

The benefits of regular on farm FEC testing

Aled Jones, Tregeiriog, Clwyd

FARM DETAILS:

- 930 acre upland farm contract farmed by Aled Jones
- Flock of 1275 Beulah ewes lambing end of March
- Provides summer grazing for approximately 200 cattle

SUMMARY RESULTS:

- Average 17 FEC tests / year completed
- Number of doses administered / year **reduced by 27% on average***
- Confirmed white drench resistance
- Changed timing of dosing to lambs
- FEC helped pick up unexpected problems

Financial saving on purchase of wormers*

Annual saving on purchase of wormers	£434.48
Annual saving per adult ewe	£0.36
% reduction in wormer costs	30%

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



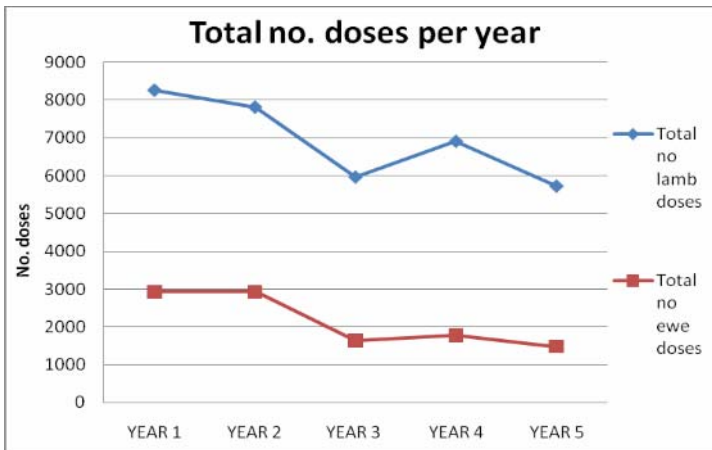
Aled, Jane & family with farm owner Rupert Greenwell

Comment:

Aled was suspicious he had white drench resistance and this has been confirmed during the course of the project with a reduction in egg count of only 60% after white drench. Aled is now concentrating on the other 2 wormer groups and only used the whites (1 BZ) for *Nematodirus* in the spring.

Generally worms wouldn't be considered a problem in the winter but FEC testing picked up heavy worm burdens in replacement ewe lambs and they were wormed accordingly. This infection would have been missed without FEC monitoring.

Timing of the treatments to lambs has changed with the interval between dosing stretched on most occasions. This possibly hasn't been reflected in the reduction of treatments as the last 2 seasons have been very wet and lamb finishing has been slower – so they may be on the farm for longer and given an extra dose later in the summer / autumn.



* FEC monitoring started in year 3

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

Ewes in Autumn / Winter:

There have been some unexplained problems with ewes on this farm after not treating them pre-tupping following low FEC results. In 06/07 scanning percentages had dropped quite significantly in some groups. There were also several ewes that were not thriving and were scouring through the winter. There was obviously the suspicion that this was down to not routinely giving the pre-tupping wormer. More tests were done by the vet but they could not find a cause. In the end the vet recommended giving a wormer and a coccidiosis dose and the ewes did recover.

This problem was repeated the following year with 1 group which had been given an ML injection for scab outperforming untreated ewes. However the untreated ewes did have a high egg count in early February which is very early for the periparturient rise to start. Numerous blood tests and post mortems have also been done.

If roundworms were causing this damage they would have been laying eggs which would have been picked up in one of the numerous FEC tests. This certainly does not reflect what we have found on other farms and we are not certain that it is a roundworm issue.

The situation is being closely monitored this winter with half the ewes wormed and half not. To date there doesn't seem to be the same issue. Even before the project started the ewes weren't wormed in the autumn of 05 and no problems were encountered then.

Recording of FEC has identified certain fields that have had a heavy *Nematodirus* burden. Where possible Aled will avoid grazing young lambs on these fields in the spring and try and graze more heavily with cattle to clean these fields up.

'I have found FECPAK to be most useful for my lambs, especially after weaning and it has helped me understand the worm situation on the farm and which areas are most heavily infected'

Aled Jones