

Beware high resistance risk when buying sheep

By Jeremy Hunt

Sheep farmers are being warned about the risk of buying-in wormer resistance and disease as the main sheep selling season kicks in to gear.

Vet Joe Henry of Alnorthumbria Veterinary Group says drenching newly bought sheep for fluke isn't as straightforward as it used to be due to increasing levels of resistance. He urges producers to discuss fluke treatment with their vet.

"Fluke treatment must be effective and must be repeated after seven weeks. This is extremely important to control fluke," says Mr Henry.

Scab control must also be a high priority and all bought-in sheep must be assumed to be a scab risk.

"To control scab they must be dipped or jabbed immediately and isolated for three weeks, and at the same time drenched to tackle any possible drench-resistant worms.

"No farmer wants to introduce someone else's resistance, so treat them with one of the new wormers containing the active ingredient Monepantel, for example, and keep them in pens or a shed for 48 hours afterwards. Then turn them out on to pasture that has already been grazed by sheep."

Scab, worm and fluke treatments can all be undertaken at the same time and immediately after sheep arrive on the farm. However, when injecting against clostridial diseases



Care is needed when buying sheep to avoid potential health issues.

Mr Henry says it's essential sheep are treated when they are under no stress.

"To avoid any doubt about the clostridial cover of bought-in sheep it's best to start again so you can be sure. But give sheep time to settle so don't jab for up to a week or so."

Mr Henry also urges farmers to be clear about dates and timings of abortion vaccines prior to tupping. "When sheep are jabbed with abortion vaccine a week before tupping they are actually being given the problem because it's a live vaccine.

"To put together an effective health programme for bought-in

sheep it's important to discuss with your vet precisely what you need to do and when you need to do it," says Mr Henry.

Richard Price, farm manager at Lowther Estate in Cumbria, reckons it costs him £2.40/ewe for post-purchase health checks including dosing and jabbing. "It's risk management and worth every penny," he says.

The estate buys about 1,000 flock replacements each autumn and even after dosing and abortion jabs, the replacements are run totally separately from the main flock until scanning time.