



**WEATHER SUMMARY**

The weather in January was changeable and generally mild in the South, but colder in the North, with temperature 1-1.5°C above average over much of southern England, but 0.5-1.0°C below in northern Scotland. Rainfall was above average in most of the UK apart from the North East and 1.5 times above average in Northern Ireland.

**SHEEP**

**GASTROINTESTINAL (GI) WORMS**

- With lambing time approaching, plans for worm control for this year's grazing season should already be in place.
- Forward planning helps maximise the use of safe grazing.
- This can be done by making use of the new sheep parasite control planners available through veterinary practices participating in the NADIS parasite control initiative.
- Identify both previous and future use of pastures, particularly use of aftermaths, and areas that will be grazed by ewes and lambs, especially those rearing twin lambs.
- Use of 'safe grazing' at turnout (e.g. last year's pastures grazed by cattle or re-seeded pastures) will avoid the risk of disease due to nematodiosis in lambs in spring.
- Reserve safe grazing for ewes with twins, and graze contaminated pastures with ewes rearing single lambs.
- The principle aim of worming ewes at lambing time is to minimise the future contamination and infectivity of pastures by controlling the periparturient rise (PPR) in worm faecal egg output.
- The emergence of anthelmintic resistance (AR) may influence the choice of wormer, and when and how frequently to treat ewes during, or after lambing.
- To delay the emergence of AR, SCOPS currently recommends that for lambing treatments either:
  - Leave a proportion (approx 10%) of the ewes untreated (ewes with singles; ewes in good body condition)
  - When using long-acting formulations, particularly of moxidectin, treat either before or soon after lambing.
- Plan ahead and use safe grazing wherever possible to remove the risk from Nematodirus and check for disease forecasts on the NADIS ([www.nadis.org.uk](http://www.nadis.org.uk)) and SCOPS ([www.scops.org.uk](http://www.scops.org.uk)) websites.
- Outbreaks of nematodiosis may have to be differentiated from coccidiosis, which can occur in lambs of similar age.
- Coccidiosis is a disease of intensive husbandry with stress a major factor in triggering outbreaks of disease and is characterised by anorexia, weight loss and diarrhoea (with or without blood) with death in severe cases.
- Reduction of stocking densities, batch rearing of lambs, creep-feeding and



**Nematodiosis affecting lambs grazing contaminated pasture. Note only the lambs are scouring; the ewes are unaffected**

avoidance of heavily contaminated pastures/premises are measures that can be taken to reduce the risk of disease outbreaks.

- Disease prevention can also include strategic dosing with an anticoccidial or administration of medicated creep feed.

**LIVER FLUKE**

- This winter has seen a high risk of liver fluke disease in much of Scotland and West Wales, with medium risk in East Scotland, and areas of North and South West England.
- Chronic liver fluke can be confirmed by checking for the presence of fluke eggs in faeces or by using the coproantigen ELISA test.
- All efforts must be taken to reduce reliance on triclabendazole by use of other flukicides at this time of year.
- Limiting pasture contamination now will reduce subsequent fluke challenge later in the year.

**CATTLE GI WORMS**

- Establish grazing plans for the year and decide whether the parasite control plan will be strategic (strategic dosing; and/or grazing management) or 'wait-and-see' (monitor and treat).
- Aim to plan the use of pastures, particularly in terms of parasite risk, when aftermaths will become available, and decide which classes of stock will be grazed where.
- This can be done by making use of the new NADIS cattle parasite control planners.
- Strategic treatments (bolus, long-acting pour on or injectable MLs) need to be given early in the grazing season to be effective.
- Cattle treated strategically should remain set-stocked or moved to safe pastures (aftermaths) when these become available.
- Ensure effective and regular monitoring/

diagnostic procedures are in place for 'wait-and-see' (monitor/treat) policies.

- See the COWS ([www.cattleparasites.org.uk](http://www.cattleparasites.org.uk)) website for more details.

**LUNGWORM**

- Start planning now for lungworm prevention, particularly on farms with a previous history of lungworm.
- On farms where the disease is endemic, vaccination should be considered as an integral part of the overall worm control strategy.
- Vaccination of calves over two months of age requires two doses of lungworm vaccine four weeks apart, with a second dose at least two weeks before turnout.
- As the lungworm vaccine is a live attenuated vaccine with a short shelf life, ordering and administration needs to be planned well in advance of turnout.

**LIVER FLUKE IN BEEF CATTLE**

- Undosed beef cattle grazing potentially fluke-infected pastures should be checked for the presence of fluke eggs in faeces, and if positive, treated and moved to fluke-free pastures.
- If slaughterhouse results are positive seek advice regarding treatment and control measures that need to be implemented.



**Lungworm disease is typically seen in grazing cattle from July onwards**