



Farm Vet News

Endell Farm Vets Blog

Endell Vets Sheep Team

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SHEEP WORM CONTROL AND RESISTANCE MANAGEMENT



Using newer wormers as a mid-season lamb dose this summer

Use of the two newer wormer groups (orange and purple) has doubled in the two years since they became available through SQPs at merchants. Fears that these products would be used too widely when the classification changed were unfounded and, if used responsibly, there is scope to harness their potential further.

Integrating the two newer groups into worming strategies will help slow resistance to the older groups (white, yellow and clear), keeping them working for longer and improving late season lamb growth rates. In the long term this means cheaper, effective worm control compared with the dangerous prospect of having to rely on the newer groups completely. Not only would that be very expensive, but if the newer groups become the only treatment option then resistance to those would increase rapidly.

As well as being an important option for quarantine treatment of incoming stock in the autumn, SCOPS recommends that either of the two newer wormers are used as a 'mid-season' or 'break drench' to remove worms that have survived prolonged exposure to other wormer groups used earlier in the season.

To work effectively, this one-off annual drench should be used in the latter part of the grazing season. Worms that have survived previous treatments with one or more of the older groups will be removed thus slowing the development of resistance to these three groups with the double benefit that killing the build-up of worms in the lambs will boost performance.

SCOPS

The Sustainable Control of Parasites in Sheep (SCOPS) group is an industry-led group that recognises resistance to the products used to control parasites is one of the biggest challenges to the future health and profitability of the UK sheep industry.

They offer sustainable control strategies to help farmers, vets and health advisors work together to tackle both internal and external parasites. Their website provides practical advice for all farming situations including parasite forecasts for your local area.

The SCOPS principles:

1. Work out a control strategy with your veterinarian or advisor.
2. Use effective quarantine strategies to prevent the importation of resistant worms in introduced sheep and goats
3. Test for Anthelmintic Resistance on your farm
4. Administer anthelmintics effectively
5. Use anthelmintics only when necessary
6. Select the appropriate anthelmintic for the task
7. Adopt strategies to preserve susceptible worms on the farm
8. Reduce dependence on anthelmintics

Considerations when dosing annually with newer wormers

- All lambs must be drenched contrary to the normal SCOPS advice of leaving the fittest lambs untreated
- FEC's should be used to determine the need to treat
- Lambs must not be 'dosed and moved' otherwise this encourages resistance in the worm population. The practical way to avoid this simply is to drench lambs and return them to the same fields for four or five days before moving them on.
- Never use these products without advice from your vet either:
 - in ewes; or,
 - at times other than quarantine treatments and a mid/late-season dose
- Currently, group 5 (5-SI purple) is only available due to supply issues

Getting the most from faecal egg count (FEC) samples

Why bother?

Regular faecal egg counting helps determine the need to treat. Worming sheep unnecessarily encourages resistance to develop in the worm population, reducing the effectiveness of those treatments, and can also be very costly.

FEC's can also be used to check for resistance in the worm population on farm and can give information on the amount of contamination going onto the pasture.

Method

Gather sheep in the corner of a field for a few minutes then pick up samples when they move, or, carry pots/bags when out sheep herding and take a sample as sheep get up.

Guidelines

Number	at least 10 individual samples (unless the group is <50 animals)
Amount	a small handful from each individual. Equal amounts from each animal
Source	samples should be from the same management groups i.e. all lambs or all ewes
Selection	must be random i.e. collect the first 10 fresh samples you come across
Timing	must be fresh faeces - less than 1 hour old!



Labelling

Please include:

- Your name
- ID sample with a group name useful to you
- Date of sampling
- Type of stock i.e. lambs/ewes
- Purpose i.e. routine monitoring / scouring
- Date last treated for worms and what with

Packaging

Enclose the samples in sealed bags, clean gloves or a pot. Free pots can be collected from the practice. Keep the samples cool (not frozen) in an airtight, leak-proof container and deliver the samples to either Salisbury or Newton Wood. A vet will phone to report the result to you and discuss treatment options if necessary.

SUMMARY

It's great news that we have more than doubled the number of doses of the newer wormer products used in the UK. This means many more flocks are harnessing the potential these products have to slow the development of resistance and improve late season lamb growth rates. It also means fears they would be used too widely when the classification changed were unfounded. We now need to push to get even more flocks adopting one of the newer wormer groups as a one-off annual dose and part of their quarantine treatments.

Samples for faecal egg counts can be submitted to either Salisbury or Newton Wood and a vet will phone you to discuss results and treatment plan, if appropriate. Flock Health Club members receive a 20% discount on FEC's along with other benefits, please ask the practice if you'd like more information.