MONITOR FARM Scotland

FARMER LED, FARMER DRIVEN

Sheep Anthelmintics and Decisions with Ewan Jamieson, Meadows Vets

Deeside Monitor Farm Open Meeting
Meikle Maldron, Torphins
8th July 2026

Ewan discusses sheep strategies at Meikle Maldron

Ewan Jamieson is a Vet Surgeon and Director at **Meadows Vets**, Old Meldrum and New Deer, with a particular interest in prevention of sheep anthelmintic resistance.

His key message at the Deeside Monitor Farm meet is:

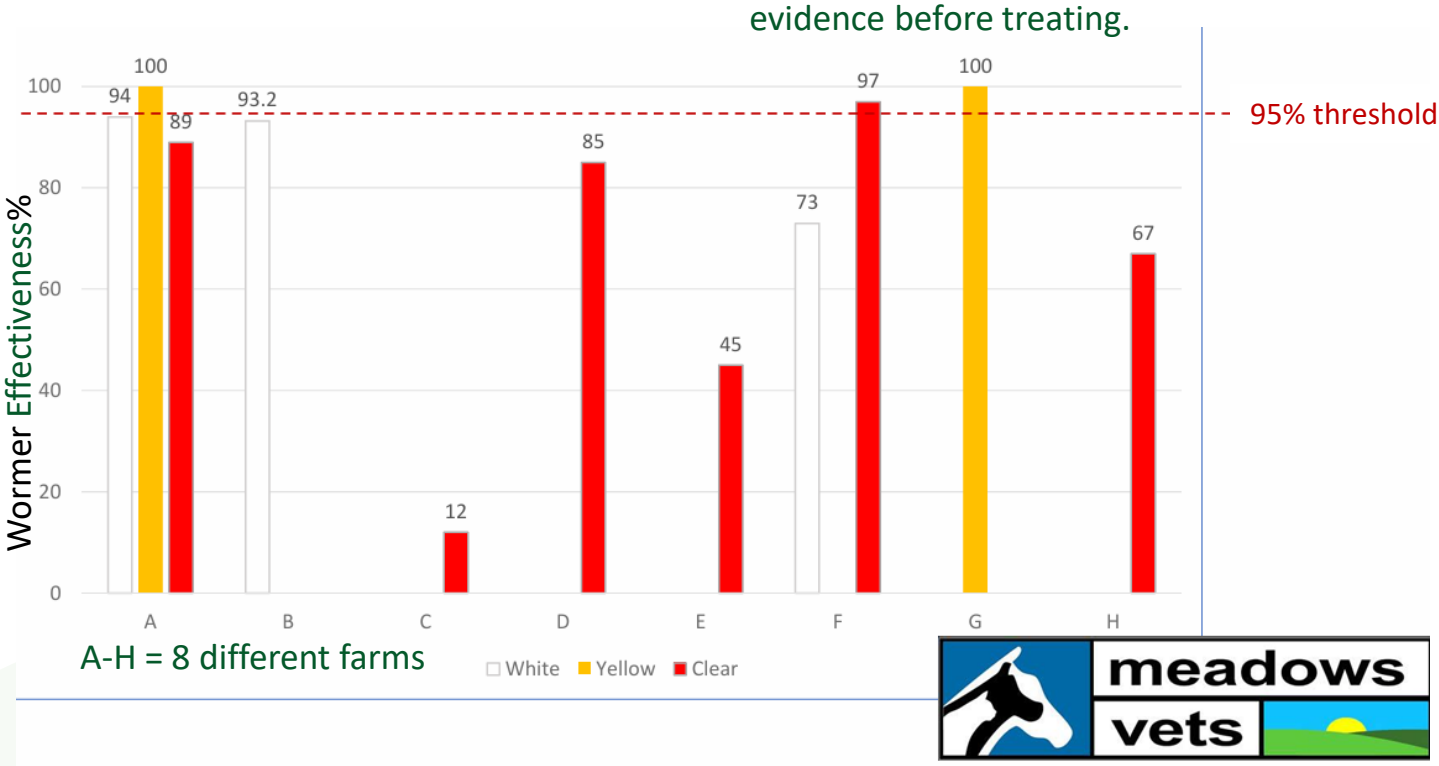
'Worm control decisions should shift from blanket treatment to targeted, evidence-led action.'

Ewan summarises:

'Treat the right animals, at the right time, with the right class of wormer — while protecting long-acting options.'

Management implication

Build a seasonal plan that cycles wormer classes, reserves long-acting wormers for higher-risk periods, and uses growth, body condition and worm egg count evidence before treating.



2024/25 Research by Meadows Vets shows some NE farms are using wormers that are less than 95% effective (as low as 12% for clear drenches).

Resistance changes the default

The historic "buy the cheapest wormer" approach is no longer a safe assumption on Northeast farms.

Context drives the answer

Weather, pasture, grazing management, worm egg counts, neighbours' experiences and local monitoring all affect the decision.

Selective treatment is the mind shift

The question becomes how many animals need treatment — a few, a proportion, or the whole group

Diagnostics improve confidence

AI-supported worm egg counts can be faster, more repeatable and more precise about worm species.

Why the decision is now harder

Farmers are balancing worm pressure, drug resistance and practical grazing constraints.

The decision is no longer simply, “do we worm this field?”

A better question is: what is the evidence that this animal or group needs treatment, and which wormer class preserves future options?

Ewan highlighted that vets are often asked what to use when a sheep is already in front of the farmer.

The answer depends on gathering enough context to avoid a blunt or poorly timed treatment.

The First Information Required

- Weather conditions and recent patterns
- Ground and grazing management
- Worm egg count results
- The worm situation locally
- Expert monitoring and vet advice
- Neighbouring farm challenges
- Pressures on the home farm
- Whether sheep can move to cleaner pasture

Use wormer classes deliberately

A shepherd should cycle wormer classes through the year and protect long-acting wormers for when they are most valuable.

Ewan says, *‘The general principle is to use all classes over time rather than relying on one product. Farms that use little wormer may cycle more slowly; heavier users need a more active yearly plan.’*

MONITOR FARM Scotland

Decision Making for Lambs

1 Early / lower worm burden
Start with shorter-acting wormers when the challenge is lower.

2 Later / higher worm burden
Long-acting Ivermectin or Moxidectin options can be useful when sheep are stuck on wormy pasture.

3 If long-acting efficacy is lost
Repeated short-acting dosing becomes harder and management flexibility drops.

4 Protect Against the Risk of Resistance
Most observed resistance is to long-acting wormers. Losing their functionality removes a key option for lambs that cannot be moved off wormy ground for several weeks.

Ewan notes, *‘Match the wormer class to the season, worm challenge, pasture options and farm resistance history — not just to habit or price.’*

Treat the animals that need it

Targeted Selective Treatment reframes worming as an animal-level decision.

“How many do we need to worm?”

Ewan says,
‘It may be 10%, 90%, or only the odd one or two.’

EWES AND LAMBS ARE DIFFERENT CHOICES

Ewes

Strong, well-conditioned ewes are often lower risk.
Triplet-carrying or thin ewes may justify treatment; hands-on body condition scoring is a practical check.

Lambs

Set an expected growth benchmark.
Worm lambs below the target; if the whole group misses target, investigate nutrition and other pressures before assuming worms alone.

WHAT TO MONITOR

1 Growth rate

Use regular weights to identify lambs falling below the benchmark.

2 Body condition

Use hands-on checks to identify ewes under stress or carrying high demand.

3 Visible signs

Dirty behinds can help target treatment, while recognising not all worms cause this sign.

4 Group performance

Poor whole-group growth should trigger a broader nutrition and management review.

Provide the evidence more quickly and precisely

Diagnostics are moving from manual microscopy toward AI-supported systems that are faster, more repeatable and more informative.

Worm egg counts and species identification improve confidence before treatment.
Worm egg counts:

- Provide more accurate, fast and repeatable results.
- Support decisions on whether to treat and when to treat.

Species insight:

- Helps distinguish worm species that cannot reliably be told apart by eye.

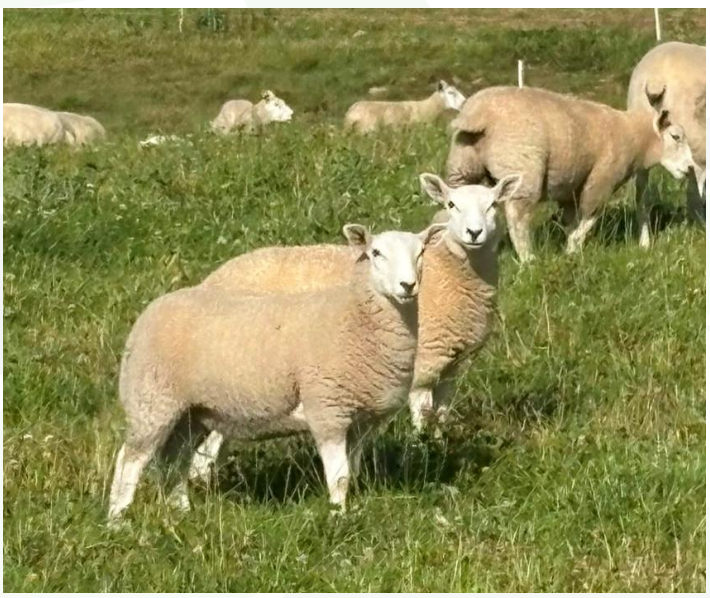
Haemonchus, the barber's pole worm, is becoming more prevalent.

A Rule in Decision Making

Combine performance data, worm egg counts, species information and farm context before choosing the wormer class.

Genetics And Genomics

Future breeding may support both resistance and resilience: some lambs carry few worms, while others carry worms yet continue to grow well. Capturing those signals could reduce reliance on treatment over time.



MONITOR FARM Scotland

Recommendations for Meikle Maldron

Turn the recommendations into a practical, worm-control operating plan.

This month

- Set lamb growth benchmarks.
- Identify thin or high-demand ewes.
- Use worm egg counts and species checks before treating.

Next season

- Start lambs with shorter-acting wormers where appropriate.
- Reserve long-acting wormers for higher challenge periods.
- Treat selectively rather than by default.

Longer term

- Expand grazing options and brassicas to reduce grass exposure.
- Track animals showing resistance or resilience.
- Use genetics and genomics as evidence develops

Ewan concludes,
'Worms will always be present. The aim is not elimination; it is better timing, better selectivity and fewer treatments that undermine future efficacy.

'The decisions are easier when you have the information. So, agree the seasonal wormer plan, define the data needed before each treatment decision, and review outcomes after each high-risk period.'

MONITOR FARM Scotland

To find out more or to sign up, please contact:

Regional Adviser – Peter Beattie

07769 366614
pbeattie@qmscotland.co.uk
monitorfarms.co.uk

Initiative supported by:

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

QMS Quality Meat Scotland

AHDB

FARMER LED, FARMER DRIVEN.