

# JUNE 2024

# NEWSLETTER



**Black Sheep Farm Health**  
Dedicated farm vets

## 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.

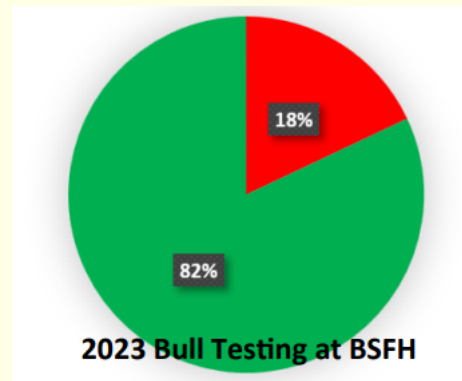
Please RSVP to the practice

## Every Bull, Every Year: Late Bull Testing

Of all the bull testing carried out at BSFH in 2023, 18% of bulls failed.

Previous performance is no guarantee of future success and it is important that every bull is tested, every year.

It is not too late; get your bull testing booked in now for peace of mind as we enter bulling season.



## Do you want 2/3 of cows pregnant on day 1 of bulling?

Artificial insemination gives greater control over bulling and allows more of the herd to conceive at the start of the bulling period.

The additional growth gained from earlier born calves is sufficient to cover the costs of AI.

AI also lowers bull cost and facilitates greater genetic gains.

Please get in touch with Jack to discuss using AI in your herd.

## Lead: A Cautionary Tale

We sporadically see cases of lead toxicity, but tend to see most cases through early summer when stock are turned out to grass. Young stock are often worse affected due to their inquisitive natures.

Lead toxicity can be very serious, causing sudden death, blindness, ataxia, abdominal pain, teeth grinding, salivation or convulsions.

Checking fields is important, particularly when it is land that you have not grazed before.

Sources of lead are more often than not discarded batteries; removing old batteries, in addition to the surrounding vegetation and topsoil, is important. In addition to batteries, sources of lead may include lead paint, lead shot, lead flashing, lead pipes and old mine workings.

## Are your farm cats microchipped?

It is now a legal requirement for all cats to be microchipped.

The chip should also be registered with your details and this should be up to date.

## Goodbye, Millie

Millie will sadly be leaving us as she returns to university to finish her midwifery training.

We wish her every success and good luck for the future. We might even see Millie back for the odd day in the office!

## The Bother with Flies

As the warm weather returns, so will the flies. Fly control is important as fly worry can significantly reduce growth and production, and flies can also act as a vector for other conditions such as pink eye and summer mastitis.

In cattle, flies are generally controlled by use of synthetic pyrethroid products (Deltamethrin ie Spotinor or Swish) either as a spot on, pour on or even in an ear tag.

In sheep, flies can be controlled by the use of insect growth regulators (Dicyclanil ie Klik) or synthetic pyrethroids (Deltamethrin ie Spotinor or Cypermethrin ie Crovect/Ectofly).

Environmental and stock management options should also be considered, for both cattle and sheep, such as avoiding grazing highest risk areas where possible (wet, low lying fields particularly near woodlands) and reducing fly breeding grounds (e.g. stagnant water, ensuring muck heaps are away from grazing stock). Dagging sheep also reduces risk.

Long-term breed considerations may also be relevant, with shedding breeds at lower risk of strike than traditional breeds.

## Worms: A Threat to the Future of Sheep Farming

Worms are still the biggest killer of lambs and so it is more important than ever that we use wormers responsibly in order to preserve their effectiveness. There are a number of ways in which we can do this which generally involve avoiding overuse, avoiding buying in resistant worms, avoiding underdosing and ensuring you know the levels of resistance on your farm.

Monitoring stock through the grazing season to ensure we only use wormers when they are required is a key to avoid overuse and protect efficacy of these drugs.

### WORM EGG COUNTS

Regular worm egg counts can be used to monitor the worm burden and identify upwards trends. **In order to get the most out of worm egg counts this summer:**

- Monitor each group, every month (or sooner if any concerns).
- For pooled samples, include dung from at least 15 animals.
- Use a measuring spoon to make submitting pooled samples much less hassle- spoons are available for free from the practice!
- Provide us with fresh samples! Please take samples as soon as possible before you drop them in to us, ideally the same day, and ideally keep them in the fridge in the meantime.
- Please get in touch about the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway (AHWP) – there is funding available towards WECs and health planning.

### TARGETED SELECTIVE TREATMENT (TST)

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.

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