

# JULY 2024

# NEWSLETTER



## Save the Date:

### Dungbeetle Meeting & Client BBQ!

Thursday 4th July 2024

Westhills Farm, Rothbury

Dungbeetle Meeting: Integrated parasite management and sustainable worm control with Rob Howe —3pm

BBQ & Social – from 6pm

Everyone is invited to attend both the meeting and the social, or just join us in the evening.

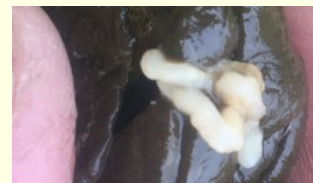
Please RSVP to the practice.

## Tapeworms

Tapeworms are flat, segmented worms that live in the intestine and have a head with hooks that attach to the gut wall with a body in the gut composed of segments.

The segments contain eggs and are continually breaking off and being passed in the faeces. Occasionally a strip of segments breaks off and is visible as a white ribbon on the muck, sometimes moving immediately after it is passed, seen particularly in lambs.

The presence of these segments in sheep faeces can sometimes cause alarm, but infection is generally harmless and lambs can carry a heavy burden without any effect on daily live weight gain (DLWG)!



## Teaser Time!

Teasers, or vasectomised tups, synchronise ewe cyclicity and tighten lambing periods.

### For most effective use of a teaser:

- Select a homebred, well grown, sexually mature shearling with good feet and teeth as a teaser.
- Consider a different breed to the stock rams so the teaser is easy to identify.
- Get teaser vasectomised at least 6 weeks before intended use.
- Introduce teaser to ewes at a ratio of no more than 1:100.
- Provide greater 'ram power' at tupping – ie as a greater proportion of the ewes will be cycling together, a greater tup to ewe ratio is suggested– 1:30.
- Replace teasers every 2-3 years; their effectiveness declines over time.

## \*\* Blowfly Strike Alert \*\*

Early signs of strike include irritation, nibbling, swishing of tails, rubbing and discomfort.

As strike progresses, signs include damp or discoloured fleece, fleece loss, separation from flock, sick animals and death.

Please get in touch for information about products available to aid in the prevention of strike.

## Direct Debit Facility

We now provide a direct debit facility.

Please contact Hazel if you would like to pay this way.

## Captive Bolt Gun Orders

Please get in touch with the practice if you are interested in a captive bolt for on farm euthanasia.

Training will be provided.

## Dealing with the Heat: Warm Weather Considerations

It is not that often that we complain in Northumberland about the weather being too warm but, with singlets and shorts having made an appearance, we should the impact that the heat can have on our livestock.

### Heat Stress

Temperatures above 25°C for cattle or 29°C for shorn sheep are above the thermoneutral range, meaning the animal must engage cooling strategies:

- **Increasing heat loss** by increasing blood flow to the skin, panting, drooling etc. These activities increase the maintenance energy requirements of the animal and so divert energy away from production and growth into thermoregulation.
- **Limiting heat production** in the rumen by eating 10-30% less forage.

The consequences of heat stress are potentially quite significant:

- **Reduced dam fertility;** reduced expression of heat/oestrus, reduced quality of eggs and reduced viability of early embryos all contribute to lower conception rates.
- **Reduced sire fertility;** quality of semen deteriorates with heat.
- **Reduced growth rates;** the cause of this is twofold- energy is being utilised for cooling and energy intake is reduced due to lower forage intakes.

What can we do to manage heat stress?

- Ensure provision of clean drinking water.
- Provide shade where possible.
- Avoid unnecessary handling, handle in the early morning when necessary.
- Consider providing supplementary feeding; forage intake will drop significantly and so need to ensure that nutritional requirements are still being met, particularly while cows are bulling.
- If providing supplementary feeding, consider feeding in the afternoon or evening so that heat from rumen fermentation peaks during cooler nights rather than during the day.
- Be alert for flies; consider preventative products if not already applied.

### Salt Poisoning

If water supply is interrupted, thirsty animals should not be given free access to water straight away. Sudden water intake after deprivation changes the salt concentration in the blood and can lead to break down of blood cells and swelling on the brain, and can therefore result in convulsions and death.

### Algae Blooms

During the summer months, we occasionally diagnose cases of blue-green algae toxicity. In the acute stages, cattle can show nervous signs and muscle tremors. In the chronic form, we see signs of liver damage, such as photosensitisation.

Sunny weather, shallow water and high concentrations of nitrogen in the water predispose to algal blooms. Drinking from ponds or from troughs that have sat stagnant are also risk factors; this is a good reminder to ensure that water troughs are cleaned out.

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