**Farm Newsletter March 2018**

Fluke

It tends to be mainly adult fluke that are a problem in sheep in spring and so all flukicides should be effective at this point. Therefore, it would be recommended to consider switching away from triclabendazole, help minimise resistance to it. At this time of year options include closantel (Flukiver) or Rafoxanide (Ranide) which is a vet only product. For further advice on this matter please speak to one of our vets.

E.coli infection in young lambs

E.coli can be a well known problem at lambing time. It can cause several problems including watery mouth, navel ill, joint ill, scour, meningitis and septicaemia.The key areas for prevention of E.coli are: **Colostrum management- 50ml/kg within first 2 hours of life**Navel treatments: ensure navels are sprayed or dipped promptly after birth (dipping achieves greater coverage) with an antiseptic solution such as Iodine solution (branded dips range from 2-7% iodine). Environmental hygiene: cleaning out individual lambing pens between lambs and ensuring lambing areas are well bedded with clean straw.SAC have reported that resistance of E.coliin lambs treated with antibiotics last year was found to varying antibiotics, but especially tetracyclines (oxycare) in over 50% of cases. Therefore we will not be supplying yellow oxytet tablets for lambs any more and recommend thelicensed treatments available which include Spectam and orojet, which have much lower levels of resistance demonstrated to disease causing strains of E.coli.

Joint Ill

Recent analysis by SAC showed that Streptococcus Dysgalactiae was more common than E.coli as a cause of Joint ill in lambs and again the bacteria was resistant to oxytet in most cases, but susceptible to Penicillin. Joint Ill is all about prevention as response to treatment was poor, but early intervention with a Penicillin gave the best results.

Husk

Husk is a condition in cattle, caused by the worm Dictycaulus Viviparous. After eating the larva on pasture the worm grows in the windpipe and can be causing disease within 3 weeks. The weather conditions were ideal in 2017 for causing many husk outbreaks. These outbreaks caused severe and prolonged coughing with the patient off its food and not gaining weight or producing its potential milk yield. Vaccination is the best method of prevention and greatly reduces losses, with regular worming of young stock often leaving cattle with poor immunity and vulnerable to infection after calving. The first dose given to calves over 8 weeks of age, followed by another in 4 weeks and cattle turned out not less than 2 weeks later. Allison is taking orders now for Huskvac so that calves are fully protected before turnout. An extra single dose to vaccinated cattle before their second grazing season will help to further protect cattle entering the adult herd.

Sheep health at Lambing time

Silage analysis (£12.50+VAT per sample) and pre-lambing blood testing of sheep (lab fees £130) are important tools for assessing nutrition. Blood tests are done 2 to 3 weeks before lambing to assess the ewe’s energy, protein and certain mineral levels. With this information changes can be made to help prevent staggers, twin lamb and ensure good colostrum and optimal lamb growth. Aim to test 20 sheep of minimum 5 singles, 5 twins and 5 triplets.To discuss any of thesetopicswith a vet please call the surgery on 01946 820312.