

The benefits of regular on farm FEC testing

Janet & Brian Hill, Isle of Bute, Argyle

FARM DETAILS:

- 1400 acre hill farm
- Flock of 700 Scottish Blackface, Lleyn & Lleyn X Blackface Ewes
- Lambing in April
- 100 cow spring calving suckler herd

SUMMARY RESULTS:

- Average 45 FEC tests / year completed
- Number of doses administered / year **reduced by 15% on average***
- Used FEC to check efficacy of treatments
- Confirmed levamisole resistance.
- Changed timing of dosing and which groups dosed

Financial saving on purchase of wormers*

Annual saving on purchase of wormers	£56.23
Annual saving per adult ewe	£0.10
% reduction in wormer costs	12%

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



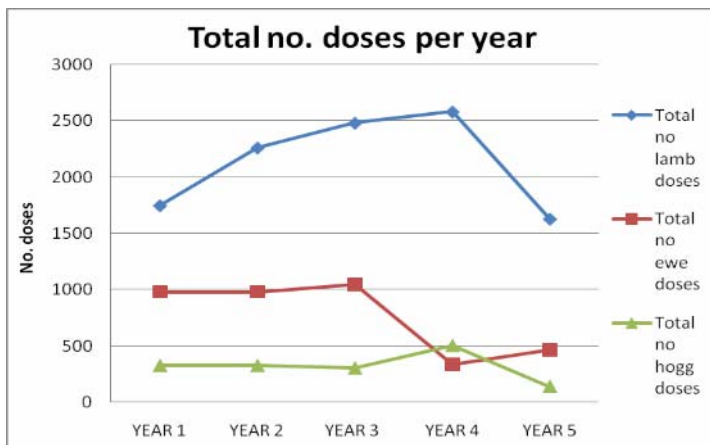
Comments:

As can be seen in the graph the biggest decrease in dosing has been with the ewes. The routine autumn treatment has been omitted for all ewes. FEC monitoring has also been deployed to help find when the spring rise occurs in ewes around lambing time to stop contamination of the pasture. Different groups of ewes were treated at different times depending on their FEC result. However Janet did comment that this made it difficult to keep track of which groups had been done, as these ewes may transfer between groups during the spring.

If we compare the 2 year average for number of treatments for lambs before and after the project started we see a slight increase in the number of doses given but there is big variation from year to year and the final year's level was the lowest of all years. Janet had already done some egg counts through the vet before starting the project so drenching wasn't excessive for lambs before the project started.

Janet has been surprised to find *Nematodirus* eggs still present in egg counts right through the summer and into the autumn.

There has been a change of management on this farm with cattle grazed alongside sheep in the hope that they would mop up any sheep roundworms.



* FEC monitoring started in year 3

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

Drench resistance.

FEC has been used at regular intervals to check the efficacy of treatments and Janet became suspicious of resistance to Morantel which belongs to group 2 LM. A full faecal egg count reduction test later confirmed resistance to Levamisole (2LM). Surprisingly the white drench gave a 100% reduction – which contrasted to a similar test done through a vet several years earlier.

This shows that the results of resistance tests will be influenced by the time of year the test is done and which worms are present.

This gave Janet the opportunity to go back to using white drenches in 2008 but she is keeping a close eye on it by carrying out post treatment checks at different points in the season.

Extract from data showing testing efficacy of treatment

Date	Group Name	Average FEC	Comment
23/09/08	Tops	885	treated with Albenil (1 BZ)
06/10/08	Tops	30	Follow up test from above

'I continue to find the FECPAK system one of the most valuable tools on the farm. It gives me peace of mind that when I am drenching animals it is only when it is needed and that my money and effort hasn't been wasted'

Janet Hill