



Upcoming CPD Courses

Advanced Nutrition with Kate Phillips 10am-3.30pm 9th June

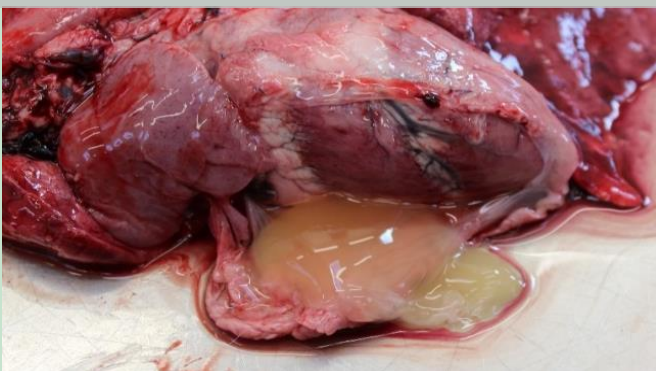
Trace Elements with Fiona Lovatt & Peter Bone 2-4pm 23rd & 30th June

Please read about a few interesting cases from Spring 2021 along with diseases to look out for in May.

Lamb dysentery was diagnosed in a 5-day-old lamb, one of three to die in a 400-ewe vaccinated flock. The three developed diarrhoea within seven days of birth. At post mortem this lamb had punctate dark purple ulcers in the jejunum, and dark red intestinal contents. Alpha, beta and epsilon toxins of *Clostridium perfringens* were detected by ELISA in intestinal contents.

Pulpy Kidney caused by *Clostridium perfringens* type D has been identified in four separate submissions this Spring. In two submissions ewes had not received a combined clostridial vaccine prior to lambing. In three of the submissions the lambs that died were all one of twins or triplets and in the most recent case a dark, haemorrhagic diarrhoea was noted prior to death. In this latter case, the animal was found moribund and died soon after. It had not sucked for some time, with no milk clot in the abomasum and impacted green fibrous material in the rumen. Lesions of hydropericardium and friable kidneys and small intestine were seen, suspicious of pulpy kidney, and toxin was confirmed in intestinal contents by ELISA testing. There was also a high Coccidial count of non-pathogenic species, probably ingested while grazing. Mismothering of this lamb was a possible factor.

Figure 1. Pericardial clot seen in a case of Pulpy kidney



Streptococcal arthritis was diagnosed in one of five lambs affected, although many more were believed to have died at grass. Lambs were two weeks old, appeared to lose strength in their hindlimbs and become recumbent before death. At post mortem there was a purulent polyarthritis including the atlanto-occipital joint, from which *Streptococcus dysgalactiae* was cultured.

Figure 2. Purulent arthritis in the atlanto occipital joint



This organism is a common cause of septic arthritis in lambs and is often unresponsive to antibiotic treatment and can be difficult to eradicate from a farm.

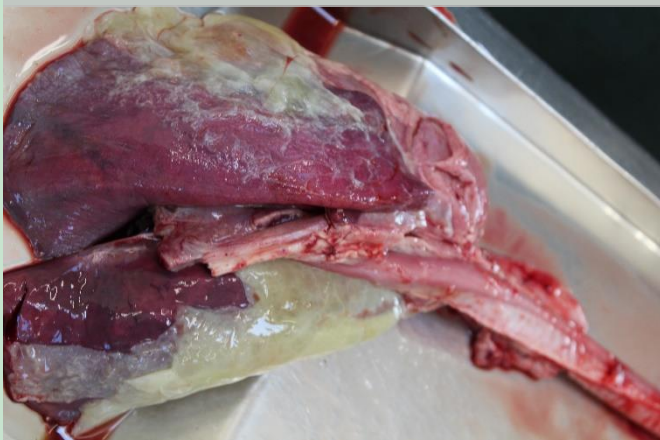
RSV pneumonia was diagnosed on two occasions in March. In the first there were deaths in four different groups of 6-10-month-old pedigree Limousin cattle. Clinical signs included coughing, mucopurulent, nasal discharge, and open-mouthed breathing. A heifer presented for post mortem had died suddenly and had two large emphysematous bullae measuring 8cm in diameter in the caudal lobes, as well as many smaller ones and sub-pleural emphysema. In the second case a six-month-old heifer died following acute respiratory distress. Similar lesions were seen as well as atelectasis in the anterior lobes. RSV virus was detected by PCR in lung samples from each post mortem.

New Test Available at the WVSC - ZST

We now offer the ZST test for the determination of immunoglobulin concentration in neonatal serum to estimate of colostrum intake for calves, lambs and kids up to 7 days old.

Pleurisy and pneumonia in young lambs was diagnosed on two occasions in April. In the first outbreak, 20 lambs in a flock of 140 ewes died at about one month of age. One was euthanased and sent for post mortem after it became recumbent and was grinding its teeth. There was a thick layer of fibrin on all lung lobes and copious froth in the trachea. In the second instance, two lambs were found dead with similar lesions. *Mannheimia haemolytica* was cultured from lung tissue on each occasion. In the first outbreak, ewes had been given clostridial vaccination before lambing but no protection against pneumonic pasteurellosis. In the second, the flock of 1,500 ewes had been fully vaccinated, but immunity in lambs starts to wane after two weeks.

Figure 3. Fibrinous pleurisy in one-month-old lamb



A large abomasal ulcer measuring 5cm in diameter was the cause of death of a two-year-old dairy heifer. The heifer had been seen with black faeces and suspected bleeding into the gastrointestinal tract. At necropsy, a large ulcer measuring 5cm in diameter was found in the abomasal mucosa and the abomasum contained a 6.5kg blood clot. Abomasal ulcers are usually seen in high yielding dairy cows particularly in the first six weeks after parturition. Good feeding is required to help prevent the acidosis.



Figure 5. Abomasal ulcer and blood clot

Plant poisoning was the cause of death of ten ewes from a group of 80 in mid-March. The ewes presented with frothing at the mouth and dyspnoea followed by ataxia and death. One ewe was submitted for postmortem examination and many leaves believed to be from the *Pieris* family were found in the rumen.

Figure 4. *Pieris* spp leaves found in the rumen of a ewe



Ornamental shrubs such as pieris and rhododendron are toxic to sheep and cause vomiting like signs and acute death. This case occurred soon after the first dry and sunny weekend in March when gardeners were out pruning and then disposed of the clippings over a fence into the sheep field.

It is important to advertise these deaths to increase awareness in the gardening community to reduce the chances of this happening again. Gardeners should dispose of their cuttings responsibly.

What to look out for in June Our commonest diagnoses in June over the last five years include tick borne fever, pulpy kidney and lamb dysentery, nephrosis in sheep and black disease or blackleg in cattle. Keep an eye out for these and encourage vaccination of at-risk stock.

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Please check the eligibility for **free carcase collection** via this website:

ahvla.defra.gov.uk/postcode/pme.asp

The suitability of submissions for a postmortem exam. must always be discussed with the WVSC duty vet.