicory and plantain.

Sheep Quarantine Treatments

At this time of year, with breeding sales fast approaching, there will soon be lots of replacement females and tups being bought and sold, moving through marts and between farms. Inevitably, moving between farms with these sheep is disease.

In addition to making informed purchasing decisions based on health status of a flock in regards to important diseases such as Johne's, MV, CLA and Border Disease, it is important to consider the unwanted guests incoming sheep may be carrying and ensure steps are taken to prevent introducing these into your flock.



- **Quarantine:** Incoming animals should be quarantined for 3-4 weeks and monitored for any signs of disease.
- **Avoid introducing resistant worms:** Gold standard is to treat incoming tups with both orange and purple drenches, but Zolvix (an orange wormer) given alongside a clear injectable or drench is a suitable alternative. Place on hard standing or in a shed for 48 hours after treatment then turn out onto "dirty" pasture.
- **Sheep Scab:** Sheep should either be treated for scab on arrival (injectable moxidectin or OP dip), or should be blood sampled 2 weeks after arrival for exposure to scab.
- **Liver Fluke:** Treat with closantel or triclabendazole on arrival followed by a repeated dose of closantel 6 weeks later. Graze on well-drained / dry pasture until after both treatments.
- **Lameness:** Examine feet on arrival for problems and treat as required. Foot bath twice in quarantine period with Zinc Sulphate solution ie Golden Hoof. Consider use of Footvax; as with any vaccination, use in plenty of time before tupping to avoid affecting tup fertility.
- **Testing:** Consider blood testing new arrivals for infectious diseases, such as Johne's, MV, CLA and Border Disease, before purchase or while still in quarantine.
- Bring animals up to date with the routine flock treatments ie vaccines.

Consider APHA Approved On-Farm Isolation Facilities?

Movement of incoming stock **will not trigger a 6-day standstill period**, provided that they are isolated for six days in an APHA approved isolation facility.

Applying for APHA approved on farm isolation facilities is a simple, please get in touch with one of the vets for more information.

Get Your Silage Tested!

Nutrition is the cornerstone of health. **When nutritional requirements are not met, there can be costly and far-reaching consequences.** Testing silage sooner rather than later allows shortfalls in forage to be identified and any additional feed budgeted for.

Silage quality varies widely between year, cuts, fields and clamps, so we'd recommend sampling each batch of clamp or bale silage separately.

Silage can be sampled 6 weeks after cutting; we offer a quick turn around, fixed-price silage sampling, interpretation and ration planning service; get in touch with Kaz for more information.

Black Sheep Farm Health, Unit 4a, Rothbury Industrial Estate, Coquet View, Rothbury,
Northumberland, NE65 7RZ Phone: 01669 838 288 Email: info@bsfh.co.uk

Joe Henry 07502297044 Jenny Hull 07734432212 Jack Sheldrake 07793078949
Kaz Strycharczyk 07557092760 Claire Neillans 07717752034 Emili Canavan-Hicks 07778456969

