



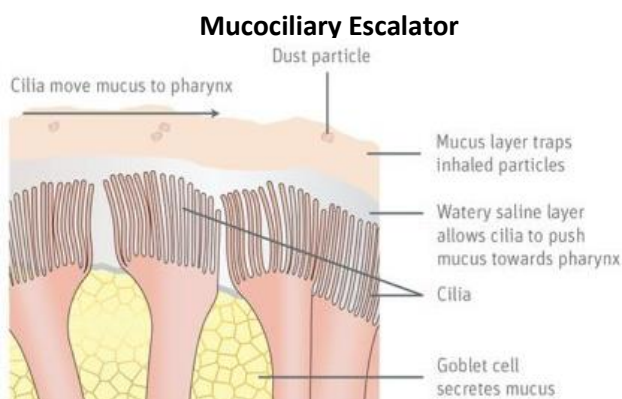
Disease Watch

Sheep Newsletter December 2019

Our very own Ed Bailey has swapped his summertime shorts for winter trousers and this is a sure sign that the temperature has significantly dropped! With the shift in weather in mind there are a few challenges for the coming months I would like to discuss.

Pneumonia

Pneumonia can present in different ways including viral, bacterial or parasitic infections. These infectious agents often gain a foothold in sheep following periods of stress that damage the normal defence mechanisms of the upper and lower respiratory tract.



Harsh weather, handling, transportation, group changes and new arrivals are some examples of these 'stressors' that leave sheep susceptible to respiratory infections as they damage the mucociliary escalator.

Clinical signs can vary in severity, but progression of disease can be rapid with the window for effective treatment often being quite narrow.

Common signs to look out for include separation from the group, lethargy, inappetence, nasal discharge, coughing and an increased breathing rate. Prompt recognition of these signs and further investigation are essential for maximising the chance of recovery. Taking a rectal temperature can be useful in guiding the decision for treatment (normal temperature range 38.3°C – 39.9°C) often sheep requiring treatment will have a rectal temperature of 40°C or higher.



Post-mortem examination can reveal changes to the lung tissue that can be very useful for diagnosis if the clinical signs within the flock are not obvious.

Individuals requiring treatment should be separated to a nursing pen and/or clearly marked with stock spray with their ear tag number and treatment given recorded in the diary.

If a bacterial cause of pneumonia is suspected then a first line treatment should include a four-day course of a fairly broad-spectrum antibiotic (for example Betamox LA, Engemycin or Tetroxyvet), with Metacam given every other day.

Close monitoring for response to treatment is crucial; if clinical signs either persist or worsen please don't hesitate to contact us to discuss a second line of treatment.

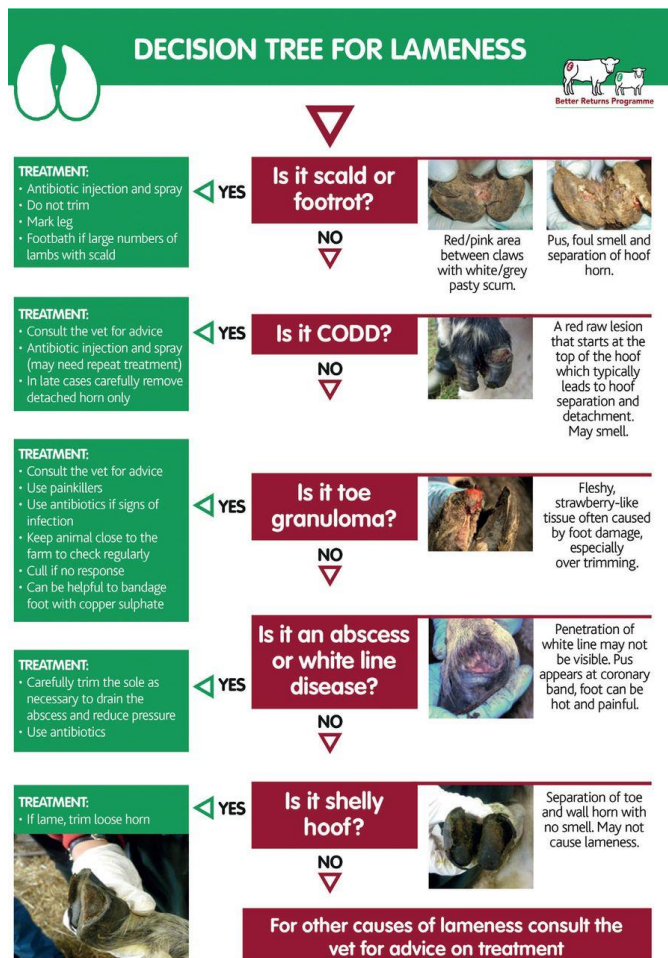
'Prevention is better than cure'

Vaccination with Heptavac-P Plus can be a valuable tool for reducing the risk of pneumonic pasteurellosis and on farms where this is a specific problem, further boosters can be given 2-3 weeks prior to expected seasonal outbreaks.

Routine body condition scoring prior to and during periods of stress can help to guide a supplementary feeding plan.

Lameness

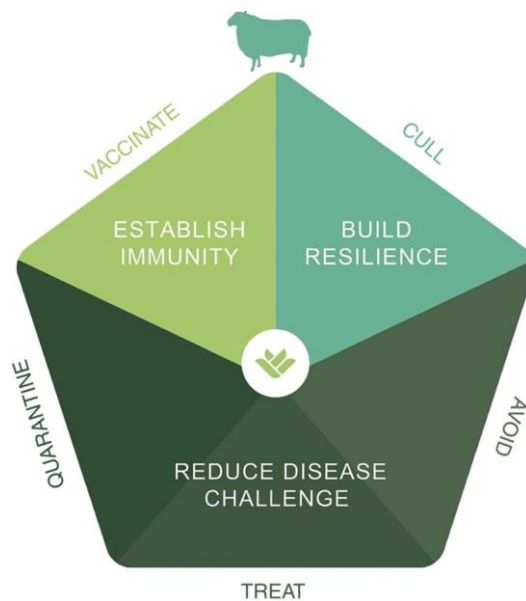
Scald/footrot and CODD make up the bulk of infectious causes of lameness and with pasture becoming wetter the risk of developing disease increases. Risk of non-infectious causes of lameness such as shelly hoof or toe granulomas can also increase during the winter months.



We have information sheets like the one above for what to do when investigating a lame sheep that can be very useful to have, especially when new members of staff arrive on farm. Please contact the office if you wish to have any lameness treatment decision sheets emailed or posted.



The Five Point Plan



Building the five-point plan into your lameness management policy can help greatly reduce your losses.

Sarah, Georgie and Ben are trained lameness reduction advisors and can either come out to farm or if you'd prefer to come to the practice, we usually have a supply of biscuits or cake in the office!

The Dispensary 'Shop'

Many of you will have seen the fine displays in the dispensary showing just some of the products that are now available at remarkably competitive prices including wormers, fluke treatments and much more!

Bridget and the team are always happy to discuss what products are available that you may otherwise purchase from an agricultural merchant.

All the best for the coming months and from all of us here have a very Merry Christmas!

Ben



P.S. no llamas were hurt in the making of this photo