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Importance of Worming of Farm Dogs

Tapeworm infections in sheep are a growing concern with carcasses being condemned at abattoirs due to the presence of different types of tapeworm cysts which render them unfit for human consumption. There are three recognised cysts that occur in sheep;



1. *Taenia hydatigena*, which infects dogs when they consume undercooked livestock or venison or feed from dead livestock or deer they find out in the world.
2. *Taenia ovis*, which infects dogs after they consume dead sheep or undercooked lamb.
3. *Taenia multiceps*, which infects dogs that eat the brains of infected sheep.

The life cycle of *Taenia* tapeworms involves two hosts to complete its lifecycle. Dogs will become infected as described above, by scavenging sheep carcasses. The worm, which develops in the dog's intestine, can be unbelievably long (up to 4 metres for *Taenia hydatigena*) and is made of segments. Each segment contains an independent set of organs with new segments being created at the neck while older segments drop off the tail. A mature segment will contain the tapeworm eggs and are passed out in the faeces where they will be eaten by an unsuspecting host i.e. sheep.

The young tapeworm hatches in the new host's intestine and escapes into the blood supply, and the next stop is the liver/brain where it forms a cyst and clinical signs can develop especially in the case of *GID*. Once sheep are infected there is no treatment so the only effective means of control is to regularly worm all farm dogs and prevent them from scavenging on carcasses or body parts.

Worming programme for farm dogs:

There is a wormer called Droncit which has a specific effect against tapeworm. The dosage is one tablet per 10kgs body weight. If you purchase a year's supply of these tablets then we will give you a 10% discount. Please phone us to discuss the number of tablets required.



Ewe Nutrition in Late Pregnancy

Correct nutrition for ewes in late pregnancy will ensure:

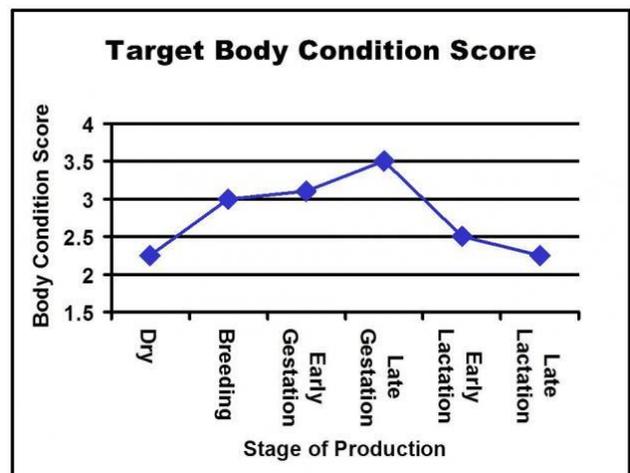
- Good growth of the unborn lamb(s) – birth weight is highly correlated to lamb survival.
- Development of the udder – essential for good lamb growth rates.
- Production of good quality colostrum – this will get neonatal lambs off to the best start in life.
- Prevention of diseases - e.g. pregnancy toxaemia, hypocalcaemia. See below.

As lambing time approaches, the energy requirements of pregnant ewes increase. Approximately 70% of lamb growth occurs in the last 6 weeks of gestation. As the lambs get larger, the space for food within the rumen decreases – this means that the ewes have a smaller appetite right at the time that they need extra energy. Make sure that your ewes are fed a good quality, high energy and palatable diet at this crucial time. Consult the concentrate manufacturer for guidelines on feeding rates of ewe nuts, and make sure that ewes are fed accordingly for singles/twins/triplets if this is known.

Body condition scoring is a useful method of assessing whether the ewes have a suitable level of fitness. The target at lambing is 3.0 – 3.5.

We offer a **sheep metabolic profile service** where we can analyse blood samples from ewes 2-3 weeks pre-lambing, in order to check for energy issues in case any nutritional adjustments need to be made.

Diseases associated with nutrition:



- 1. Pregnancy toxaemia (twin lamb disease)** - This may occur in the last few weeks of pregnancy as a result of an insufficient energy intake to meet the high energy demands of the ewe. Affected ewes will be dull and depressed, off feed, and may grind their teeth and 'star gaze'. If untreated, this progresses to recumbency and death in a couple of days.
Risk factors include: ewes carrying multiple lambs / inadequate quantity or quality of feed / inadequate trough space / sudden change of feed / stress (e.g. handling or cold weather) / over-conditioned ewes in late pregnancy resulting in a reduced appetite.
Treatment consists of twin lamb drenches and provision of a high energy diet. Glucose injections can be given intravenously. In severe cases, induction of parturition or caesarean section may be considered. Treatment may unfortunately be unrewarding in severe cases, so prevention is far preferable!
- 2. Hypocalcaemia** - The presentation of this disease is similar to pregnancy toxaemia. Older ewes in late gestation are more likely to be affected, especially if there is a sudden change in feed or other stress. **Treatment** is with 50-80ml Calcium 20% under the skin, which may need to be repeated. It is a good idea to treat for both hypocalcaemia and twin lamb disease if either is suspected, since the clinical signs of the diseases are so similar.
- 3. Cervical Prolapse** - It is important that ewes do not get over-fat. Over-conditioning is one of the risk factors for cervical prolapse in late pregnancy. Once a ewe has had a cervical prolapse they are highly likely to suffer a prolapse again the following year, so they should be culled before the next breeding season.

Damory Vaccination Service

Herd vaccination is a key element to the control of several endemic diseases such as BVD, Leptospirosis & IBR on many farms. In order for a vaccine to be effective it must be stored within strict temperature limits; correctly reconstituted before use; administered via the correct route (i/m or s/c); at the correct dose and interval; and using a properly functioning vaccine gun.



A survey of 71 farms which vaccinated against BVD found that 21% vaccinated using the wrong dose or route of administration, 48% administered the primary course at an incorrect interval, only 24% completed the primary course by the recommended time prior to service, and breakdown of the cold storage of the vaccine potentially occurred at some point on 90% of the farms.

With so many potential pitfalls it appears that many herds are not achieving the full disease protection that they are paying and hoping for.

At Damory we would like to **offer a more complete “vaccination service” to our clients:** For a reduced rate of £60 per hour one of our farm vets can vaccinate your herd, ensuring the vaccine is transported directly from our refrigerator, kept cool and administered correctly. We will also check your vaccine gun and can supply a new one if it is not functioning correctly.

We hope this new service will be of use to farms where time and staffing pressures can make herd vaccination difficult, giving peace of mind that your herd is receiving full protection and value from the vaccine.



Test Barren Ewes for Toxoplasmosis

Scanning is best performed at 40 – 90 days of gestation. As well as the pregnancy diagnosis and guidance for managing groups, scanning results are also useful in terms of disease monitoring. If your barren ewe rate is over 2%, or you have noticed an increased number of returns to service after an irregular extended interval, then an infectious disease could be the cause. Toxoplasmosis is the main infectious cause of early embryo loss in sheep, and a common cause of abortion and weak lambs too.

The **“Barren Ewe Check”** scheme tests for Toxoplasmosis and is supported and subsidised by MSD Animal Health. Up to 8 barren ewes can be blood tested under the scheme, which is available from now until 31st March.



All the farm staff at Damory would like to wish you a very happy and prosperous New Year and thank you for all of your custom over the past 12 months.