

MARCHES VETERINARY GROUP

FARM ANIMAL NEWSLETTER – FEB 2017



Liver Fluke

We have identified liver fluke infection on a number of farms recently by testing faeces samples for fluke eggs. In some cases the animals have been treated but have picked fluke up again after treatment, whilst in other cases disease has not been suspected and samples have been checked as a precaution. If you haven't checked your stock, it's a worthwhile thing to do. When collecting samples, think about where animals have grazed and the stock that are most likely at risk. These will be animals that were grazing areas that might have mud snails during the autumn and winter. Ideally, collect **10 individual fresh samples** and submit them to the practice.

We have seen one case where animals have been treated with triclabendazole and it hasn't been effective. **Triclabendazole resistance** in liver fluke is becoming more common, so **testing animals 3 weeks after treatment** is sensible to check that treatment has been effective.

Fever Tags

The trial with the Fever Tags has been **very successful** and the trial farm is now going to put tags into all their calves as a routine.

It isn't uncommon for a calf to be examined post mortem with a history that it only became unwell shortly before it died; but the post mortem shows that there is longstanding damage to the lungs, so the problem started weeks or even months previously. The aim with the Fever Tags is to identify such cases so that they are **treated earlier**, giving a much better chance of a full recovery and reducing the number of poor doers.

If you are interested in trying the tags, please contact us for more information.

Itchy sheep

Sheep scab and lice are both more common at this time of year. Both cause itching and rubbing leading to wool loss. It isn't possible to be sure whether you have scab or lice just by looking at an animal. Sometimes it is possible to see lice with the naked eye, but sheep can have lice and scab at the same time, and you won't be able to see that. So it's always best to have a proper **diagnosis made by examining samples under the microscope**. Sheep scab is difficult to completely eliminate from a flock; but having to inject sheep repeatedly for scab is bad from the point of view of selecting for resistance – in worms and scab mites. So, be sure to take veterinary advice and follow it exactly.

Feeding enough protein, having ewes and cows at **the right condition score** and a clean environment are the best ways to ensure healthy lambs and calves. Vaccinating **ewes against clostridial diseases and pasteurilla** and **cows against rotavirus and E.coli** will provide extra protection. But a feed of quality colostrum as soon as possible after birth will have more impact on the future health of the newborn lambs and calf than anything else.