



BISHOPTON
VETERINARY GROUP

Don't Be Caught Out By Clostridial Disease In Sheep

Clostridial diseases are caused by anaerobic bacilli of the family Clostridia, they are widely distributed in the environment, and are the classic cause of sudden death in sheep.

Healthy animals have low levels of clostridia in their gut and it is only when an animal's natural immunity is compromised that clostridial diseases become a problem. These disease outbreaks are unpredictable, but trigger factors include a sudden change in diet particularly with associated acidosis, a change such as turnout to lush grazing, or housing, and any stresses, e.g. bullying, or the presence of other disease.

DISEASE	AGE	SEASON	TRIGGER
LAMB DYSENTRY	< 2 weeks	SPRING	FLUSH OF MILK
STRUCK	< 2 weeks, adults	SPRING	FLUSH OF MILK/GRASS
PULPY KIDNEY	>2 weeks	ANY TIME	FLUSH OF MILK/GRASS
BRAXY	4-8 months	AUTUMN	FROSTED FOOD
BLACK DISEASE	adults	WINTER	FLUKE
BLACKLEG	ANY	ANY	INJURY/WOUNDS
TETANUS	Usually 2weeks - 4 months	SPRING	DOCKING/CASTRATING

Unfortunately clostridial infections progress rapidly and many sheep may be found either dead or dying. Intensive treatment with antibiotics is rarely effective against this rapidly fatal disease. Control of clostridial disease is best achieved with vaccination. We recommend vaccinating breeding stock (including tups) with Heptavac-P plus. This provides protection against 7 common Clostridial diseases as well as Pasteurella pneumonia.

All breeding sheep not previously vaccinated with Heptavac P Plus must receive two injections, each of 2 ml, separated by an interval of 4-6 weeks. Thereafter they must receive booster injections at intervals of not more than 12 months. In adult breeding ewes these yearly booster injections should be given during the pre-lambing period, 4-6 weeks before lambing, as an aid in control of disease in their lambs (providing lambs receive adequate colostrum).

In order to maintain protection in growing lambs (especially for pulpy kidney, tetanus and pasteurellosis) it is advisable to vaccinate them from 3 weeks of age with Ovivac-P plus. Lambs should receive two injections, each of 2 ml, separated by an interval of 4 - 6 weeks. On farms where the incidence of pasteurellosis is high, a supplementary booster vaccination with Ovipast Plus (Pasteurella vaccine) may be required 2 - 3 weeks prior to expected seasonal outbreaks (typically late autumn/early winter).



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