



Sheep abortion vaccination update

Toxoplasma – don't forget unvaccinated shearlings

Toxoplasma gondii is the second most commonly diagnosed cause of sheep abortion, causing about a quarter of all diagnosed abortions in GB.

Vaccination with a single dose of Toxovax (MSD) is known to help protect from the effects of infection for at least two lambing seasons and possibly longer. Ewe lambs can be vaccinated from 5 months of age, at least 3 weeks prior to mating.

Supply issues last year means that many shearlings and older replacements will not have been vaccinated. Remember to vaccinate them this year – they should be vaccinated between 4 months and 3 weeks prior to mating.

Enzootic abortion – vaccinate early if possible!

Enzootic abortion (EAE) is even more commonly diagnosed, causing up to one third of all diagnosed sheep abortions in GB.

Live vaccines reduce disease for several years from a single jab (Enzovax [MSD] and Cevac Chlamydia [Ceva]). Ewe lambs should be vaccinated from 5 months of age, at least 4 weeks before mating, and shearlings and older ewes should be vaccinated between 4 months and 4 weeks before mating.

Ceva have indicated that there may be supply issues with their live EAE vaccine later in the season, so the advice is to vaccinate animals as early as possible (following the above rules) to avoid supply issues closer to tugging.

Remember, live EAE vaccines and Toxovax can be given on the same day, but not mixed and injected at separate sites.

There is also an inactivated vaccine, in combination with *Salmonella* Abortisovis (Inmeva [Hipra]) - this requires two injections in the first year and annual boosters.

Editors Notes

- The Sheep Veterinary Society (SVS) promotes sheep health and welfare through scientific meetings, workshops and training sessions and representation on the British Veterinary Association Council and specialist Committees. The Society was formed in 1967 and the Society's five hundred members are drawn from all sectors of the sheep industry. Most

members are veterinary surgeons but a quarter of the membership are advisers, researchers, farmers and shepherds.

- Biosecurity and Disease management are the essential drivers for economic sheep farming, and this remains at the forefront of the Sheep Veterinary Society's agenda and we will continue to move this forward with the conversations between local veterinary surgeons and their sheep farmer clients being our principal focus.
- The Sheep Antibiotic Guardian Group (SAGG) is a voluntary group of cross sector organisations. It is responsible for co-ordinating the activity around antibiotic use in the sheep sector and to report progress on the antibiotic reduction targets on behalf of the sheep industry to the Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture (RUMA) Alliance. Outputs of this group are available on the RUMA website: ruma.org.uk
- SAGG is chaired by Fiona Lovatt who together with Charles Sercombe reports on behalf of the group into the RUMA Targets Task Force. The group secretariat is provided by the Veterinary Medicine Directorate (VMD) and membership includes: National Sheep Association (NSA), Sheep Veterinary Society (SVS), National Farmers Union (NFU), Agriculture & Horticulture Development Board (AHDB), Quality Meat Scotland (QMS), Hybu Cig Cymru – Meat Promotion Wales (HCC), Red Tractor, Farm Assured Welsh Livestock and Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance (RUMA).

For further information contact:

David Wilson, President, Sheep Veterinary Society – secretariat@sheepvetsoc.org.uk

Fiona Lovatt, Chair, Sheep Antibiotic Guardian Group – fiona@flockhealth.co.uk