

# December Sheep Newsletter

SUMMERLEAZE  
FARM & EQUINE VETS



## APHA Thin Ewe Investigation

Do you have any thin ewes that you have identified for removal from the flock? Would you be interested in knowing what is the cause of these problem animals, and if they are part of a bigger picture affecting overall flock health?

APHA are currently offering a FREE post mortem service (three ewes per farm) for a limited period of time (currently until the end of December, although this *may* be extended). They are looking specifically to test for the 'iceberg diseases' in addition to other potential causes of ill thrift. A full report will be provided and the carcass disposed of with no additional charge.

If you would be interested in this please contact us and we can liaise with the VLA. Blood samples are required prior to euthanasing the sheep which we could do on farm or in the trailer en route to Starcross.

## What are Iceberg Diseases?



The term 'Iceberg diseases' refers to a group of diseases which can cause various symptoms in flocks, one of which being thin ewes where no obvious cause can be found. This group of diseases includes Border Disease (BD), Caseous Lymphadenitis (CLA), Maedi Visna (MV), ovine Johne's disease and Ovine Pulmonary Adenocarcinoma (OPA).

They can cause a wide array of symptoms between them but one thing they have in common is each disease is thought to be only the 'tip of the iceberg' in terms of its affect on overall flock performance. In addition to visible symptoms these diseases will also affect scanning rate, lambing percentage, lamb growth rates along with ewe and ram replacement rates.

It is estimated that only 5% of UK farms are currently doing any form of screening for these diseases. Identifying the presence of a disease on farm and tackling it could prove beneficial in all aspects of flock production.

## Have you seen anything like these in your flock?



CLA tends to cause abscesses in lymph nodes around the head. However, in around 25% of sheep the abscesses are entirely internal. Some infected sheep do not develop abscesses at all.

Hairy shaker' lamb (above)..... part of the presentation of Border Disease which affects reproductive performance.



This ewe (left) died of pneumonia characterised by a large amount of fluid in the lungs.... OPA.

## Rams

Have you been happy with your rams? If you have any suspect rams and are still using them remember we can do a fertility exam to check semen quality. 10% reduction for flock health club members.

If mating has finished for you and you are worried about the condition of your rams it might be worth doing a worm egg count to check worm load.

## Sudden deaths

Hopefully you haven't had any, but if you have do you know why they died?



*Summerleaze Vets*  
*Christmas & New Year Opening Hours*

*Christmas Eve*  
8am till 4pm

*Christmas Day*  
Closed - Emergencies Only

*Boxing Day*  
Closed - Emergencies Only

*New Year's Eve*  
8am till 4pm

*New Year's Day*  
Closed - Emergencies Only

**Wishing all our client's, a very  
Happy Christmas and a healthy New Year**

**PLEASE** rest assure that we have dedicated Farm and Equine vets on call for emergencies throughout the festive season. People often say "I wasn't sure if it was an emergency or not" - the easy answer is, if you are worried enough to think "I might need the vet" then call - we would rather speak to you or see your animal if you are concerned, than not see it!

## Christmas Present Idea



Summerleaze Calendar  
for 2021 is now available  
£5 each

Available from Reception



Summerleaze Vets, Axminster, EX13 7RA  
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