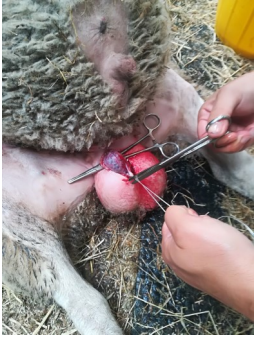


As I write this we are still experiencing the longest drought I can recall. We have already encountered the first cases of plant poisoning as the shortages of grazing is resulting that animals are starting to brows hedges and weeds with long roots that are normally too bitter to eat. With this comes the risk of photosensitisation and sunburn. Especially when plants such as St John's Wort or Ragwort are consumed. I have already had to deal with haemonchosis in sheep. This blood sucking parasite is able to survive in warmer temperatures. Clinical signs are anaemia, with no diarrhoea, and bottle jaw. There is little immunity to this parasite, so disease can be seen in lambs and adult sheep. As anthelmintic resistance is a common feature with this worm it is important to speak with one of us for the correct treatment that also should cover the immature stages of the parasite.



One condition I have not seen for many years but could be a problem this year is ryegrass staggers. It is seen in animals grazing perennial ryegrass infected with a seed-borne fungus. It is usually seen after periods of prolonged dry weather when the grass is under drought stress.

The condition may also occur following periods of rain that allow production of the endophytes on the ryegrass. Diagnosis of ryegrass staggers is based mainly on a clinical history of uncoordinated gait, tremors and collapse. If suspected and animals are moved to another pasture they may improve but the neurotoxin can persist in hay/silage. And last but not least with tupping season looming for the January lambing flocks I have already started vasectomising rams. As these need a fortnight after surgery to "clear out the pipes" and need putting in 14 days pre tupping they require surgery at least a month before tupping starts. Please don't get caught out as preparation is the key to success! **Maarten**



Alternative fly therapy, Charolais style: Birds catching flies on the plains of Hampshire

Action Johne's (Megan)



As we move into phase II of Action Johne's each farm must be assigned a plan of action based on a risk assessment and on the results of some testing so we know the prevalence on farm by 31st October 2018. Helpfully NMR and CIS now classify their Johne's Disease results the same way. The aim is a disease reduction program and for all farms to be involved (not just the infected ones) as prevention is more cost effective. If we can do a risk assessment of your farm then we can predict the likely sticking points and



reduce disease quicker than relying on historic test results alone. 27 milk processors, which accounts for 82% of UK milk production, are signed up to the Action Johne's scheme and the requirements of each milk processor are a little different. Ask your vet if you are unsure. A note on "Supershedders": these are animals that excrete huge amounts of the bacteria in their dung and 1g of poo from these animals can be enough to infect a calf. One of these animals can cause major problems and you may see a whole string of ear tags next to each other go down with the disease. It has also been noted that heavy shedders show a reduction in milk solids therefore there is an immediate economic reason to cull these animals. We all know that cows infecting calves in the first month (often hours) of life accounts for 80% of disease transmission but it is also recognised that calves can infect other calves. To help you find the cows you need for your 30 cow screen (which is often the starting point of any required testing) use NMR Herd Tracker and to test the efficacy of your plan NMR have developed the Herdwise Cohort Monitor. Alternatively ask your vet at your next visit and we can assist in selecting the correct animals.

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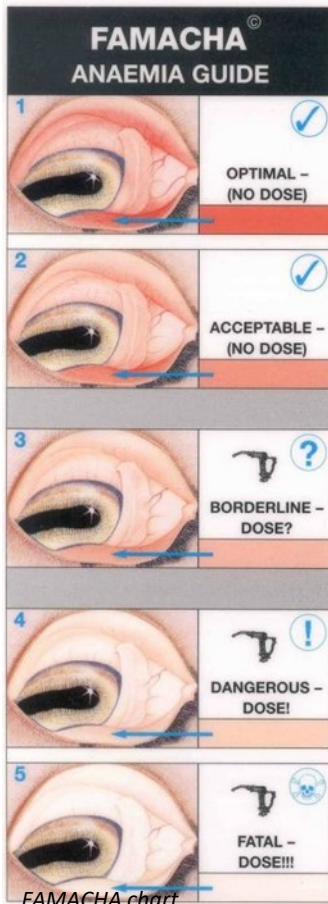
BVDFree (Megan)

Can historic BVD results be uploaded to the database?

- Yes
- Results of samples taken before 1 January, 2017 can be uploaded to the database free of charge.
- Contact your vet or laboratory to get started.



Beware the Bloodsucking worms! - Haemonchus contortus (Sarah)



There is only one blood sucking gut worm in the UK; *Haemonchus contortus*, or the 'Barbers pole worm'. It is capable of causing serious disease in sheep of all ages. It is most commonly seen in the hottest months and is a lover of 'tropical' humid conditions. So I was hoping that due to our drought conditions even these worms may be struggling to survive on pasture! However a few sudden high worm counts on farms with a known haemonchus problem have made me think they are probably doing alright in this heat so vigilance is needed to look out for any unexpected spikes in worm egg counts or clinical signs of the disease in any age stock.

Unlike other gutworms, whose main clinical signs are weight loss and scour, with haemonchus the main disease signs are all due to the anaemia caused by the worms blood sucking from inside the abomasum. Both larval and adult forms of the worm feed on blood; each adult worm is capable of removing about 0.05 ml of blood per day. So a sheep with 5000 *H. contortus* could lose 250 ml of blood daily! If a large number of larvae are ingested in one go, the first sign is often of sudden death; this is 'acute' disease. A moderate burden may cause signs very similar to liver fluke, due to the protein (as blood) loss; bottle jaw, slowness to gather/move, weight loss and importantly pale mucus membranes. The best place to assess an animal's 'colour' is by its conjunctiva, by placing a thumb on the top eyelid and pressing down firmly, whilst pulling down the lower eyelid. You should then get the third eyelid and a good amount of conjunctiva to look at to decide if they look pale or not. It should be a healthy pink, like ours. There are colour charts you can use to help you decide (FAMCHA chart). All classes of wormer will technically kill the worm in the sheep. However the problem is that it is such a prolific worm (lays thousands of eggs at a time) that the white, yellow and clear drenches will effectively be useless in an outbreak as they just kill the burden in the sheep that day. The only product to give any lasting protection is the long acting ivermectin; moxidectin (cydectin) injection. This will give up to 13 weeks protection approximately, but we all know we need to be respectful of using lots of wormer across all ages, and using such long acting ones especially. Some of the flukicide products, closantel (Flukiver) and nitroxylin (Trodox) can also be used to control it. These are narrower spectrum drugs and are therefore the more responsible choice. However the Flukiver will only give up to 5 weeks protection. All of these products come with fairly lengthy withhold times, and some of them are not easy to inject. So pasture management and planning how to manage it on an individual farm is important.

Please give us a call if you are concerned to discuss. Remember the importance and value of us knowing what 'bugs' are on your farms, or in your sheep so we can best plan how to protect your stock from their affects.