



Farm Vet News

Endell Farm Vets

Endell Vets Flock Health Club

28 May 2021

Thin ewes

With most of your lambs weaned, depending when you lambed, now might be the time to start taking a closer look at your ewes who have worked hard for you over the last few months

BODY CONDITION SCORING

You will all be aware of the importance of regular body condition scoring. Getting into the habit of putting your hands on the backs of ewes, rams and lambs whenever they are gathered keeps you in tune with it and allows you to assess trends which is much more useful than one off scoring of a flock. Scoring is subjective so it is better that the same person carries out the task to be able to make useful comparisons.

	Hill	Upland	Lowland
Weaning	2.0	2.0	2.5
Tupping	2.5	3	3.5
Mid Pregnancy to lambing	2.0	2.5	3.0
8 Weeks Post Lambing	2.0	2.0-2.5	2.5-3.0



REASONS FOR POOR CONDITION IN INDIVIDUAL EWES

- Tumours
- Arthritis
- Endocarditis (heart valve infection)
- Scrapie
- Chronic pneumonia
- CLA



REASONS FOR POOR CONDITION IN SMALL GROUPS

- Poor dentition
- Johne's disease
- OPA/SPA
- Maedi Visna
- Parasitic gastroenteritis (worms)

REASONS FOR POOR CONDITION IN LARGER NUMBERS

- Inadequate nutrition
- Liver fluke
- Sheep scab
- Foot rot
- CODD

INVESTIGATION OF THIN EWES

It may be obvious on history or clinical presentation what is causing the poor condition eg. pneumonia, scald/foot rot, or after completion of non-invasive tests such as worm egg counts or fluke egg counts. Other times the cause of ill-thrift may not be easy to determine and you might want to consider post mortem examination of 1-3 ewes that have been identified for removal from the flock due to poor condition.

Our vets can carry out on farm post mortems to aim to identify diseases with obvious changes such as in liver fluke and tumours but a post mortem at one of the Veterinary Investigation Centres will be able to check for diseases that are not obvious to the naked eye such as Maedi Visna and Johne's, that may have implications for the whole flock.

MAEDI VISNA MONITORING

Maedi Visna (MV) is a chronic infectious viral disease affecting the lungs and nervous system of sheep, and often just presents as poor condition. There is no vaccine or cure and it can be fatal. As more sheep farmers become aware of the disease, those selling stock to other farms are more likely to be asked what their MV status is before purchases are made.

It is also in the interest of your flock to keep them as healthy as possible even if you are not selling animals. Flocks can either be monitored or accredited, with monitored flocks being those that cannot totally isolate their flock and therefore can't be accredited.

Please speak to one of our vets if you would like more information about MV monitoring/accreditation.