

The benefits of regular on farm FEC testing

Clive Rowland, Garrowby, Yorkshire

FARM DETAILS:

- 600 acre lowland farm
- Flock of 700 mule and crossbreds lambing end of March
- 135 spring calving suckler herd
- All cattle finished on farm

SUMMARY RESULTS:

- Average 65 FEC tests / year completed
- Number of doses administered / year **reduced by 57%** on average*
- Used FEC to check efficacy of treatments
- Confirmed white drench resistance and suspect start of resistance to group 3 ML (ivermectin).
- Changed timing of dosing and which groups dosed

Financial saving on purchase of wormers*

Annual saving on purchase of wormers	£490.99
Annual saving per adult ewe	£0.74
% reduction in wormer costs	56%

*Average of 2 years before start of project compared to average of 2 years after start of project
Only takes account of sheep wormers



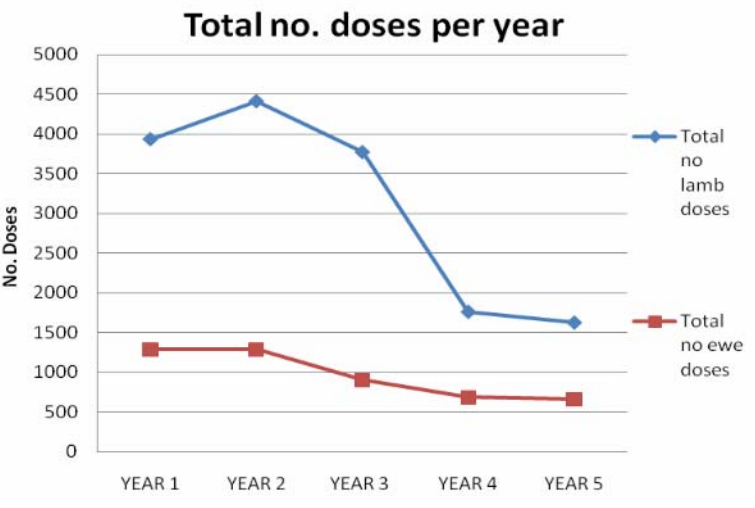
Comment:

The number of FEC tests done by Clive shows how regular monitoring can fit in with other farm activities'. The time spent testing has certainly paid off as he has managed to cut out more than half the normal dosing of the sheep flock.

Monitoring of FEC has shown that worm burdens have generally been low at Home Farm. Maybe this is a reflection of a near equal stocking of cattle on the farm with the cattle cleaning the sheep pastures of worms.

Even though tremendous savings have been made – this is one farm where there is scope for further reduction of dosing as on some occasions when Clive decided to treat the counts haven't been extremely high so they could have been left for another week to 10 days and tested again.

However the extract from lambs' data below demonstrates how other factors have also been considered when deciding to treat.



* FEC monitoring started in year 3

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

DATE	No. in group	Average EPG	Treated	Reason for decision
24/07/2007	140	315	Y	listless & gaunt looking
20/08/2007	450	285	Y	Look dull - starting to scour & coughing badly
14/08/2008	83	450	Y	weaned and dosed

Cattle worming

Clive is one of few farms who also applied the principals of FEC monitoring to his cattle enterprise.

The usual policy for cattle at Home Farm was to apply a pour on to all cattle at housing (also for ecto-parasite control) and all young stock at turnout. All calves and young stock were given either a pour on or injectable wormer in midsummer. One group of 25 heifers receive a wormer bolus at turnout as they graze a block of land with restricted handling facilities.

The policy for young stock has radically changed with FEC showing no need for worming at turnout which included no boluses given to the heifers (£7 / head saving). The FEC in young stock has then been monitored through the summer. Only one group of heifers needed to be wormed in 2008 and the others have made the summer without any wormer. This is a significant saving to add on to those seen in the sheep enterprise.

Clive has been wary to watch out for signs of lungworm as this won't be picked up in a FEC count.

'I find it quite easy to pick up samples as I'm shepherding and with time I have become more confident in using the microscope. I will certainly continue to use FECPAK once this project has finished as it has more than paid for itself'

Clive Rowland