



Coombefield Veterinary Hospital

Sheep Newsletter

April 2015

Most of the people I have seen or spoken to this year seem to have had very successful lambings and the weather has certainly been very favourable. We have done several caesareans and have taken out some huge lovely looking lambs!

Post Mortems

We have done a small number of post mortems over the last month or two in lambs. The majority seem to have died of pulpy kidney (one of the clostridial diseases). Clostridial disease does often affect well looking lambs. It is vital to remember to Heptavac to avoid this problem as it is such a shame to find dead lambs when the problem could have been prevented.

Abortions and Schmallerberg

Abortion doesn't seem to have been much of a problem this year amongst our clients. Reports from the Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA) found the usual Toxoplasma and Enzootic Abortion to be the main causes. A few cases of deformed lambs have been submitted to the VLA for testing for Schmallerberg disease this year. So far all cases tested have been negative.

Vaginal Prolapses

We have seen several cases of vaginal prolapses in late gestation ewes and have heard reports from some farms of increased numbers this year. There is no easy answer as to why we get prolapses more in some years than others or on some farms than others. Possible causes for increased numbers include:

- Overfat ewes (BCS 4 or greater)
- Triplets
- High fibre diets, particularly those containing root crops
- Housed ewes (hence limited exercise)
- Lameness leading to prolonged periods lying down

Short docked tails, steep fields (!) and subclinical hypocalcaemia (milk fever) have also been thought by some to have an effect.

Nematodirus

Lastly, I know seems like it is still early and we are still getting some frosts, but the season for Nematodirus will be upon us soon (we have already seen a Nematodirus egg on one worm egg count). The best way to avoid problems with Nematodirus is to avoid grazing lambs on pastures used by lambs last year. The May NADIS forecast is warning that Nematodirus may be a problem early this year due to the warm temperatures in April. Preventative treatments will be needed if lambs are grazing infected pastures.

Scouring in lambs can also be caused by other worms and coccidiosis. A worm egg count is a useful way of diagnosing the problem and will make sure the treatment is the correct one.

If you would like to speak to a Farm vet or arrange a visit
Please call 01297 630515 or email farm@axvets.co.uk