

Evaluation of regular faecal egg counting practices on farms; effect on anthelmintic use and animal performance

Objectives

To evaluate the use of FECPAK, a purpose built unit that allows farmers to undertake their own faecal egg counting, on a range of different farming situations in the UK by:-

- Verifying farmers ability to calculate their own FEC
- Comparing the level of anthelmintic use during the course of the project to previous levels of use
- Assessing the impact of parasite management on animal performance
- Assessing the financial impact that regular FEC may have
- Assessing farmers reactions to using FECPAK on farm



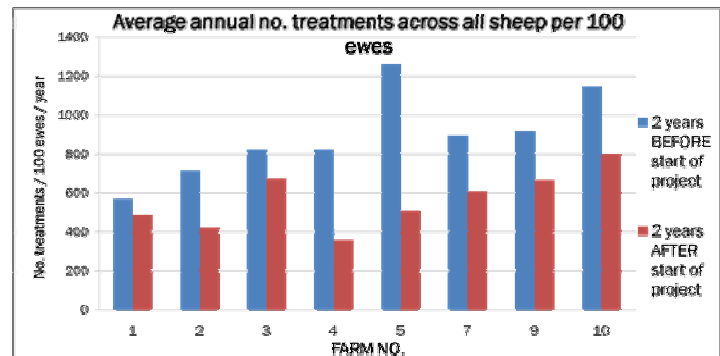
Description of work

10 geographically dispersed farms in the UK, ranging from Hill to Lowland, were provided with a FECPAK each and given 1 day consultancy on parasite control.

Physical and financial data were collected at onset of testing and at 12 month intervals for 2 years. Historic data was collected for the 2 years prior to the start of the project. Verification samples were collected from farms

NB: Farms 6 & 8 were removed from the data set due to lack of FEC testing by farmer and incomplete records

Change in treatment frequency



Results

- Over the 2 year period an average of 37 Faecal Egg Counts a year were carried out by the 8 farms which completed the project.
- FEC audit samples were completed with the farmers to verify their FEC counts. 16 out of 20 tests received were within the accepted accuracy range (within 180epg of the lab result).
- 63% of the farmers used FEC to check the efficacy of treatment. 7 farms completed a faecal egg count reduction test and found resistance to at least 1 anthelmintic group.
- There has been no reported negative effect on the performance of lambs. 2 farms have demonstrated an increase in lamb performance which the farmers are certain is due to changing anthelmintic group after discovering resistance
- In addition, 25% of the farmers found a benefit of testing cattle with less anthelmintic treatments given to young cattle

Farmer survey

A questionnaire was completed by 49 of our existing clients.

Summary results:- (supported project findings)

- 74% of respondents had decreased the number of treatment to lambs (between 20% and 75% decrease)
- 67% had changed the timing of treatments to lambs
- 41% of FECPAK users had changed their worming policy for adult ewes at mating AND at lambing
- 91% claimed to have a better understanding of the parasite situation on their farms
- 79% of clients said that using regular faecal egg counting had been of financial benefit to their business

“After finding we had extensive white wormer resistance we changed wormer group this year and our lambs have looked far better. We haven't used any creep feed and we are drawing lambs just as quick as ever. This has saved us £1500 in creep feed alone!!”

Quote from PARASOL farmer

Evaluation of regular faecal egg counting practices on farms; effect on anthelmintic use and animal performance

Financial impact

Farm Code	Farm Type	No Ewes	Financial saving from reduction in purchases of anthelmintics		
			Total annual saving	Annual saving per adult ewe	Percentage reduction in cost
1	Hill	581	£ 56.23	£ 0.10	12%
2	Hill	2150	£ 1,224.54	£ 0.57	42%
3	Lowland	905	£ 251.58	£ 0.28	22%
4	Lowland	663	£ 490.99	£ 0.74	56%
5	Hill / Upland / Lowland	1435	£ 1,897.28	£ 1.32	64%
7	Lowland / Upland	620	£ 534.81	£ 0.86	46%
9	Upland	1193	£ 434.48	£ 0.36	31%
10	Lowland	1101	£ 420.96	£ 0.38	25%
AVERAGE OVER 8 FARMS			£ 663.86	£ 0.58	37%

In some cases there were also substantial labour savings as a result of less treatments.

Summary and recommendations

- Farmers are capable of calculating FEC themselves providing they have the correct equipment and guidance
- FEC as a TST tool can reduce the frequency of anthelmintic treatments in lambs and adult sheep, target which groups need treatment and check the efficacy of treatments without compromising animal performance
- Using regular FEC fits in with other farm management activities and can be of financial benefit to the operation
- Farmers should also seek advice and guidance from a veterinarian / sheep consultant to maximise the potential benefits of using FEC as a TST approach
- FEC can assist to maintain/increase the 'in-refugia' population



'I continue to find the FECPAK system one of the most valuable tools on the farm' Quote from PARASOL farmer



For further information:

Tel: 01970 828236
 Email: enquiries@innovis.org.uk
 Web: innovis.org.uk

Peithyll Centre, Capel Dewi, Aberystwyth, SY23 3HU