

# The benefits of regular on farm FEC testing

Ed Smith & Roland Sherrat, Husbands Bosworth, Leicestershire

## FARM DETAILS:

- 350 acre lowland farm
- Flock of 1,000 mules and crossbreds
- Lambing middle of March

## SUMMARY RESULTS:

- Average 14 FEC tests / year completed
- Number of doses administered / year **reduced by 30%** on average\*
- Confirmed extensive white drench resistance
- Considerable improvement in lambs since changed to and effective wormer

### Financial saving on purchase of wormers\*

Annual saving on purchase of wormers	£420.96
Annual saving per adult ewe	£0.38
% reduction in wormer costs	25%

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

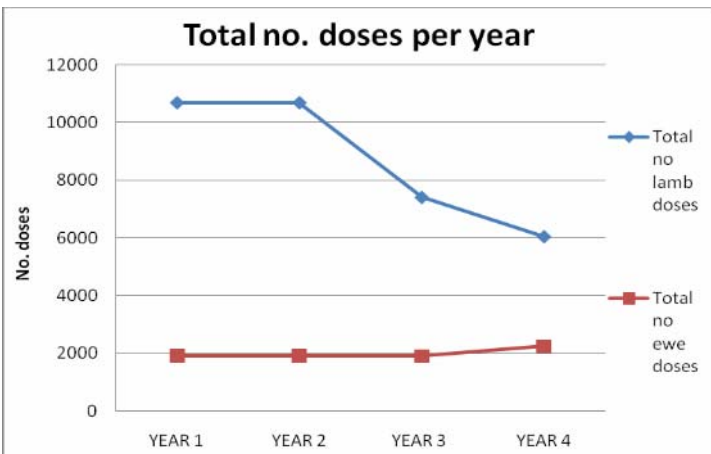


## Comment:

This is an example where the FECPAK system has been shared between two farmers. The analysis that this summary refers to is done on Ed's farm as he is a full time farmer but all the counting is carried out by Roland who runs a smaller flock nearby but also works full time. This partnership has worked well with Ed collecting the samples and taking them to Roland who has become competent in egg counting.

In the first year of FEC testing very little was done on Ed's farm with most tests carried out as a confirmation after dosing. However the number of treatments per lamb did drop and may be as a result of more awareness of over worming. More tests were done in the final year and this is reflected in a further decrease in number of lambs dosed. The average number of treatments per lamb dropped from 6.3 before the project started to 3.6 in the final year. Even though progress has been made there is still scope to better utilise FEC monitoring.

No change has been made to the policy for worming adult ewes and this is something to consider in the future. On Roland's farm he was able to miss out the pre-tupping wormer for the majority of his ewes.



\* FEC monitoring started in year 3

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

## Lamb performance:

Without doubt the significant finding on this farm has been the discovery of white drench (1 BZ) failure. Post treatment counts actually went up after treating with a white (1 BZ) drench. Ed has been complaining about the lambs being slow to finish for the last few years and thought it could be a number of factors from mineral deficiencies to wet summers. We are now sure that the inability to kill resistant worms was the number one culprit and since changing to group 2 or 3 drenches the lambs have never looked better.

In 2008 no creep feed was used due to inflated costs. Even though they didn't start drawing lambs as early in the season they weren't far behind and numbers sold soon picked up in mid summer when they usually get their dip in performance. Indeed sales figures for 07 and 08 show that there were 300 more lambs sold by the end of October in 2008 than there was in 2007. We have to remember that this also coincided with less lambs wormed.

Overall the lambs performed better without the creep feed so Ed reckons that this has saved him £1,500 in feed costs alone. When we add this to the reduction in wormer costs there has been a significant financial saving to the business.

'Changing the wormer after finding that white drench was hardly killing anything has been of huge benefit. My lambs look like they used to years ago - drawing lambs for market hasn't been a problem this year - and I haven't used any creep feed!

Ed Smith