

# The benefits of regular on farm FEC testing

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## FARM DETAILS:

- 3000 acre hill farm with block of lowland ground
- Flock of 2,100 Scottish Blackface ewes lambing in April
- 50 cow spring calving suckler herd

## SUMMARY RESULTS:

- Average 30 FEC tests / year completed
- Number of doses administered / year **reduced by 41% on average\***
- Confirmed white drench resistance.
- Considered other factors as well as FEC
- Seen differences from year to year. Demonstrated why we can't guess what's going on.

### Financial saving on purchase of wormers\*

Annual saving on purchase of wormers	£1,225
Annual saving per adult ewe	£0.57
% reduction in wormer costs	42%

\*Average of 2 years before start of project compared to average of 2 years after start of project

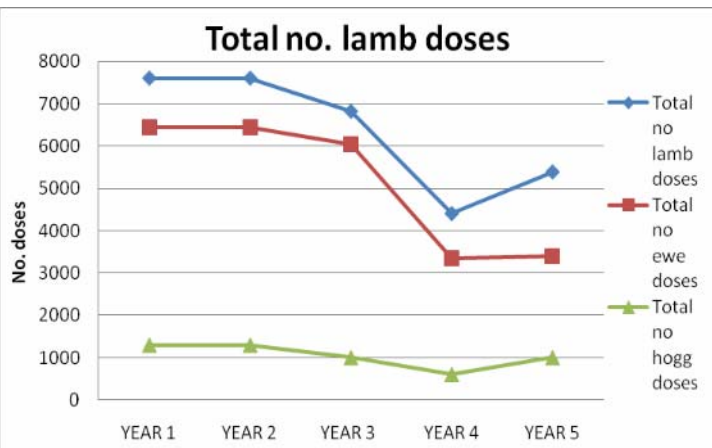


## Comment:

FEC testing has been used to great effect by Alastair with significant reduction in treatments to both ewes and lambs which due to the numbers involved has resulted in considerable financial saving. As Alastair pays for casual labour reducing the workload will add to this financial benefit.

The number of lamb doses in year 5 was greater than year 4 – but FEC counts were higher so these extra treatments were warranted to maximise lamb performance.

This farm has demonstrated that using FEC is also a useful tool for hill sheep. This table is an extract which shows how 1 group of 160 hill lambs were monitored through the summer and shows that other factors have been used to help make the decision on when to worm.



\* FEC monitoring started in year 3

\* Data adjusted so that stock numbers were fixed across all years

DATE	Group Name	Av. EPG	Treated	Reason for decision
18/06/08	Hill singles	135	Y	Not back in til clipping
16/07/08	Hill singles	180	N	
15/08/08	Hill singles	360	N	leave til weaning 2 wks
01/09/08	Hill singles	510	Y	weaning dose

## Ewe dosing:

FEC was influential this spring to decide when to drench the ewes around the lambing period. For example in 2007 FEC was monitored in a group of 600 ewes that were lambing on the lowland ground (see table below). The FEC result was surprisingly low throughout the period where we expect the spring rise and because the ewes also looked extremely fit the majority of them were not wormed. The 25 leaner looking ewes that gave a higher FEC result warranted a treatment. Therefore this farm saved drenching 575 of their ewes at lambing.

Date	Group Name	No. Sheep	Average EPG	Treated	Reason for decision
15/03/2007	Crossed ewes	600	75	N	Ewes v fit
15/03/2007	Crossed ewes -Thin	25	255	Y	Lean ewes from above
25/03/2007	LAMBING STARTS - OUTDOORS				
05/06/2007	Twin mothers	150	75	N	Ewes fit

In 2008 FEC testing again showed that no pre-lambing treatment was needed – but all ewes were treated approximately 5 weeks post lambing as counts were higher and due to the bad spring the ewes were leaner. This shows the value of monitoring as no 2 years are the same. In contrast some of the hill ewes have warranted 2 treatments as counts have been higher and they were in poorer condition.

'I have found that testing FEC on farm has fitted in well with the overall management and farm work and reducing treatments has helped reduce the workload'

Alastair MacArthur