

February 2009



DAMORY VETERINARY CLINIC

# Sheep Newsletter

## NEWSLETTER TOPICS

### Bluetongue

### Barren Ewe Check

### Liver Fluke

#### Bluetongue Vaccination

Bluetongue still remains a huge threat to UK livestock, and vaccination needs to be continued this year. We had an excellent uptake on the vaccine last year and this needs to be maintained to help keep Bluetongue from becoming established in the UK.

Currently we are still only vaccinating for strain 8 of the bluetongue virus (although other strains are moving through Europe and could soon become a threat).

Cattle – any stock that received a primary course of 2 doses last year will only require a single booster dose this year. Any cattle not vaccinated last year will require 2 doses 3 weeks apart.

Sheep – all stock will require a single dose whether vaccinated last year or not.

Goats – for previously unvaccinated animals a primary course of 2 doses is required (as in cattle), then 6 monthly boosters are recommended.

Work is still being done on the significance of transfer of immunity via colostrum, but the current advice is that all youngstock (calves/lambs/kids) should be vaccinated from 4 weeks of age, irrespective of when their mothers were vaccinated.

The risk period will begin in mid March again, so aim to get the vaccinations completed well before then. Please contact the surgery to order your vaccine ASAP.

#### Barren Ewe Check

Between now and the end of March Intervet are providing subsidised blood testing of barren ewes for Toxoplasmosis. We need to test 6-8 barren or aborted ewes.

This testing cannot be done on ewes that have been previously vaccinated against Toxoplasma.

#### Liver Fluke

We may be repeating ourselves, but this is the worst year for liver fluke we have ever seen. We've been seeing clinical signs (weight loss, diarrhoea, and death!), but even without obviously sick animals fluke is a debilitating disease, causing reduced growth rates, lower fertility and poorer milk production resulting in lower lamb growth rate..

Adult sheep and overwintered lambs can be tested via a pooled dung sample – the best time of the year to do this is NOW (late winter). Please feel free to bring in pooled dung samples for testing.