



# Highgate Veterinary Clinic

## Farmers Newsletter - January 2005

### The Lambing Contract

Last year, a dozen clients took part in our first lambing contract and it was so successful that we're running the contract again this year, the terms of which are:-



1	The contract this year costs £110 and is placed onto your account when you join.
2	Ewes will be examined free between 3 weeks before they lamb to 4 weeks after they lamb.
3	Lambings will be free but caesareans will be charged as normal.
4	Lambs will be examined free up to one month of age.
5	Laboratory work will be charged as normal.
6	Visits and returns to surgery outside working hours will be charged.
7	There will be a 10% discount on Spectam Scour Halt and Scabivax up to the end of September. These discounts will not be given retrospectively.

### Worming Sheep

Lambing time will soon be on us (it already is for some). Many of you are used to vaccinating with Heptavac P before lambing but remember that there are advantages to worming ewes before or at lambing time.

Adult sheep pick up worms all year round but few develop into egg producing adults. The worms sit in the gut wall in a state of suspended animation. This continues until the month before and shortly after lambing. The ewe's immunity

weakens as a normal part of late pregnancy. This allows the dormant worms to develop to adults and release masses of eggs which are deposited on the pasture ready to infect this year's crop of lambs. Worming the ewes in late preg-

nancy reduces the need to treat lambs later and therefore is cost effective. Bearing in mind that there is a high incidence of worm resistance to white drenches, we recommend you use Cydectin or Dectomax.

### Johnes Disease – The Next Public Health Scare?



Many of you will have seen cases of either suspected or confirmed Johnes disease in your herd. The laboratory at Penrith diagnosed over twenty cases last month. Many more cattle will be culled without

testing if they are showing the typical symptoms of watery scour and weight loss while remaining bright and eating. Animals are most susceptible to infection as young calves. They pick up the bacteria (Mycobacterium avium paratuberculosis) across the placenta, via faeces or from colostrum and milk. There is then a long gap, often of several years, before they develop diarrhoea. A reduced milk yield will be seen in the lacta-

tion before this. Sheep can also suffer from Johnes disease, presenting as wasting rather than scour. The bacteria has also been suspected of having a role in Crohn's disease in people. A study has now shown it to be present in the blood of some affected people. How would you fare if, in the future, the milk companies decided to collect only from Johnes free herds or to pay a premium for such milk?

Eliminating it from a herd would involve changes in calf and slurry management as well as blood testing adult cattle. Unfortunately, until scour develops, sampling will only pick up 50% of infected animals. The extended incubation period means that any positives are likely to be the tip of an iceberg. A long-term commitment would be needed to gain disease-free status. Starting now might pay dividends in the future.

### TB Testing reminder



If your TB test due date is on or after the first of February 2005 then you need to be thinking about arranging it now. The

rules are changing. Tests need to be completed and the paperwork with DEFRA sometime in the three months preceding your due date. (Previously it was the three months after) If DEFRA doesn't get your paperwork then movement restrictions will be applied from the second of February 2005.

If you leave it to the last minute to book your tests then we cannot be responsible for the consequences if we cannot fit you in on time.

### Janet Requests

After a little confusion, Janet asks, when paying your bill, could you please write on the back of your cheque the invoice number that payment relates to. Thanks.