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www.howellsvets.co.uk

York Road, Easingwold YO61 3EB

Call us on **01347 823678**, option 1 to speak to our reception team to arrange all visits including emergency work. Available 24/7, 365 days a year.



PRE-TUPPING

Sheep Scab

Sheep scab is a disease caused by the *Psoroptes ovis* mite. It is highly infectious, spreading between sheep as well as contaminated equipment. The lifecycle takes 14 days to complete, and it can last in the environment for up to 17 days.

Sheep often don't show symptoms in the early stages of the disease meaning once clinical signs are seen, up to 60% of the flock may be infected! The common clinical signs include intense itching, wool loss and characteristic scabs.

Diagnosis

This can either be done via a skin scrape at the edge of the lesions or a blood test. It can be difficult to find mites on the skin scrape but if one is found, this is a definite positive result. If the mite isn't found, a blood test for antibodies can be done. This shows exposure to sheep scab. The blood test works well with homebred sheep but is harder to interpret in bought-in ewes with an uncertain exposure history.

Treatment

1. Dipping - In an organophosphate (OP) plunge dip.
Sheep need to be fully submerged (including their head) and left to stand on a hard surface afterwards. OP dips require a certificate of competence so many people opt to use mobile contractors.
2. Injectable - Using Macrocytic Lactones (MLs; clear wormer)
Need to be careful using this as it is also used to treat intestinal worms. Overuse can lead to increased anthelmintic resistance.

For more information regarding sheep scab and its treatments please contact the practice.



By Alasdair Ross



TUPPING

Pre-Breeding fertility examinations:

The most common cause of poor conception rates in ewes is a sub-fertile ram, rather than infectious disease.

It is important to do an MOT of all your tups at least 8 weeks before introducing them to the ewes. This is because sperm production takes 7 weeks and any stress or pain (e.g. lameness) will affect the sperm quality, so we need fit and healthy tups in this period.

Early identification of issues gives you time to treat any problems or buy replacement tups.

20% of tups at breeding soundness examinations (BSE) will be identified as sub-fertile. Without the BSE these tups would have gone to work, and you would have had issues with your conception rates.

50% of these sub-fertile tups will be identified on physical examination. Make sure you check the 'Five T's': see image.

The other 50% of these sub-fertile tups will be identified on fertility testing. This is where we examine the testes then check the sperm under the microscope (both looking at motility on-farm and morphology back at the practice).

Take home messages:

- Problems with tups need to be identified quickly and treated well before the tups are introduced to the ewes.
- Not all problems are visible - fertility testing of tups needs to be done to be certain that they are adequately fertile. Please contact Howells Veterinary Services to arrange this.

RAM MOT

Assess your rams

Toes

Check locomotion, legs and feet

Teeth

Check for under or overshot jaw, gaps and molar abscesses

Testicles

Measure and check firmness (like a flexed bicep) with no lumps or bumps

Tone

Aim for body condition between 3.5 – 4 (spine well covered)

Treat

Check vaccinations are up-to date (clostridia, Pasteurella), parasites, lameness and any shearing requirements.



By Sophie Walker-Munro



AUTUMN CALVING

Preparation is key!

- Ensure all calving kits have been restocked - gloves, lubrication, calving ropes and iodine are essential.
- Clean facilities - these will give our cows and calves the best chance to get going and prevent any disease.
- Ensure cow nutrition is up to date and modified to keep the cows at a good BCS and prevent deficiencies later. This will also ensure that the calves get the best quality colostrum which is essential for thriving.

Tips for post calving:

- If your calves aren't getting up to suckle then please ensure they receive sufficient colostrum. Ideally, they should receive 4 litres in the first 4 hours of life!
- Ensure all navels are dipped with iodine as soon as possible. Remember this should be a 50:50 10% iodine: alcohol solution. Dipping is always better than spraying!

Coccidiosis thrives in Autumn!

Remember that Coccidiosis is particularly prevalent during the autumn calving season when the environmental conditions are favourable. Coccidiosis primarily affects the intestines of young calves and can result in weight loss, lethargy, dehydration and bloody diarrhoea. To keep disease to a minimum: ensure good hygiene, pasture management and provide good quality nutrition to calves. A coccidiostat can be used if deemed necessary by one of our vets.



By Rachael Pond

BIOSECURITY IT'S AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING WE DO



EXPERTISE

At Roxby Farm Supplies we completely understand the central role which biosecurity plays in the effective management of your enterprise. Our team has a wealth of combined experience built up over many decades from working within the industry.

SOUND ADVICE

We work with you to develop an approach that is right for you and your farm. We gain a real understanding of your farm layout and management; this helps us to provide bespoke technical and practical advice.

COMPETITIVE

Our suppliers see the value in what we are trying to achieve this enables us to source the best products at an extremely competitive price. More importantly, we will help you to monitor results and work with you to refine procedures and help maximise profits.



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will eat well, and
ultimately produce well.*

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