

VETERINARY ADVICE

Be much more targeted in the approach to wormers

I've always wormed my lambs regularly during the season – is that wrong?

In the past, we farmed in a world where all the drenches were effective against worms so worming regularly seemed to be a good idea. Sadly, we now know that resistance to drenches is widespread and we have to be much more targeted in our approach to using wormers, only drenching those lambs that need treatment.

But am I likely to have resistance on my farm?

Recent studies have shown a worrying level of resistance on UK farms and in fact it is quite likely that you have resistance to at least one of the worming groups on your farm. The recent WAARD survey in Wales found that of 47 farms tested, only one had no evidence of resistance with 94 per cent of farms showing resistance to white wormers, one of the

WORM DRENCHES

Judith Lee, BVMS DBR MRCVS, of Westmorland Veterinary Group, looks at which are the best worm drenches

most commonly used groups.

More worryingly, farms commonly had multiple resistance with 77 per cent having resistance to two or more groups. Resistance is defined as when wormers are less than 95 per cent effective, which will occur long before you see an effect on the farm.

What effect will resistance have on my farm?

Initially, it may only be that lamb growth rates are affected, this is often significant with growth rates being 50 per cent less than expected. You will only notice this if you are regularly monitoring growth rates. However, as the situation progresses it will become

obvious that treatment with worming drenches does not improve scouring etc in affected lambs.

How can I check for resistance on my farm?

The gold standard is to do faecal egg count reduction tests, which you should discuss with your vet. However, post-treatment drench tests will give you an idea if there is a problem.

Ideally, take faecal samples from ten animals before treatment and then sample again seven days after treatment if using a group two levamisole (yellow wormer) and 14 days if you are using BZ (white) or ML (clear wormer). Send the individual samples to the lab

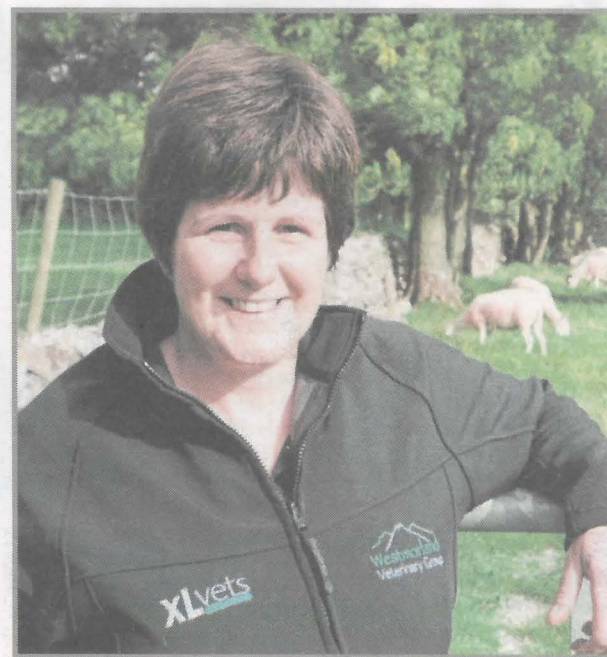
and ask them to pool them as this gives a more accurate result.

Should I be using these new drenches?

Given the results of recent farm surveys, the group four and five wormers should be part of the worming plan on almost every farm. This is especially true if you have confirmed resistance on your farm. However, we have to use them responsibly so that we can extend the useful life of both these groups and the three traditional groups.

A mid-season "break" dose can be useful in the summer and every sheep coming on to your farm should be treated with a quarantine dose.

Although these drenches are more expensive than the older ones, the benefits of using them far outweigh the costs, in terms of improved lamb performance and maintaining the efficacy of worming treatments on farm.



ADVICE: Judith Lee, Westmorland Veterinary Group

Involving your vet in devising a worm control policy for your farm and in monitoring

worm egg counts will enable you to make the best use of all the products available.





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