

Black Sheep Farm Health

September 2022 Newsletter



The Field Report

Mastering Medicines Course

Monday 3rd October, 18:00-20:00, @BSFH, Rothbury. £40 excluding VAT. Certificates and refreshments provided. Lively discussion guaranteed. This course is a requirement for Red Tractor.

Either ring the practice on 01669 838 288, or email claire.neillans@bsfh.co.uk, to book your place.

Pre Topping Jobs

There are many jobs to start thinking about to get the flock prepared for tugging, these include:

- Fluke treatments—either based on sampling or following your health plan for routine treatment.
- Bolus ewes to ensure adequate trace elements, ideally based on previous trace element blood results.
- Vaccinate ewes according to your health plan.
- Fertility testing tups— more information over the page.
- Thin ewe check - thin ewes identified pre tugging are a good opportunity to learn more about diseases present on your farm, either through post mortems or blood sampling:
 - PM examination provides information on OPA, Johnes, MV, CLA, chronic pneumonia and many others.
 - Blood sampling can provide information on Johnes, CLA and trace element status.
- Late season break dose for lambs—SCOPS recommend the use of a mid to late season break dose with a purple or orange wormer (e.g. Zolvix) where FWEC and previous wormer use in the season warrant this.

Sheep Quarantine Treatments

All incoming sheep should be quarantined to reduce the probability of introducing disease onto the farm. During the quarantine period, sheep should be monitored for signs of disease and receive a number of treatments:

- Worming - incoming sheep should be treated with either an orange (zolvix) or purple (startec) wormer as well as moxidectin injection or drench (depending on scab risk) to avoid bringing resistant worms onto farm. They should be kept on hard standing for 48 hours after treatment and then be moved to dirty pasture.
- Sheep scab - if they have been treated prior to movement, blood samples can be taken for exposure to scab 2 weeks after isolation. However if they are considered high risk or aren't treated prior to movement, they should be treated with either organophosphate dipping or injectable moxidectin.
- Liver fluke - depending on time of year of purchase animals should be dosed with nitroxynil, closantel or triclabendazole at arrival followed by either closantel or nitroxynil 6 or 7 weeks later. Sheep should be grazed on well drained, dry pasture until the second treatment.
- Lameness - animals should be examined on arrival and any lesions treated. Foot bathing twice during quarantine with zinc sulphate will reduce risk further. Foot vax can also be considered.
- Other—quarantine is a good opportunity to consider vaccination status of incoming stock. It is also important to remember that membership of health schemes (PSGHS) may require further testing

Further guidance on parasite control in sheep can be found at <https://www.scops.org.uk/>.



Preparing the Tups

With autumn fast approaching, it is time to begin preparations for tugging. Tup preparation should begin 10 weeks before tugging to allow time to correct any problems and possibly buy replacement animals if required.

The 5 T's - examination and preparation of tups for breeding should centre around the 5T's which are:

- Toes - examine the legs, feet and gait of the tups and treat any abnormalities. Culling chronically lame tups and any with poor foot confirmation can help avoid lameness problems in the flock. Also consider the use of foot vax 6 weeks prior to tugging to reduce lameness due to footrot.
- Teeth—check for under or overshot jaw, missing teeth or abscesses.
- Testicles - check testicles for firmness (feel like a flexed bicep when normal) and any lumps/bumps. Measuring scrotal circumference can indicate a rams suitability for breeding.
- Tone—tups should be body condition score of 3.5-4 / 5 at tugging. Any underconditioned tups should receive supplementary feeding prior to tugging. Over fat tups are also a problem and this should be avoided as scrotal fat insulates the testicles reducing fertility and also reduces lifespan and increases risk of other conditions such as joint deformities, acidosis and urolithiasis.
- Treat—check tups are up to date with clostridial and Pasteurella vaccination, worm and fluke control and fly strike and head fly preventatives.



New Tups - new tups should be quarantined for 3 weeks. During this time tups should be monitored for signs of disease and receive appropriate quarantine treatments (more information given overleaf).

Fertility Testing Tups - this involves a physical examination around the 5T's above and acquiring a semen sample which is assessed for its density, motility and the percentage of normal appearing sperm. This information can be used to determine if tups can cope with solo mating group or would be better used in groups or not used at all. Contact the practice at 01669 838 288 to enquire about pre-breeding examinations and fertility testing for your tups.

Pneumonia Vaccination

With housing not too far around the corner it is an important time to consider the timing of your pneumonia vaccinations especially if you use injectable vaccines.

Pneumonia causes significant financial losses when outbreaks occur due to mortality, labour costs and treatment costs. However the greatest cost is often unseen in weight loss and reduced weight gains leading to longer time to finish. Improving air quality, limiting stress and maximising health as well as vaccination are important in pneumonia control.

At risk animals should be vaccinated based on your farm history of disease and ease of handling prior to housing and should be laid out in your health plan. Intranasal vaccines lead to fastest cover from agents and should ideally be given a week before housing whereas injectable vaccines such as Bovalto Respi 3 take more planning and require 2 doses 4 weeks apart and full immunity takes 3 weeks to develop.