



info@northparkvets.co.uk

NORTH TAWTON

Tel: 01837 82327

OKEHAMPTON

Tel: 01837 658777

HATHERLEIGH

Tel: 01837 810455



APRIL 2021 NEWSLETTER

COCCIDIOSIS – LAMBS & CALVES: Coccidiosis is a highly infectious protozoan parasitic infection of the intestinal lining in cattle and sheep which can destroy large amounts of the lining. The disease is mostly commonly seen in youngstock of around 3-12 weeks of age, usually as inappetence, scouring and weight loss. The parasite's oocysts (eggs) are shed in faeces, contaminating the environment, and are able to survive for more than 12 months. Susceptible youngstock then pick up the oocysts and within 2-3 weeks are shedding more themselves. Given the right conditions, such as a high stocking density with a new crop of lambs or calves, concurrent disease, or mixing groups, this multiplication of oocysts can be explosive, spreading the disease rapidly within the group.

Treatment: as well as essential management measures to help reduce exposure of stock to contaminated areas, there are oral treatments available, including Toltracol© (toltrazuril) and Vecoxan© (diclazuril) drenches, or Deccox© (decoquinate), which is incorporated into feed and provided for at least 28 days. The timing of drench administration is critical – please speak to one of the vets for advice. A second dose of Vecoxan may be needed in lambs after 3 weeks in conditions of high coccidiosis numbers, which is not unusual, whereas the datasheet for Toltracol does not state this is necessary: this is because Toltracol kills all stages of coccidia developing within the gut lining (unlike Vecoxan). It is important to note that there are withdrawal periods for Toltracol which is not the case with Vecoxan, however these are unlikely to be of concern in most cases. As a result, our recommendation is to use Toltracol as our first line treatment/prevention for coccidiosis if Deccox is not used.

As always at this time of year, remain vigilant for **NEMATODIRUS infection in lambs**. Clinical signs include a sudden onset profuse watery diarrhoea in young lambs, typically **6-12 weeks of age**, as they start to graze. Lambs are dull and depressed, stop sucking, and rapidly develop a gaunt appearance with obvious dehydration, condition loss and death. The damage is done by large numbers of immature larvae that are not producing eggs, so faecal egg counts (FECs) are not a reliable indicator of risk. **Eggs laid by last years' lambs hatch when temperatures reach 10°C or greater for a consistent period**, which could be around the corner. **Ideally move lambs to low-risk pastures** (i.e. pasture not grazed by lambs the previous spring). If you cannot avoid high risk pasture and you have a history of nematodirus on the farm, then preventative treatment is necessary. **We recommend using a white (1-BZ) drench**. White drenches are still highly effective against nematodirus on most farms (unlike against the other gut worms) and are suitable for young lambs. It may be necessary to treat lambs more than once depending on the spread of ages in a group and subsequent weather conditions.

Congratulations to Clare and Will on the safe arrival of their third child Bryn Jones.

We have an **additional vet**, Mario Fallace, joining us on 12th April. Mario has worked in the UK for several years and will be doing TB testing and export work for us.

AVIAN INFLUENZA – Poultry housing measures have now been lifted, but the Avian Influenza Prevention Zone remains in place. We have been asked to remind all poultry keepers to continue following the enhanced mandatory biosecurity guidance as the risk of avian influenza continues (there were two confirmed cases on poultry units in the last few days of March). More information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird->



"Like" North Park Veterinary Farm and follow us Instagram @northparkfarmvets for regular updates

