



September 2023

Autumn Meeting- Parasite control at housing: Fluke and Worm Treatment Decisions

Vets Andy and Roger will be holding a worm walk and discussion at Tregondale Farm, Menheniot, with the Rows kindly hosting. Paul Uglow (of Norbrook) will be challenging commonly held beliefs about parasite management, asking questions like – ***do you really need to use fluke products?*** Food will of course be provided! This meeting is free to beef club members, with a fee of £25/farm for non-members - all welcome!

Date: Wednesday 18th October

Time: 11:00 – 14:00

Address: Tregondale Farm, Menheniot, PL14 3RG

The transition away from single farm payments

With so much changing quickly, and the costs of everything rocketing, there has never been a better time to use tailored, free, on farm support. **Castle Vets are hosting a free workshop with Business Information point.** They have been given funding to support farms across Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, and Somerset.

We will be letting you know what is available, when you can apply, how to make sure your business is viable and if there are any easy changes you can make to help improve your farm as the subsidies are withdrawn.

After the workshop you are entitled to further free, individual, one-to-one support with a consultant. They can come onto your farm and carry out a detailed, independent investigation of all farming and business activities, to develop a plan and support you through it.

The workshop will take place on **11th of October, 7pm-9:30pm at Liskerrett Community Centre, Vareley Lane, Liskeard PL14 4AP.** This is free to attend and includes a buffet and refreshments.

Please RSVP with the surgery (**we will need your SBI number**) or via this link:

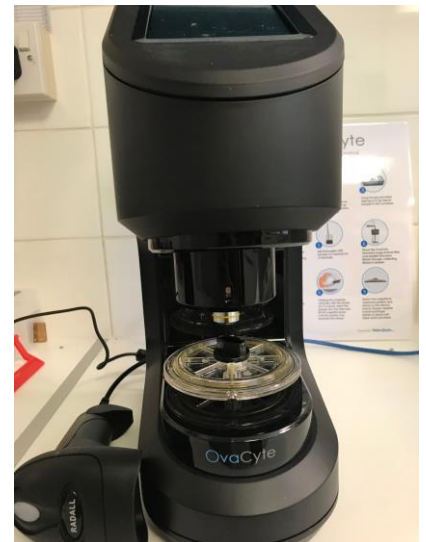
<https://businessinfopoint.co.uk/workshops/farm-grants-update-navigating-the-agricultural-transition-94/>



Watch out for Autumn Worms!

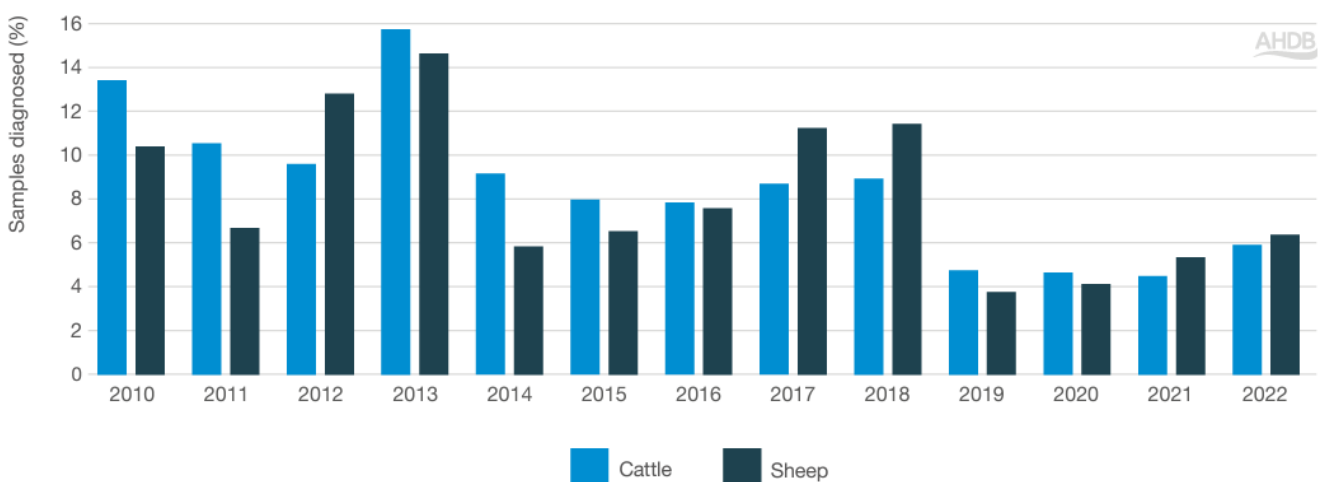
Last year, we saw very late peaks in worm burdens across our farms. This is likely to repeat itself this year, so we urge sheep farmers to consider regularly monitoring the worm level in their fattening lambs. Lack of grazing due to grass burn out led to alternative pastures being used last year, and this unfortunately led to some incidences of high mortality, as grazing was being re-used within the same season. Some areas where fluke might be abundant might also be being accessed (e.g. near pools, rivers or ponds).

At the start of this summer, Castle Vets purchased a new in-house worm egg counting machine to increase the speed, reliability, and repeatability of our results. We now only need 3 grams of dung sample to get you an accurate roundworm egg count. Our turn-around time will be much quicker, enabling you to act as soon as possible, if you need to.



Fluke – Time to rethink your treatments?

Fluke levels vary greatly on your farm year to year, from field to field. This parasite's lifecycle is completely dependent upon snails, which require damp conditions to survive and thrive. As can be seen below, 2018-22 had the lowest rates of liver fluke diagnosis in recent times. This could be because we have become better at identifying and treating it but could also be linked to climate change. Hotter, drier summers lead to less snails and so reduce the volume of fluke surviving and completing their lifecycle.



Source: APHA

Figure 1. Diagnoses of liver fluke in GB sheep and cattle 2010–2022 showing the year-to-year variation in risk of liver fluke. (2022 period still in progress at time of print)

Note: diagnoses presented as a percentage of diagnosable submissions of fasciolosis in cattle and chronic fasciolosis in sheep, excluding continuation diagnoses of acute and chronic fasciolosis and submissions recorded as 'diagnosis not applicable'.

Around 5% of all ruminant livers in the UK are consistently condemned due to fluke damage¹. Animals must be grazing to pick up the liver fluke parasite -fluke cysts are killed in silage bales

under anaerobic conditions within 2 weeks of sealing. Once eaten, the parasite makes its way through the gut wall and burrows into the liver. The immature fluke migrate through the liver (causing damage as they go!) and end up in the bile ducts. These tubes link the gall bladder to the gut and are used to squeeze digestive juices ('bile) into the cow's gut that help it to digest fat. It is the movement of the fluke through the liver that causes extensive trauma, inflammation, and scarring, leading to condemned livers at slaughter.



Clinical signs of fluke in sheep and cattle	
<p>Long term infection</p> <p>More common in cattle + occurs months after initially eating fluke on pasture, late in season or at housing</p>	<p>Short term (acute) infection</p> <p>More common in sheep + occurs about three weeks after fluke ingested on pasture</p>
<p>Bottle Jaw (fluid under jaw – the liver isn't functioning properly)</p> <p>Weight loss</p> <p>Ill-thrift</p> <p>Anaemia (pale inner-eyelids and gums)</p> <p>Poor production (lower scanning percentages, more susceptible to other disease like twin lamb / ketosis)</p>	<p>Sudden death</p> <p>Abdominal pain</p> <p>Lethargy</p>

In October, vets Andy + Roger will be joined by Paul Uglow (from Norbrook) for a farm walk, evaluation, and discussion around both worming grazing stock and fluke control. With weather and fluke burden changing so significantly over the past five years a greater emphasis on diagnosing fluke pre-treatment is advised. A new way of testing dung (copra-antigen testing) can tell us whether your animals are infected, within 5-6weeks of infection. Previous fluke egg counts can only detect infection after 10-12weeks and are less reliable as flukes shed eggs irregularly.

This new tool, in conjunction with changing conditions, makes it easier and more appropriate to find out if your stock are actually infected, before you treat them.

<https://ahdb.org.uk/knowledge-library/liver-fluke-control-in-grazing-livestock>

Focus on: BVD

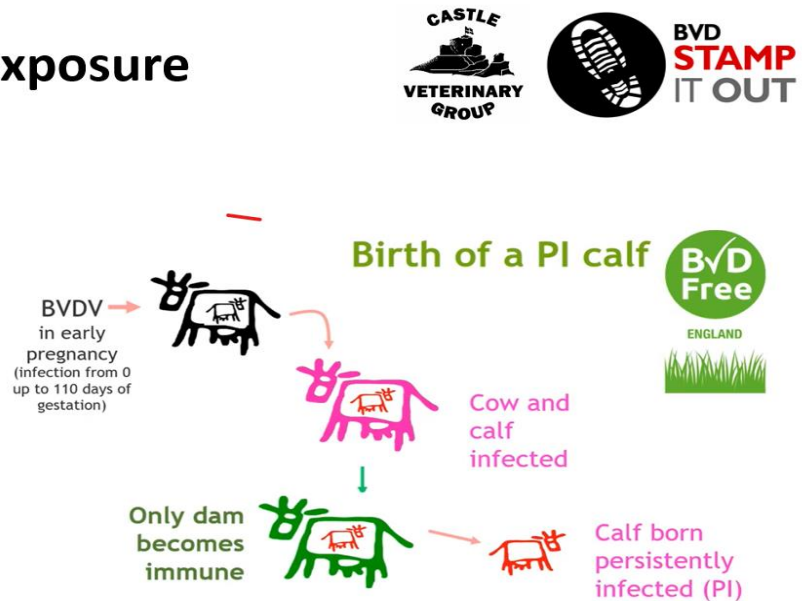
BVD (bovine viral diarrhoea) virus testing is now a requirement for all Red Tractor beef farms. Generally, your vet will take 5-10 samples from homebred livestock to look for exposure to the virus. BVD causes 'infertility', abortions, and increased incidence of youngstock diseases, such as pneumonia and scours. BVD is often carried into farms by buying in pregnant cows (or 'Trojan Horses'), who's foetus has already been infected by the virus. If this calf is delivered alive, it acts as a virus factory churning out millions of infectious agents (these calves are called 'PI's – persistently infected animals).

BVD is widespread, and when Castle Vets sampled 116 of our herds in 2020-21, 9% of them showed exposure to BVD.

Where did the BVD exposure come from?

- Fattening animals
- Trojan horses
- Boundaries

Vaccination does not guarantee 100% protection



Yearly monitoring is crucial in reducing the impact this disease could have on your farm. We know getting rid of BVD is possible, as the whole of Scotland is BVD Free, having undergone a voluntary, then compulsory and government enforced screening program.

Funding for this testing is available through the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway (AHWP), which is a grant through the Sustainable Farming Initiative. AHWP funding also gives you several hours of vet time, to complete a health review of your stock, but (unlike Red Tractor Reviews), we also have funding time and freedom to discuss issues in depth. This could include a full housing assessment (have you had high levels of calf pneumonia?), nutritional review (have you had ketosis, staggers, or poor conception rates?), or investigating your herds' productivity (do less than 65% of your cows calve within the first three weeks of your block?). BVD remains a threat to your farm's productivity and your stock's health, so we urge you to consider using this government funding to continue to monitor it, and guard against it!

