

FEBRUARY IS THE TIME TO PLAN WORM CONTROL STRATEGIES FOR 2023

By Lucy Hepworth, BVSc MRCVS

As we approach turnout, it is a good time to review how worm control for gut and lungworm is managed in your youngstock. Changing weather patterns means that outbreaks of lungworm and gutworm are becoming more unpredictable. Lungworm is prevalent in this area. Our awareness of the impact of regular worming strategies on dung beetles and subsequent soil health means that many farmers are adapting their worm control for youngstock.

Animals turned out for the first time have no immunity to worms. It can be precarious to wait for animals to show signs of lungworm before treatment. Outbreaks can flare up fast with permanent damage to lungs or lead to mortality. The lungworm vaccine given pre turnout delivers irradiated lungworm larvae to the animal so that it builds 3 months of short-term immunity. Once grazing, exposure to lungworm larvae converts this short-term immunity to long-term immunity.

If immunity is not built sufficiently through exposure, for example when heifers receive long-acting wormers in their first year at grass, we can see lungworm issues in older animals. Autumn calving dairy heifers are at particular risk, which has a negative impact on heifers as they start their 1st lactation, and effects subsequent survival into 2nd lactation. Immunity is key to get right when heifers are reared away from the main farm because exposure can vary between the adult and youngstock.

As per data sheet the vaccine is given to heifers 8 weeks+. However, if you are a spring calving dairy and would like to use it in younger heifers this may be possible off licence on a case-by-case basis. It is important to discuss what age the heifers are turned out, and we would need to look at the lungworm risk of pasture available.

With the reassurance of lungworm vaccine on board, alternatives to regular worming to control gut worms becomes a possibility depending on the farm. Gut worm control strategies are based on pasture mapping, regular worm egg counts and weighing.

The grazing available for youngstock can be mapped to try and make sure the animals are on the lowest risk pasture. Rotational grazing strategies are beneficial for reducing exposure of animals to larvae as the larvae tend to dry out between grazing cycles. Worm egg counts should be done monthly and from a representative sample of animals. Regular growth rate monitoring to check that animals are meeting 0.7kg/head/day of growth is extremely helpful.



Dung beetles are key to soil health and subsequent grass growth – we need to work with them.

Worm control is different for each farm in terms of farm history, farm pasture risk, type of stock, immunity of stock (e.g. trace element status, nutrition), wormer resistance, concurrent issues (e.g. coccidiosis), so it’s a great discussion to have on a farm by farm basis to see if worm control is optimal. If you would like to review your parasite plan ahead of turnout please speak to your routine vet or give me a ring at the clinic.

	High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk
Spring	Grazed by first year youngstock in the previous year	Grazed only by adult or yearling cattle the previous year	New leys and forage crops Sheep or conservation in the previous year

Our longest standing member of Friars Moor, Emma and 3 of her friends are doing 100 skips each, per day in February for cancer research.

If you would like to donate please follow this link  
<https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/emmas-skipping-challenge-giving-page-847>

## #ColostrumIsGold

We are offering all our spring block calving herds the opportunity to measure the effectiveness of colostrum transfer at the start of calving.

10 calves, 1-7 days old is £50 + VAT. Book in for a Tuesday in Feb/March a week after expected calving date.

## DRUG UPDATE:

### Huskvac:

AVAILABLE TO ORDER! Please ring to discuss your requirements with Cathy

### Spirovac:

AVAILABLE TO ORDER!

### Clostridia's vaccines:

Covexin 10 100ml bottles are now available



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

9TH  
FEB

### VET TECH OPEN DAY

FREE OF CHARGE 10:30am to 2pm With kind permission of MR Tizzard, Manor Farm, Ashington, Yeovil BA228ED We would like to invite you to join us for our Vet Tech and Foot Trimming open day. Come and meet the team and find out what para-professional services we can offer in your area.

13TH  
FEB

### PRACTICAL LAMBING COURSE

10am-4pm, Held on a farm near Gillingham – further details on booking. Places are limited so book early to avoid disappointment. £100 inc VAT This course is ideal for the small holder or new staff in the commercial flock.

21ST  
FEB

### SMALLHOLDERS MEETING

Topic: "Sheep Showing and Annual Update" 6:30pm start. On farm near Sturminster Newton (Full address available upon RSVP) £10 for non-members, free of charge for members

TBC

### MILKSURE

Pre calving visits to optimise calf rearing success this spring. Before calving starts, take the time for a fresh look at calf health and performance. Involve your calf rearing team. Choose a specific area of calf health area to discuss and together we can focus on how to improve it.

TBC

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**TO REGISTER YOUR INTEREST FOR UPCOMING MEETINGS  
PLEASE CALL THE FARM OFFICE ON 01258472314**



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