

ABOUT LOCHABER MONITOR FARM

Farm name Strone Farm, Lochaber Monitor Farm, Banavie, Fort William, PH33 7PB

Meeting Number 11 – Sheep Fluke Focus- Matthew Colston Elanco, Mairi Thom -Crown Vets

Meeting Date Thursday 1st November 2018

Next Meeting 31st January 2019

The Lochaber Monitor farm; Strone Farm is run by Chris and Malcolm Cameron as a family partnership and in total the business farms 1,788 hectares along with 85ha seasonal let and 77ha of common grazing.

Cattle: 45 Limousin cows producing store calves. Cows are in-wintered. Calves sold forward store.

Sheep: 500 Cheviot ewes, producing store and for the first time in 2018 finished lambs. Mainly Lleyn tups and hoggs kept as replacements. Ewes lambing are wintered away.

Management Group: John MacAulay (Chair), Paolo Berardelli, Peter Kennedy, Ewen Campbell and James Colston.



Aim of Meeting:

- Explore best practice fluke management and Fluke resistance threat on West coast farms
- Update the group on the lamb finishing trial at Fass Fern
- Discuss Strone calves, in preparation for cattle marketing meeting on 17th January



Fight the Fluke; The group watched a YouTube video prepared by the Moredun institute.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ztylSqFuatU>

Key messages

- Climate change is contributing to warmer temperatures and increased rain fall in autumn and winter, which can see the fluke burden in cattle and sheep extended throughout the year, if not treated effectively.
- There are more cases of Fluke becoming resistant to Triclabendazol (The active ingredient in some winter flukicide products).
- Use local forecasts, faecal testing and treat with the right product at the right time at the right dose.

Areas of discussion

1/ Forecasting

- Liver fluke threat will be highest following a mild winter and a warm wet summer. The dry spring of 2018 has meant that for many farms on the west coast, the autumn regional fluke threat has been lower and later than usual.
- Farmers can use the NADIS fluke forecast as a tool to decide if the regional threat is high. A forecast can be viewed online or sent to you each month by your vet practice.

2/ Know your Farm

- The liver fluke threat will vary from farm to farm. Low lying, muddy, wet parts of the farm will pose a high risk, even when the forecasted regional risk is low.

3/ Routine testing

- Forecasting should not be used as the sole tool for deciding when to treat for fluke.
- Taking dung samples in autumn and asking your vet to take a faecal egg count will tell you if adult fluke is present in the liver, by detecting if fluke eggs which are present in the faeces. A positive result will suggest that it is time to use a flukicide. A re-test 2-3 weeks later can show if treatment has been successful or if there are resistant fluke.
- A coproantigen test will detect late immature liver fluke and adult fluke before eggs appear in the faeces. It is therefore particularly useful early in the season especially for ewe lambs. Coproantigen tests will show positive results before eggs are produced.

4/ Use the correct product at the correct time

- Resistance to Triclabendazole has been seen on many farms on the west coast. It is essential that this ingredient is only used when necessary.
- Fasinex is a widely used product containing triclabendazol. It kills all stages of liver fluke, which usually only occur in autumn/early winter. Using it in situations where the fluke burden is low, or at other times in the year when all stages of fluke are not present, can increase chances of resistance.
- Other products not containing triclabendazol should be used in late winter and spring, depending on the risk and burden.

Facts & Figures discussed

MF Group Fluke testing

- Before the meeting, 5 members of the MF community group volunteered to collect 10 dung samples from 10 individual ewe lambs, for both a coproantigen test and a pooled faecal egg count test. The farms give a good representation of Argyll & Lochaber in October, when fluke threat is normally high.

	Farm 1	Farm 2	Farm 3	Farm 4	Farm 5
Test Date	23/10/2018	23/10/2018	18/10/2018	23/10/2018	15/10/2018
Lamb 1	-ve	-ve	-ve	-ve	+ve
Lamb 2	-ve	-ve	-ve	+ve	+ve
Lamb 3	-ve	-ve	-ve	+ve	+ve
Lamb 4	-ve	-ve	+ve	+ve	+ve
Lamb 5	-ve	-ve	+ve	-ve	+ve
Lamb 6	-ve	-ve	-ve	-ve	+ve
Lamb 7	-ve	-ve	-ve	-ve	+ve
Lamb 8	-ve	-ve	-ve	-ve	+ve
Lamb 9	-ve	-ve	-ve	-ve	+ve
Lamb 10	-ve	-ve	-ve	-ve	-ve
Pooled Egg Count	-ve	-ve	-ve	+ve	+ve

- The results show, that for farms 1 & 2 all lambs tested negative showing that treatment is not required. However, the farmers should continue to monitor the fluke forecast and consider re-testing later in the season, dosing with the appropriate product if required. The results are only representative of the areas of the farm grazed until testing. If the lambs are moved to a new higher risk part of the farm, the threat will increase.
- On farms 3 and 4, positive results are exposed 6 - 9 weeks post infection. This is 2 – 3 weeks before fluke eggs can be detected in the faeces (egg count for farm 3 is -ve). Although only a low percentage of animals are infected, a flukicide should still be considered as an option for breaking the life cycle and for killing any immature fluke not picked up in the test.
- Farm 5 shows an example of triclabendazol resistance. The above test was conducted 2 weeks post treatment and shows that treatment has been unsuccessful. An alternative strategy will need to be to control the parasite. A Vet or animal health advisor, should be consulted for further advice on fluke management.

Farmers update

Sheep

- 202 lambs are currently being finished at Fass Fern and sold post 40Kg live weight.
 - To calculate the difference in store margin come January, the group were asked to allocate an August store price, to which they decided £40 per 26Kg lamb.
 - The lambs have been weighed every 2 weeks since the 1st August with 177 sold before the 1st November.
 - The average price per lamb to date is £70.60
 - 10t of straw has been used to date
 - 16t of pellets have been used to date
- Full set of results will be published at the next meeting on the 31st January.

Cattle

- 13 Calves have been brought home to Strone from Inverness & Clunes (not weaned)
- The group were asked to estimate the store weight and did so at 250-300Kg.
- A new weigh crate has arrived and will be used to record weaning weights



ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING

- Calves will be weighed before the next meeting on the 31st January, where we will discuss the profitability of this system.
- Silage has been tested and we are awaiting the results.

FACILITATOR CONTACT DETAILS

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