

# *West Lakeland Veterinary Group*

## Farm newsletter November 2016

**Preventing Rickets in Hoggs** Rickets is usually described as a condition of hill hoggs away wintered on good dairy grazing and is a consequence of Vitamin D deficiency at a time of fast growth triggered by improved nutrition. Rapid growth of the skeleton ensues but calcification of new bone is impaired leading to widening of growth plates. Stiffness, laying down a lot and twisted limbs can result. Ewe lambs have also been known to be affected. Vitamin D is produced in the skin, in this area only between mid-March and mid-September. **Prevention** of rickets is by administration of a Vitamin D drench before hoggs move to wintering (e.g. Battle, Hayward and Bower Vitamin D3 drench). This can be repeated in early spring. Consideration could also be given to dosing of breeding ewe hoggs.

**Cobalt deficiency (pine)** is seen where low soil cobalt concentrations exist and can be made worse by gut worms. The common clinical signs are mostly seen in weaned lambs at pasture during late summer/autumn and include: lethargy, reduced appetite, poor quality wool, small size and poor body condition. Diagnosis is based upon clinical signs and blood sampling or supplementation trial. The most rapid treatment is to combine an intramuscular injection of vitamin B12 and drenching with up to 1 mg/kg bodyweight of cobalt sulphate. Thereafter, monthly drenching with cobalt sulphate, often in combination with an anthelmintic preparation, should ensure liveweight gain. Monthly dosing lambs from around three months-old with cobalt drenches should supply sufficient cobalt to growing lambs in most situations, the cost of oral cobalt supplementation is less than 1pence per 25Kg lamb. Boluses are also available but can be more expensive but would be more worthwhile if other trace element deficiencies exist e.g. copper or iodine.

**The National Johnes Management Plan.** This has been launched to help control Johnes Disease on UK farms. Johnes Disease is a chronic, debilitating and irreversible infection of cattle causing scour and weight loss which is common in many herds. Both Chris and Ruth are now accredited Johnes advisors through the scheme and would be happy to offer advice and assist farmers in joining the scheme. We will be speaking about Johnes at a meeting hosted by AHDB and sponsored by Boehringer (the makers of the new BVD live vaccine 'BOVELA'). The meeting will be held at the Santon Bridge Inn on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December. Arrival at 7pm, supper will be provided at 7.30 followed by a Johnes presentation, Please contact the practice to reserve your places. The link to the action Johnes website which can provide more details of the scheme is: <http://www.actionjohnesuk.org/>

**Liver Fluke** Due to last winter being very mild and the summer being wet, the parasite forecast is predicting a high risk of fluke in the NorthWest. Different drenches for fluke should be used at different times in the season and if you are unsure as to which flukicide to use when, please ask one of our vets who will be happy to offer advice. Normally in high risk years sheep deaths peak from fluke in November and continue into December and January so it is advisable to treat as soon as possible if it hasn't been done already and to repeat the treatment in 4-6 weeks (source- SAC consulting). Clinical signs of liver fluke causing a problem in your flock would include sudden deaths, weight loss, poor growth rates or lethargy. Diagnosis can be made by looking for fluke eggs in faeces which indicate that adult fluke are present, or at post-mortem. The table below illustrates which product can be used when in relation to treating for fluke after housing.

Active ingredient	Administration route	Stage of fluke killed
Triclabendazole (Fasinex)	Oral	2 weeks onwards
Closantel (Flukiver/ closamectin)	Drench/pour-on	7 weeks onwards
Nitroxynil (Trodax)	s/c injection	8 weeks onwards
Clorsulon (Ivomec super)	s/c injection	Adults only
Oxyclozanide (Zanil)	Oral	Adults only
Albendazole (Albanil)	Oral	Adults only