

# LIVESTOCK

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## Project to subsidise vet post-mortems at North East-based fallen stock centre

► Eblex study to subsidise testing

► To complement new AHVLA system

IN a year-long project, Eblex will be subsidising the cost of post-mortems on livestock for English beef and sheep producers.

Based at J. Warrens ABP, the major fallen stock collector in the North East of England, the scheme will allow farmers to opt for a subsidised post-mortem without taking their carcase to the veterinary inspection centre.

Once the farmer has requested a post-mortem at the time of carcase collection, the animal will be examined in a dedicated post-mortem room at J. Warren ABP, with results sent to both farmer and vet within 48 hours via text, fax, email or by phone.

Richard Matthews, farm partner at Castle Vets in Barnard Castle, says: "This is a great way for farmers to gain information on the prevalence of disease and parasites on their farms."

"As the fallen stock are already being picked up and taken to Warrens it makes total sense to have a post-mortem



The service is a good way for farmers to gain information on the prevalence of disease and parasites on their farms, according to Richard Matthews, of Castle Vets, Barnard Castle.

done, particularly as the charges are very cost effective."

### Investigation

It is hoped the project will encourage the investigation of animal losses after the first or second death, rather than the fifth or tenth, so intervention of illness and disease can be dealt with much sooner."

Fiona Lovatt, an independent vet and president of the Sheep Veterinary Society, adds: "There are a number of sheep diseases we can't easily diagnose in the live animal and post-mortem examinations are absolutely invaluable."

As the year progresses, the project plans to issue anonymised alerts when season-

al disease occurs, such as fluke, nematodirus and other forms of parasitic gastroenteritis, lung-

### Costs

EXCLUDING VAT and collection, but including some simple lab tests:

- £20 for a lamb
  - £25 for a ewe or tup
  - £30 for a calf less than six months old
  - £50 for a beast six-24 months old
  - £70 for a cow or bull
- Farmers will receive a fallen stock post-mortem report, describing the clinical findings.

with a view to giving a diagnosis, along with possible causes and suggestions, where possible, for future actions, or consultations with the vet to avoid further incidences.

### MORE INFORMATION

For further details, contact Ben Strugnell on 07899 950 372, or Warrens ABP on 01388 488 115.

worm, and bovine pneumonia, so farmers can treat animals promptly when the time is right to do so.

The scheme coincides with the closure of several Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA) regional laboratories, including Newcastle and Preston, and the recent review of Defra's live-

stock disease surveillance model. It is envisaged this project will complement the new surveillance system being developed by AHVLA.

Diagnostic services will still be provided by the remaining AHVLA regional laboratories and the option of a post-mortem by local vets will still be available if desired.

### Previous study findings

IN a previous pilot study, funded by Eblex and the Moredun Research Institute, post-mortem examinations were carried out anonymously on 106 ewes at a large fallen stock collection centre in North East England from June to December 2012.

The top causes of death were:

1. Mastitis
2. Acute liver fluke
3. Pasteurella pneumonia - a type of pneumonia caused by

pasteurella bacteria

4. Lung abscesses - possibly caused by spread of infection from footrot and other causes.

5. Tumours

6. Ovine Pulmonary Adenocarcinoma - also known as Jaagsiekte, a lung tumour caused by a virus

7. Johne's disease

Vet Ben Strugnell, who was involved in the study, says: "It was interesting to see how these results compared to the results

from the post-mortems conducted by the AHVLA used to evaluate national disease levels.

"We chose adult ewes because we suspected many of these never make it to the AHVLA, owing to the cost. We hope the fallen stock centres will be a very useful source of data on diseases occurring within the sheep industry, and avoid some of the biases associated with data collected through the AHVLA network."

