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## Worm control in cattle

A recent assessment of the economic burden of major gastrointestinal parasites in cattle and sheep, estimated an annual cost for the 18 participating countries of €1.8 billion. Eighty-one percent of this cost was due to lost production and 19% was attributed to treatment costs. Furthermore, the cost of gastrointestinal nematode infections with resistance against macrocyclic lactones was estimated to be €38 million annually (Charlier et al., 2020). Clearly there is scope to improve the management of worms at the herd level. However, whilst awareness of sustainable methods of parasite control are well described in sheep, the same is not the case for cattle. In light of this, a recent position statement has been published by the British Cattle Veterinary Association (BCVA), accessible here:

<https://www.bcva.org.uk/content/new-bcva-policy-prioritises-parasite-control>

It advocates a shift away from routine “strategic” dosing to a more targeted approach.

“Strategic treatment” describes the routine dosing of first-season grazers at specific intervals of time based upon the predicted life cycle of worms, to minimise adult burdens and their consequences whilst allowing the development of immunity which allows us to minimise treatment when they are adults. Whilst this approach works well, it may promote the development of anthelmintic resistance, making worm control in the future more difficult. Clearly anthelmintic use is still needed, but it must be more discriminating.

In light of this; two new approaches to worm control in cattle have been suggested – “targeted treatment” and “targeted selective treatment”. Such approaches aim to suppress parasite populations below those that have an impact on production, whilst ensuring a pool of susceptible worms (“refugia”) exist to minimise the development of resistant genotypes.

Targeted treatment may be defined as the treatment of a whole group of animals based on knowledge of parasite risk or following diagnostic information and estimation of infection severity – this might be a pooled worm egg count four to eight weeks after turnout, measurement of growth rate data, or milk or blood tests such as serum pepsinogen at housing. By delaying treatment until it is actually required, unnecessary treatment and the development of resistance can be minimised. However, practically implementing such an approach requires diligent monitoring to avoid (sub)clinical effects of worms on growth or milk production from occurring.

Targeted selective treatment is defined as treatment only of individual animals likely to benefit the most from treatment within a group based upon a determinant criterion – eg: O’Shaughnessy (2015) performed this



approach based upon thrice weekly measurement of individual worm egg counts and treatment of individuals with a count of more than 200 in suckler calves and dairy cows. Whilst the results were promising, this approach isn’t especially practical, and for most farmers targeted treatment may be the most appealing route to take.

Policy statements such as those released by the BCVA highlight that there is going to be a move away from strategic treatment of cattle to a more refined approach, such as those described above. These will be farm specific, and to maximise animal performance will require diligence and attention to detail.

If you need any help, our team of vets will be more than happy to discuss how to optimise anthelmintic use on your farm!

# Are external teat sealants right for your herd?

Teat sealants form a bio-adhesive film which reduces milk leakage and decreases the risk of mastitis contracted in the dry period. They can be used at dry off and/or pre-calving and are designed to be used in conjunction with (not as an alternative to) internal sealants. (The effect after application is demonstrated in figure 1.) Because teat sealants are not internal they can easily be used pre-calving in heifers and are an ideal way to start acclimatising heifers to the parlour before they calve with weekly external application.

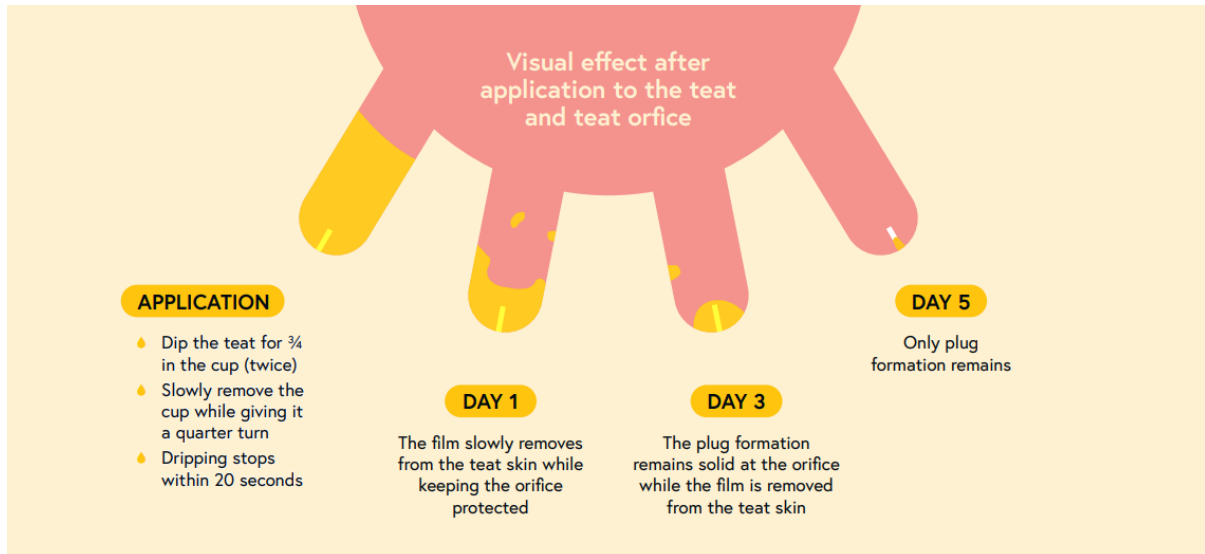


Figure 1 Example of external teat sealant action (Ubera Dry promotional material)

## Uses:

- At dry off: protect the teat canal for five to seven days while the internal teat sealant is forming an adequate barrier
- One to two weeks before calving: protect the teat canal as colostrogenesis develops in the udder and increases the risk of milk leakage.

There is limited research examining the efficacy of external teat sealants but in one study that used rubber feeding teats they found that Uddergold was least effective while Ubera Dry was most effective at protecting the internal teat canal against *E.coli*, *Staph aureus* and *Strep uberis*. Further work is being carried out in the

Netherlands to confirm these findings in the on-farm environment but Ubera Dry is available for sale in the UK.

External teat sealants are unlikely to be needed as a permanent addition to your current dry cow management all year around but different farms may benefit from using them in particularly high risk periods – for example if you have a high rate of summer mastitis soon after drying off or if you have an increase in dry cow origin mastitis in winter due to challenging calving yard management.

If you think you could benefit from external teat sealants please speak to your usual vet.

## Abortion in goats

The cause of a small ruminant abortion can be difficult to determine, but 'abortion outbreaks' are generally diagnosed more easily because there is more available diagnostic material. The reason we may investigate an abortion is to rule out a possible infectious (bacterial or viral) cause. An investigation is usually done by taking a thorough history, samples from the foetus and placenta, sending the foetus/placenta to a lab for a post mortem or taking bloods from the nanny.

### Initial advice to owners:

- Save all products of abortion for examination and testing (foetus, placenta/membranes)
- Isolate aborted doe until diagnosis is reached and/or uterine discharges have ceased.
- **CARE:** Possible zoonotic risk, particularly with pregnant people. Gloves should be worn. Aborted materials should be burned. Dogs and cats should be kept away from material.

### Other things to consider:

- Individual versus herd problem?
- Mixing with other stock? Possible exposure?
- Homebred versus bought-in does?
- Sufficient feed? Silage? Access to poisonous plants?
- Herd disease status? Abortions in previous years?
- Timing of abortion during gestation?
- High rate of empty does?
- Are the does ill/stressed? Trauma? Treated with medicines?

### Common infectious causes of Abortion:

- Enzootic Abortion (Chlamydia)
- Toxoplasmosis
- Listeriosis
- Campylobacter
- Q-fever
- Leptospirosis
- Salmonella



# Blowfly strike in sheep

Blowfly strike occurs when living tissue is invaded by the larvae (maggots) of flies. Green bottle flies will invade undamaged skin and are attracted to areas with soiled fleece or wounds. Blue bottle and black bottle flies will only attack areas that are already damaged.



Eggs laid by adults will hatch into larvae within 12 hours, which explains the rapid progression of this disease. Larvae feed on skin and faecal material and can become fully grown plump maggots within just three days especially when the

conditions are warm and humid. They also secrete enzymes that break down skin and muscle; this decomposing tissue then attracts more flies! Ammonia secreted by the maggots and toxins released by damaged tissues are absorbed into the animal's blood stream causing systemic illness and death. Secondary bacterial infections are common too and can lead to death if left untreated. All in all, very nasty!

Maggots drop to the ground and pupate (develop a brown casing) before emerging as flies within three to seven days in the summer months. During the colder months, these pupae can over-winter and emerge as soil temperatures rise in the spring.

The most typical presentation is around the back end in ewes and lambs which are soiled either due to worms or lush pasture, but are also commonly found in scald and footrot lesions.

Flystrike is a huge welfare and economic issue for farmers and prevention is by far better than having to treat affected individuals. Preventative treatments should be in combination with daily checking of stock for any behaviour changes that may suggest disease.

Products differ in their ability to treat or prevent disease, and how long they last.



*We see some of the worst cases of flystrike in the autumn when it is still wet and warm, but many of the preventative products applied earlier in the season will have stopped working.*

Below is a summary of the products we have available in the Farm Office – please remember that if you only have a small flock we have open bottles from which we can dispense the required volume for the number of animals that you have.

Product	Notes	Chemical Name	Protection/Treatment	Meat Withdrawal
CLiK	These all contain the same active ingredients but at different concentrations leading to different lengths of cover.	Dicyclanil 5% (50 mg/ml)	16 weeks protection (not treatment)	40 days
CLiK EXTRA		Dicyclanil 6.5% (65 mg/ml)	19 weeks protection (not treatment)	40 days
CLiKZiN		Dicyclanil 1.25% (12.5 mg/ml)	8 week protection (not treatment)	7 days
Fly & Lice Spot On	These all contain the same active ingredient at the same concentration but are made by different companies.	Deltamethrin	<b>FLYSTRIKE TREATMENT ONLY</b> (no ongoing protection) Up to 6 week reduction in lice and ticks too.	35 days
Dectospot				
Spotinor				
Crovect		Cypermethrin	Treats and provides 6-8 weeks protection. Also kills existing lice and up to 10 weeks protection against ticks.	8 days

## Spring 2022 Turnout Offers

**AUTOWORM**



**£14.80**  
per bolus

**DECTOSPOT**



**£85**  
2.5L

**ELECTRON**



**£2.35**  
per tag

All prices exclude VAT and are guaranteed until the end of May 2022.



## Upcoming Events and Courses

### Growing Your Lambs

*How to ensure maximum growth rates and health in your lambs*  
Monday 6 June, 2pm  
Venue TBC

### Responsible Use of Medicines

*Online Course*  
Friday 27 May, 10am  
Cost £25 incl VAT per person  
If you would like to attend, please ring the office to book your place (01722-333291, option 1).

## Webinars

The following webinars are available on our website:

### Beef Benchmarking Introduction

### Bovine Respiratory Disease Prevention

### Colostrum Management in Beef Calves

### Block Calving – to Estrumate or CIDR?

### Getting Lambs to Grow

### Backyard Pigs

Please visit  
[www.endellfarmvets.co.uk](http://www.endellfarmvets.co.uk)  
for more information.

## Avian flu: freedom!

As of 2 May, poultry and other captive birds have been allowed to be let outside unless you are within a 3km Protection Zone! Although the requirement to house your birds is ending for most keepers, the Avian Influenza Prevention Zone remains in place; this means you must continue to practise strong biosecurity as there is still a risk your birds could catch bird flu.

Please be careful about letting your free range birds out onto freshly cut grass – they seem to have a real taste for this and gorge themselves leading to crop impactions which can only be resolved with surgery!



## LATEST UPDATE

Housing measures end  
00:01 on 2 May 2022

BIRD FLU ALERT

Animal & Plant Health Agency

FIND OUT MORE AT [GOV.UK/BIRDFLU](http://GOV.UK/BIRDFLU)

## Notice:

*Over the last three years UK businesses have suffered through a global pandemic, lockdowns and, more recently, dramatic increases in energy/fuel prices with inflation (and interest rates) starting to follow quickly – until now we've been able to continue to deliver our service without an increase in our fees.*

*However, farm vet businesses are relatively simple things and our biggest costs are labour and fuel – the 33% increase in fuel price in the last 12 months and the threat of 10% inflation by the end of the year means that for the first time in some years we're going to have to increase our fees, effective from 1 May 2022.*

*If you would like to discuss what this might mean for your business, please feel free to contact the office to speak to Sarah or Jim.*

## Finally ...

We are very sad to announce that Lillith has decided to move on to dairy pastures new at the end of May. We've had the pleasure of being part of her career since before she graduated in 2019 and are proud to have been a small part in her taking on her new role. We wish her all the very best for the future!



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