



Summer 23



Smallholder Newsletter

Services offered

If you're interested in any of these, please ring or email our friendly office team to get booked in!

Phone: 01666 823035 - Email: smallholders@georgevetgroup.co.uk

Smallholder visit

We'd happily book you in for a smallholder visit. This involves a vet visiting your holding to assess and discuss key management areas. This discussion would include housing, nutrition, body condition scoring, vaccination planning, parasite control and other important things!

Afterwards, a Health Plan will be made specifically for your farm in the form of a calendar including month-specific reminders.

Cost: **£185 plus VAT**

Included:

- Visit Fee
- One hour of vet time
- Tailor made Health Plan Calendar
- One Worm Egg Count

HEALTH PLAN CALENDAR

Even if you have had a Health Plan made in the past, it is still very useful to review this and chat about any changes or questions you might have. If you've been lucky enough not to have had us out in the past year, this visit will guarantee we've seen your animals and you are able to get medicines without having an "Animal Under Our Care Visit" first.

Pregnancy scanning (goats and sheep)

We offer a scanning service for small ruminants. This will be carried out by Joe Pescod and Keir Hamilton, who will come out to your farm with their scanner and will be able to tell whether your ewe/doe is pregnant.

Cost: **Visit Fee + Vet time spent on farm**

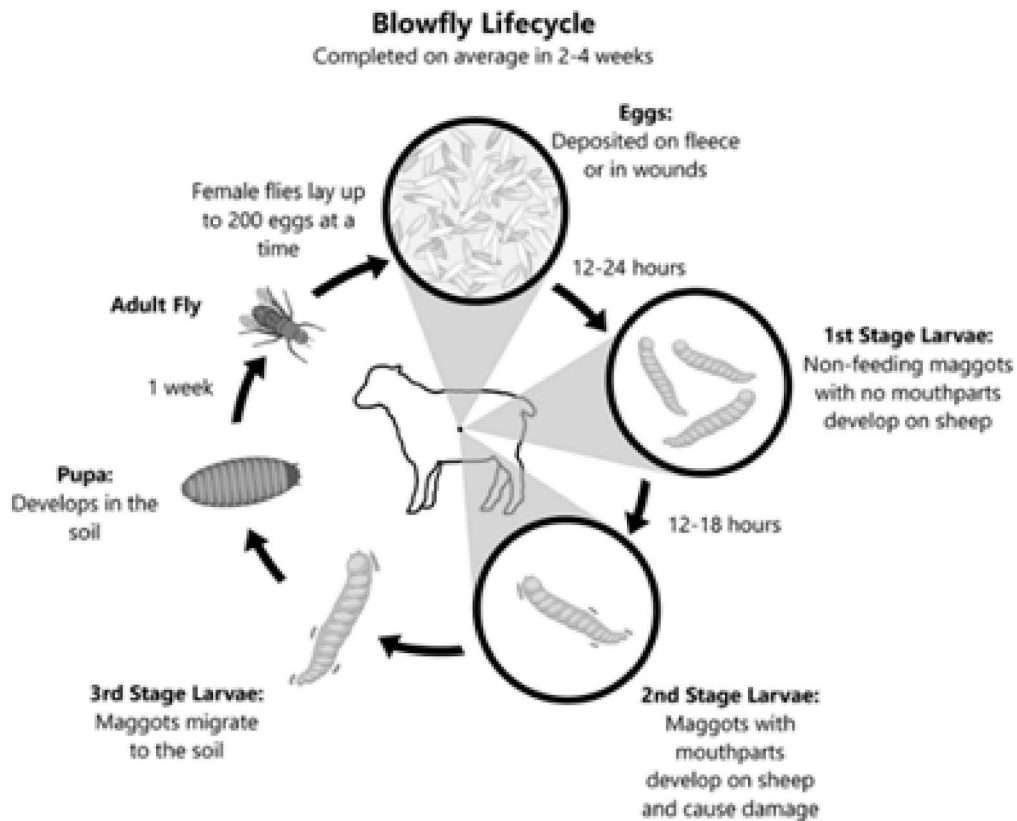
Worming + vaccination assistance

Our lovely vet techs, are able to assist with worming and vaccination of your animals. If you would like to have some help doing these husbandry tasks, please get in touch.



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Strike - Verity Atkins

Flystrike is one of the most prevalent diseases of sheep during the summer months, but alpacas, llamas and goats are also equally affected.

In the UK fly strike is mainly caused by the greenbottle fly which start to emerge and reproduce once temperatures increase in the summer months.

It is important to keep a particular eye on animals with areas of long wet soiled fleece, foot rot lesions and open wounds as these are ideal locations for them to develop.

Signs to look out for:

- Patches of moist foul-smelling discoloured wool/fibre
- Signs of agitation; biting at affected areas, rubbing, tail swishing, foot stamping
- Separation from the group, inappetence and dullness

If flystrike occurs, rapid intervention is essential for successful treatment. Initial treatment such as clipping out the dirty contaminated fleece around the whole area and washing/flushing out all fly larvae can help to limit further damage, whilst you seek further veterinary advice.



As with every disease prevention is easier than cure – the question is how, when and which products?

Prevention can be achieved through close flock monitoring, appropriate insecticide use and by minimising fly breeding opportunities.

There are multiple options for appropriate insecticide to be used prior to anticipated challenge. These include:

- Insect growth regulators which prevent larvae from hatching (e.g. CLiK, CLiK EXTRA) – pour-on products which can provide up to 19 weeks protection. They are best used after shearing
- Synthetic pyrethroids (e.g. Crovect, Spotinor) – pour-on product which provide 6-8 weeks of protection against flies and are generally the best choice for use before shearing

Alongside insecticide use, it is also important to reduce the potential for the flies to breed by:

- Minimising faecal soiling through good nutrition, worm control, and fleece management to include timely shearing prior to risk periods, dagging ewes and tail-docking lambs
- Prompt identification and treatment of all wounds and foot rot lesions
- Management of the fly population where possible

How to treat your flock when they do get affected by flystrike?

- Clipping the fleece, physical removal of maggots, followed by cleaning and disinfection of wounds. Additional supportive treatment such as antibiotics and non-steroidal anti-inflammatories might be appropriate
- Use of an appropriate insecticide for treatment (e.g. Spotinor, Crovect)

Don't hesitate to speak to your vet for further advice on the most appropriate preventative protocols and strategies to suit your herd/flock.

Parasites in Alpacas – Ellie Body MRCVS



Summer is the peak time of year when we want to beware of internal parasites.

We have four main types we need to consider:

Gut-worms

There are a few species of gut-worms which affect alpacas, most of which also affect sheep and cattle. Infestation will cause weight loss, diarrhoea, anaemia, lethargy and anorexia, and can cause death if they're not treated early enough. Alpacas are really good at retaining water as they're adapted to arid climates so don't always have diarrhoea. Moreover, alpacas are well adapted to high altitudes and low oxygen conditions, so often cope well with low levels of red blood cells but can acutely collapse if a stressful event occurs. It is why it's important to monitor their body condition -we covered this in an earlier newsletter- and monitor for weight loss.

We can test for gut-worms by detecting gut-worm eggs in the faeces. To monitor gut-worm levels we should regularly be carrying out faeces worm egg counts and body condition scoring. The frequency we should do this will vary farm to farm and depends on your history and age of animals, so it's best to discuss this with your vet.

Based on history and the faeces test results we will decide if worming is necessary. Ideally we should dose animals individually based on an accurate body weight, as under dosing risks inducing drug-resistant gut-worms and over dosing risks unwanted side effects.

We can also manage gut-worms by grazing management. The Camelid Veterinary Society recommends a maximum stocking density of 7 alpacas per acre of pasture. It's also important to have some spare pasture available which is fresh, and uncontaminated and onto which we can move animals to "rest" grazed pastures. We can also reduce pasture contamination by removing faeces from pasture at least once a month, but more frequently the better.

It's also important to consider the risk of newly acquired alpacas or those returning from shows/ breeding, as they could be harbouring parasites from their previous location; plus stress can precipitate any infestation. It is why it's recommended that these animals should be quarantined for 4-6 weeks with no contact with your other alpacas. This helps control other infectious diseases as well as parasites. We should then test the faeces prior to arrival and/or on arrival to assess burdens then depending on the result we may consider repeating the faeces test before they join the main herd.

Coccidia

This is commonly found in young alpacas as adult alpacas develop immunity to it, and is associated with high stocking density and poor hygiene with outbreaks being more common in the wetter months. There are several species of coccidia so the clinical signs and severity of disease varies – but generally it causes diarrhoea, straining and weight loss/poor growth.

We can test for this using a faeces sample and decide based on the results if a cocci treatment is necessary. Some species of cocci don't cause disease and others such as "E.mac" can cause significant disease with low levels of infestation. Prevention is better than cure, so ensure good hygiene for young alpacas and quarantine visiting/ newly acquired animals as discussed above.

Liver Fluke

This parasite is particularly an issue on wet ground as it's lifecycle involves stages in mud snails, hence this is usually an issue in autumn/winter. Once ingested the parasite will migrate to the liver and cause damage there, leading to inappetence, weakness and anaemia.

We can test for this using a faeces sample and detect liver damage using a blood sample. Treatment involves using a flukicide based product.

Cryptosporidia/Giardia

These are types of protozoa, which typically only cause disease in cria or immune-compromised alpacas. They can survive well in the environment, so if contaminated food/water is ingested it can cause diarrhoea, dehydration, weight loss and inappetence.

Animals can become very unwell and treatment mainly involves supportive care with fluids – if you suspect a case then contact a vet.

Bumblefoot/pododermatitis in chickens – Fien Coudenys MRCVS



Considering how much time chickens spend on their feet, it is not surprising for them to occasionally suffer from foot problems. One of these issues is known as bumblefoot or pododermatitis. We will look at common causes, clinical symptoms, treatment options and preventative measures.

Causes

There are numerous causes of pododermatitis, but it's mostly caused by a bacteria called *Staphylococcus aureus*, which can enter the skin of the foot through any abrasion, cut or injury. The most common causes are:

- Trauma/foot injuries
- Obesity: chickens being overweight experience more pressure on their feet
- Wrong bedding/substrate: abrasive solid surfaces (especially concrete) are often the culprit
- Lack of movement
- Unequal weight division due to lameness of one foot
- Lack of hygiene – unhygienic conditions favour bacterial colonisation

Clinical symptoms



Pododermatitis can present as lameness or unwillingness to bear weight on one foot. Some chickens will spend a lot more time laying down than usual.

It's important to lift the feet up to inspect them properly. The lameness could be due to something else.

Initially, redness and swelling in the foot may be present and the foot may feel hot.

Later on, a black scab may appear, generally on the sole of the foot.



<https://ittybittyfarminthecity.blogspot.com/2011/03/cluckin-bumblefoot.html>

<https://cs-tf.com/bumblefoot-in-chickens-what-causes-how-to-treat/>

Treatment options

Treatment will depend on the stage of infection. The infection is easiest to treat in the early stages. Pain relief and antibiotics are most likely needed to tackle the infection. Bathing infected feet in an Epson salt solution multiple times a week may aid with recovery, as well as bandaging the foot after applying a manuka honey dressing or an antibacterial/antiseptic spray such as Vetericyn. When the infection has progressed more and a black scab is present on the bottom of the foot, surgical debridement and bandaging may be necessary which should be performed by a veterinarian.

Preventative measures

It is important to provide the right substrate and to avoid concrete and wire flooring when possible. Having good environmental hygiene is essential, as well as quickly treating any underlying diseases.

Any queries, please get in touch with our friendly office team. We look forward to meeting you!

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All the best,

Fien



Ellie



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