

# Black Sheep Farm Health

September 2021 Newsletter



## The Field Report

Thank you to everyone who came to both the medicines course and social evening – it was great to see everyone!

### Take advantage of this crucial time of year for sheep wormers

In the UK, the three main groups of wormer are white (Group 1), yellow (Group 2) and clear (Group 3) products. For decades these were the only wormers on the market and their regular use led to widespread resistance. The recent advent of Group 4, or orange, wormers (Zolvix, active ingredient monepantel) has been a welcome addition and strategic use means we will be able to preserve the efficacy of our older wormer groups. In the long term this means cheaper, effective worm control. Zolvix should not be used as routine drench in lambs or ewes as we must avoid resistance to this product at all costs. When to use:

- **Quarantine treatments** for incoming stock: This kills off any resistant worms carried by bought-in sheep which will proliferate on your farm.
- **'Break drench'** for lambs at or after weaning: Remove resistant worms that have survived prolonged exposure to other wormer groups (1-3) used earlier in the summer.

As we enter the autumn, both weaning and the purchase of replacement breeding stock are in full swing. We can provide small volumes for bought-in animals e.g. purchased tups.



### How will you respond to the removal of BPS payments?

See below for a notice from client, local farmer and consultant Ian Cairns.

Defra is funding a number of consultancy firms to deliver advice to farmers under the Future Farming Resilience Fund (FFRF) to be delivered between September 2021 and February 2022. Each consultant will be offering their own preference on delivery ranging from 1:1 advice, workshops/groups or a mix of both. All should be offering advice on the how BPS payments will be phased out and what options farm business might take to remain viable. All advice funded under FFRF will be free of charge to farmers.

Only one consultancy firm is using local consultants to deliver 1:1 information and advice, tailored to beef, sheep and mixed farms in Northumberland. JH Agri Consultancy has teamed up with local consultants Rhidian Jones and Ian Cairns. Both Rhidian and Ian have practical experience and understanding of farming in the county and how the upcoming changes will affect both tenants and owner occupiers. Features of our delivery include;

- 100% delivered as 1:1 advice on your farm (over 2 visits).
- How your BPS payments will reduce over the next 7 years.
- Review your existing business (financial and technical) against relevant benchmarks to identify opportunities to improve profitability.
- How the new ELM (environmental) scheme might fit your farm now and in future as it is developed and rolled out.
- How tree planting, carbon credits and diversification might offer opportunities.
- Work with you to identify which options for change will be relevant to your farm.
- Provide written recommendations and an action plan in discussion with you.
- All delivery is free, independent and guaranteed confidential.

To sign up or find out more, visit [www.jhagricconsultancy.co.uk](http://www.jhagricconsultancy.co.uk) and click on the 'subsidy change' page or speak to Ian Cairns on 07469 203088 or Rhidian Jones on 07889 182364.



## 'Join the march to reduce sheep lameness' - MSD Animal Health

The run up to weaning is an ideal time to identify and note problems before any disease becomes more established. Check sheep's feet regularly, as sheep with early stage footrot or contagious ovine digital dermatitis (CODD) have been known not to appear as being lame.

At weaning time, mark any persistently lame ewes for culling, and if flock replacements are home-bred, make sure breeding is only from sound ewes or ewe lambs that have not been lame.

Most sheep lameness in the UK is caused by the bacteria *Dichelobacter nodosus*, which can appear as scald or as footrot. If allowed to progress, it causes significant discomfort and welfare concerns due to the obvious pain. Becoming more widespread is CODD, caused by a treponeme bacteria, it has a progressive nature and in its later stages can cause severe lameness.

These are the two most important causes of lameness in UK sheep; they may be two different diseases yet are strongly associated in their infectivity and transmission routes<sup>1</sup>. Footrot is certainly a risk factor for CODD, so by keeping this widespread disease under control will help reduce the impact of CODD in the flock.

Recent work has looked at management practices that can reduce the levels of lameness found in a sheep flock. This includes the development of an industry accepted framework, the FAI Five Point Plan (5PP), to establish best practice for managing lameness in sheep. Across the sheep farming community there is real momentum behind the 5PP and many have confirmed that by implementing it and sustaining it helps to keep flock lameness incidence down to 2% or less.

1. **Vaccination** is an aid to treating footrot and preventing lameness by stimulating immunity. Vaccination should be on a whole flock basis and timed to be given just before increased disease risk. It has also been demonstrated<sup>1</sup>, in mixed infections of footrot & CODD, that by managing footrot with vaccination first, has enabled more successful treatment and control of CODD.
2. **Culling** persistently infected sheep, especially at the start of a control programme, brings a reduction in lameness as these animals are "constantly shedding" infection.
3. **Avoid** disease transmission by paying attention to good hygiene, minimising the gathering of sheep, using footbaths\* for disinfection and stopping trimming\*\* infected feet – see below for more information.
4. **Treating** within 3 days should be the foundation of any protocol to reduce infectious lameness, both for welfare and infection control. Affected animals should be isolated for monitoring and to reduce disease spread.
5. **Quarantine**, a standard biosecurity procedure, should be for a minimum 4-week period. If any sheep shows signs of lameness during quarantine, isolate them and treat appropriately before being introduced to the flock.

Lameness remains a significant welfare and economic issue for sheep flocks in the UK. Adopting the Five Point Plan in its entirety has been shown to give the greatest chance of reducing lameness by a combination of standard farm practices that decrease the level of risk. Conversely, it has been seen that by dropping any one of the five management practices, there is often a resulting increase in the prevalence of lameness in the flock – that's why it is called the Five Point Plan.

For more information go to the sheep health section of the DNOMF Website: <https://www.msd-animal-health-hub.co.uk/DNOMF>

