

PEAK VETERINARY NEWS

June 2019

Mastitis in Sheep

Mastitis is inflammation of the udder either due to infection or trauma. The most common presenting signs include loss of milk production, changes in gland size and/or consistency and general lethargy and illness.

The most common route of infection is from the teat due to environmental contamination. The infectious agent may produce a toxin that is absorbed into the blood stream resulting in generalised illness.

The periods of highest risk are 2-4 weeks after lambing or just after weaning. Any ewe that becomes ill after lambing should be checked for mastitis, as should any ewe whose lambs appear hungry.

Clinical Signs

- Off food for 1-2 days
- Mild lameness due to swollen udder
- Swollen affected gland, may be hard if more chronic disease
- Milk is discoloured and may contain clots. Sometimes milk appears watery.
- Hungry lambs
- Initially the udder will feel hot but then may become cold which holds a poor prognosis.

Treatment

Treatment can be very difficult in chronic cases, with most sheep losing the affected gland. The aim is to prevent and treat the systemic infection. Antibiotics are required, often for an extended course, or in sick ewes the use of a single injection of a longer acting antibiotic has been shown to be effective against many infectious agents, including *Pasturella* which is one of the most common causes of mastitis in sheep. The best approach to antibiotic use is through culture and sensitivity of a milk sample from the affected gland.

Anti-inflammatories (e.g. Metacam) are also a vital part of treatment to reduce temperature and inflammation of the gland.

Very little research has been carried out on the efficacy of intramammary tube use in sheep but if used then care must be taken not to damage the teat.

Prevention

Care should be taken to keep the environment clean and dry to prevent contamination of the udder. Transmission of infection may occur on the hands of stockpeople during examination of the udder. Lambers should wash their hands in soap/hot water or disinfectant between handling ewes, especially when sampling udders for milk let-down after lambing.

Ewes that have severe udder damage should be culled at weaning.

Blowfly Strike in Sheep

Now the warmer weather is (hopefully) on its way and here to stay, strike is something we need to keep in the back of our minds.

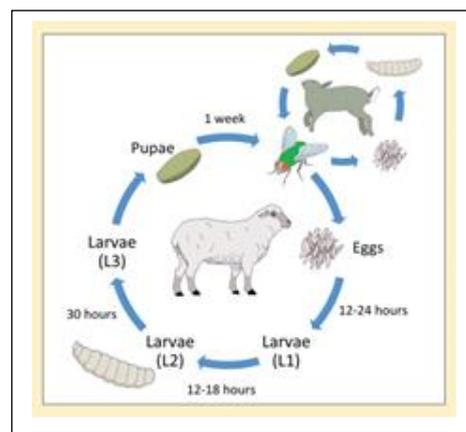
Strike tends to occur in the warmer, humid weather & affects about 80% of UK farms. Blowfly strike can be fatal if left untreated and leads to production losses mainly due to longer finishing times. Most commonly occurs around the tail but it can also occur in open wounds or footrot lesions. The risk of strike is increased by warm weather, high humidity, faecal soiling, thick fleeced breeds and high blowfly numbers.

Clinical Signs

- Chewing or rubbing at the tail end, foot stamping, shaking.
- Wool shedding / matting.
- Strong odour which can attract more flies.

Treatment

Clean affected area, remove all visible maggots and apply spot-on. Antibiotic spray should be applied to the affected area. A list of some of the available products can be seen below.



Control

Prevention is the best form of control. As soon as weather alters a preventative treatment should be applied. This will decrease the number of blowflies on farm through the rest of summer. Ongoing control of strike in late summer/autumn will prevent larvae from overwintering in the soil.

Trade Name	Drug	Blowfly Prevention	Blowfly Treatment	Meat Withdrawal
CLiK (Elanco)	5% dicyclanil	16 weeks	X	40 days
CLiK Extra (Elanco)	65mg/ml dicyclanil	19 weeks	X	40 days
CLiKZiN (Elanco)	12.5mg/ml dicyclanil	8 weeks	X	7 days
Vetrazin (Elanco)	6% cyromazine	8-10 weeks	X	28 days
Dysect Sheep (Zoetis)	12.5mg/ml alphacypermethrin	8-10 weeks	Apply directly to fly strike area	49 days
Crovect (Elanco) AND Ectofly (Bimeda)	1.25% cypermethrin	6-8 weeks Not for lambs < 1 week or animals < 12.5kg	Apply directly to fly strike area Only prevents on areas applied to	8 days
Spotinor (Norbrook)	10mg/ml deltamethrin	X	Apply directly to fly strike area	35 days

As always, any issues you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact us,

*Warm Regards:
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