

Newsletter May 2022

How big of a deal is anthelmintic resistance in sheep?

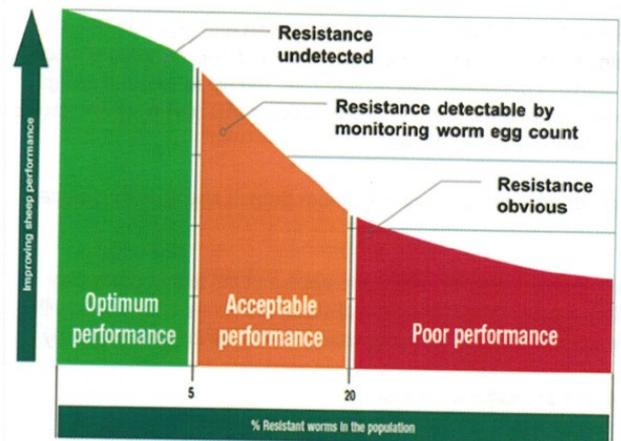
Anthelmintic resistance is one of the biggest challenges to the health and profitability of sheep and affects the entire sheep industry. A recent study found that parasitic worms has been estimated to cost the European livestock industry more than €1.8 billion per year, with drug-resistance costing at least €38 million per year in production losses and treatment costs.

Anthelmintic resistance is the ability of worms to survive the normal dose of a wormer and pass that ability onto its offspring. This results in the proportion of resistant worms in the population increasing over time. Worms can be resistant to one class or several classes of wormer.

The percentage of resistant worms, and the number that survive treatment, increases with time as illustrated:

The impact of wormer resistance on the farm will not be immediately obvious. As resistance develops, there is a gradual increase in the number of worms surviving treatment. The worms left behind will hold the lambs back, decreasing growth rates by up to 50% before there are any visible signs that the wormer treatment has not been fully effective. The level of challenge, and therefore the need to treat for these worms during the summer and autumn, is weather dependant.

- Even low levels of resistance can leave enough worms behind to affect growth rates. Indeed, when the number of resistant worms is more than 10%, we start to gradually lose lamb performance because the product is not performing at its optimum level.
- A low to moderate worm burden can reduce growth rates by up to **50% without any obvious clinical signs.**



Source – SCOPS

This is why we need to change current practices and adopt a more **sustainable approach to worm control** - even when there are no visible signs of decreased performance or lack of wormer efficiency. In the last 10 years the number of reports of resistance to the three older classes have been increasing. Research from Wales Against Anthelmintic Resistance Development (WAARD) showed the majority of farms surveyed had a degree of resistance to all three older worm classes.

Once Anthelmintic resistance has developed, it is not reversible, so we need to do everything possible to slow the development of resistance. The speed at which resistance develops depends on how carefully and sustainably Anthelmintics are used. This means avoiding practices that drive resistance development, such as:

- **Under-dosing:** weigh the animals, calibrate the dosing gun and dose to the heaviest animal in the group.
- **Over-using wormers:** move from routine dosing to routine monitoring. Lambs should only be treated when their worm burden reaches the point where it starts to decrease their growth rate; the same wormer group should not be used repeatedly or for consecutive treatments; and the newer group 4-AD (Orange) and group 5-SI (Purple) wormers should be used in every flock at the right time.

Its always best to check how effective a treatment has been by doing a post-treatment drench check, with a faecal egg count, after every treatment.

As the impact of resistant worms remains invisible until resistance levels reach the tipping point, it is important to include newer actives in worm control plans now. Taking action before there are obvious problems on the farm will help maintain the activity of wormers for the future, as well as allowing lambs to reach their growth potential today. For more information, please speak to one of our vets or contact the office on 01278 663399.

Commercial Sheep Discussion Group

Do you want to progress your sheep business?
Do you want to maximise all avenues of potential revenue on farm?

We are launching a Sheep discussion group for farmers in the Somerset and East Devon. This will involve regular benchmarking to allow you to see how your sheep business is comparing and identify areas for investment and additional revenue.

The first meeting '**Soil Health and Autumn Re-seeds**' will take place at **Stream Farm, Broomfield, Bridgwater, TA5 2EN** on **Tuesday 31st May at 1pm.**

THIS EVENT IS FREE TO CLIENTS.

Food and Refreshments will be provided.

Please contact any of our branches today to book your place today.



Introducing Victoria

Victoria joined the team at Farm Vets Southwest in November 2021 from a practice in Axminster after graduating from the Royal Veterinary College in the summer of 2021. Growing up on her family's suckler and sheep farm in Somerset she enjoys all aspects of farm animal practice. Since being with the practice Victoria has gotten stuck into the busy spring period attending lambing's and calving's.

Sheep and Goat Health Club

The next meeting of the Small Flock Health Club for Sheep and Goat keepers with less than 50 animals will take place on **Thursday 9th June** at Lane Farm, Dommett, Ilminster at 2pm. This event is **FREE** for Flock Health Club members and **£15 to non-members**. Please contact any of our offices to book your place today.

Medicines Course

Due to current high demand an additional date for the Medicines Course has been added. This course will take place on **Tuesday 7th June at 2pm** at Sedgemoor Auction Centre. Please contact any of our offices to book your place.

Sheep Abortions: Free Lab Testing

Subsidised blood testing is only available until 30th June 2022 so take advantage of it now! There will be a charge for a visit and time to take blood samples.

Freeze-branding

We are currently investing in Freeze-branding kit and training for our Vet Techs. We hope to roll out this service soon - watch this space. We will be able to do whole herds or we will have the flexibility to do small numbers - new cows or heifers coming through.