Highgate Veterinary Clinic

Farmers Newsletter - May 2004

Cattle wormers—Making the right choice

There is a plethora of different cattle wormers on the market and although they are all designed to kill worms, there are some very important differences.

The correct wormer for your farm depends on your grazing policies, stocking densities, and handling facilities.

One of our larger dairy farms was treating all his young stock (yearlings and in calf heifers) with Autoworm boluses. The treatment was expensive but convenient and gave good growth rates.

In the autumn of 2002, his dairy herd started to cough and production fell. Lungworm was diagnosed and Eprinex (a nil milk withdrawal wormer costing ~£4.50 per animal) had to be given to all the dairy cows.

As part of his herd health plan we considered a different way to worm his cattle and stimulate enough immunity to prevent disease in the adults. We chose to use Noromectin pour on at 3 and 8 weeks after turnout only in his first grazing heifers. In autumn, they were treated again when they started to cough, but the heifers grew well and, as they've had a natural dose of husk, they shouldn't get it again.

Although this has meant extra handling of the heifers, pour ons are easy to apply and happily this has reduced his wormer bill by over 50%.

This may not work on your farm as every situation is unique.

Herd (and flock) health planning can reap big benefits to your animals health and your pocket! If you don't have a health plan or need yours renewing, please give us a ring.

Nematodirus season is upon us!

Nematodirus is a worm which causes scour and death in lambs between four and twelve weeks of age. Lambs over 12 weeks old are immune.

Diagnosis is often on post mortem as the lambs can become ill before worm eggs are seen in the faeces.

Infection is by larvae deposited on the ground by last year's lamb crop and the eggs hatch when the average temperature is above 10°C when thousands of larvae appear simultaneously. Locally, disease is seen in May and June.

The likelihood of disease depends on the age of the lambs when the larvae hatch. In a mild spring, hatching occurs when the lambs are too young to graze sufficient grass and larvae. In a cold spring, the lambs are over 12 weeks and immune.

If your lambs are grazing where last year's lambs scoured in May/June, then you will probably have problems this year. If you can't avoid these pastures, don't wait until the lambs start scouring—the damage is already done! Drenching the lambs three times over the two months with a white drench, levamisole or Oromec should do the trick. Oral Cydectin will work but, as it doesn't have a persistence against Nematodirus, it's an expensive option. Don't use Avermectin injections as they don't work.

If your lambs still scour, submit faeces samples to us to rule out coccidiosis.

In Brief

Return of Coprin

This injectable copper supplement for cattle is back on the market. The present stock has a short shelf life so we are not keeping it in stock. If you want some coprin, please order it.

New Fly Treatment

Swish is a new pour on cattle insecticide which lasts 10 weeks (c.f. "Spot On" 8 weeks).

It is claimed that one application will last the fly season. The down side is that it appears to be 30% more expensive than Spot on.

Flock Check

Up to the end of July 2004, Intervet are offering a free blood test of ewes that aborted this year. This will detect antibodies to toxoplasmosis and enzootic abortion.

This newsletter is available on the Highgate Veterinary Clinic web site at **www.highgate-vets.co.uk**

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