

# The Green Gazette



FARM  
August 23

## Tup Testing

It's nearly that time of year again... Thinking about tugging needs to begin at least **10 weeks** before the tups go in with the ewes. This gives you plenty of time to sort out any problems you may discover, or to find, buy and quarantine a new tup if you need to.

The best way to check if your rams are fit for purpose is to book them in for a Breeding Soundness Examination with a vet. We can come to you, or if you prefer, we can carry out the exam at the surgery. As well as a general "MOT" we can look at semen quality, assessing both its motility and checking for any abnormalities in the individual sperm cells. Knowing how well a tup is likely to work helps you to decide how many ewes he can cope with, or whether to use him at all.

As a minimum, it's important to perform a basic check of all the rams you plan to use this year. Have you heard of the 5 T's for Tups?

- **Testicles**- Bigger really is better! Too much asymmetry can be a problem. As can heat, abnormal swellings or pain on palpation. If you're not sure, call us and we can take a look.
- **Teeth**- Check for gaps, wobbly teeth, signs of abscesses or discharge/bad smells. If he can't eat, he can't work. Also check that his lower jaw doesn't appear too long or too short as this could be passed on to his lambs.
- **Toes**- A lame tup can't work. Check his feet and treat any conditions you find. If you're not sure what you're looking at, or how best to treat it, give us a call for some advice.
- **Tone**- Ideally tups need to be BCS 3.5-4.0. This gives them plenty of reserves for when their minds are on things other than eating! The top of his spine should only be felt with firm pressure and his back should be dome-shaped.
- **Treat**- Check that his clostridia vaccinations are up-to-date and look for any evidence of internal or external parasites that may need treating.

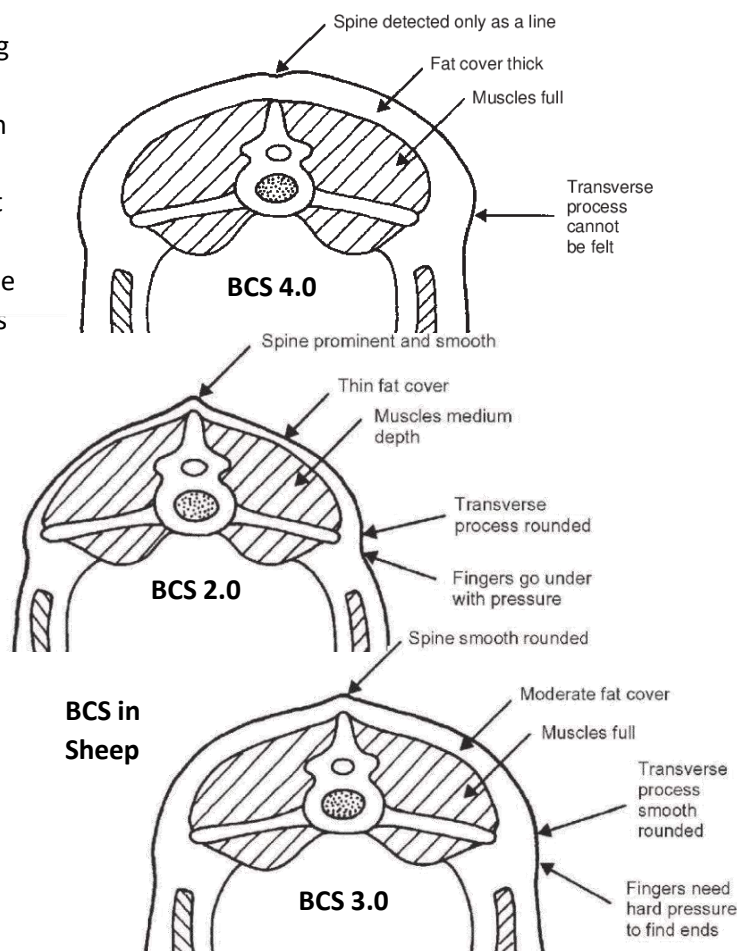
## Get your ewes ready

**Vaccinations**- Enzootic vaccine should be given at least 4-5 weeks before tugging (depending on vaccine) and toxoplasma vaccine should be given at least 3 weeks before tugging. Gimmers and bought-in sheep are most at risk of aborting.

**Body condition**- hill sheep should be BCS 2.5 and lowland breeds between 3.0-3.5

**Flushing**- Feeding more protein and energy in the few weeks before tugging can increase scanning %. However, this will not compensate for poor BCS.

**Teeth and Feet**- Cull broken-mouthed and chronically lame ewes as they are more likely to scan empty.



# Lungworm in Cattle

Lungworm cases peak between July and October and risks are highest during cooler wetter summers. Risk varies between farms but outbreaks can be hard to predict and can cause huge losses if they are quick and unexpected.

Lungworms are picked up off the pasture by grazing cattle. **First season grazers are most at risk** although disease can be seen in older animals where pasture contamination is high. The worm larvae then migrate through the body from the guts to the lungs, where they mature to adults. Adult worms are coughed up by the cattle and swallowed, returning them to the guts to lay the eggs which are shed in faeces. It can take as little as 5 days for an egg to reach the infective stage on pasture.

## Signs of infection

- Coughing
- Rapid breathing and/or increased effort to breathe
- Sudden deaths

## Control and Prevention

- **Know your status**- Outbreaks don't occur every year on a farm so knowing if lungworm is present or not can help you plan your prevention. A blood test for antibodies can tell us if cattle have been exposed to lungworm, even if they've not been sick with it.
- **Don't buy it in**- Lungworm can be hiding in bought in cattle. Ideally quarantine new animals for 3 weeks and test them to know what they're carrying. Alternatively, treat with a wormer and hold them off pasture for 24-48 hours while eggs are shed. Then turn them out onto worm contaminated pasture to dilute any resistant worms they may be carrying.
- **Develop immunity**- Cattle develop natural lungworm immunity if gradually exposed. If challenge is going to be too high too quickly, vaccination before calves' are first turned out can be effective. Care needs to be taken with long-acting wormers or boluses as this can prevent lungworm immunity from developing, leaving animals at risk.
- **Know your pastures**- avoid grazing your at risk (1<sup>st</sup> season or previously unexposed) cattle on pastures likely to be contaminated with lungworm larvae. These are pastures grazed by youngstock showing signs of lungworm either this year or last year.

## Treatment

If you suspect lungworm, speak to us for advice on treatment.

- There is no recorded resistance in lungworm to available wormers ...**yet!**
- Only 3-MLs (clear drenches) have a residual effect so if you are treating with another class of wormer you need to move the animals to a lower risk pasture to prevent re-infection. (This is the opposite of the recommendation for gut worms where we return animals to the same pasture to dilute any resistant worms).
- If animals have a temperature higher than 39°C they may have secondary pneumonia so treat with an anti-inflammatory such as Loxicom and an appropriate antibiotic such as Alamylin LA or Draxxin.
- Any severely affected animals should be seen by a vet.

## FECs

At this time of year you should be monitoring the worm burdens of your 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> season grazers. Using FECs to worm at the right time can save you time and money on unnecessary dosing while ensuring you diagnose and treat gut worms before they can knock your animals back. FECs can rise quickly at this time of year so repeat samples in 2-3 weeks if results come back low or negative. Adult animals shouldn't be struggling with high worm burdens at this time of year. If yours are scouring and a faecal sample shows a high egg count, this warrants investigation into deficiencies that may be influencing their immune response.

## Ewe Abortion Vaccines

- Cevac is currently unavailable and expected to be back on the market in October
- Enzovax will be on allocation from the manufacturer. Our allocation is currently unknown but if you let us know what you will need and when, we can try to order some.
- An alternative enzootic abortion vaccine is available called INMEVA, made by Hipra. Price per sheep is the same as Enzovax but the course involves 2 injections, 3 weeks apart and a booster in 12months
- Toxovax currently has no supply issues. Orders must be placed by Thursday AM for delivery the following week