



Liver Fluke Update December 2017

NADIS reports that the summer of 2017 has been one of the wettest on record, with higher than average rainfall in the period from May to October in many parts of the UK.

Based on this, NADIS has predicted a high risk of liver fluke infection in North, West and Central Scotland, West Wales, Cornwall: Eastern Scotland and parts of North and South West England are at medium risk, whereas most of Central and Eastern England are at low risk.

Recent reports from SRUC, APHA and others (see below) support this general situation but there are also localised variations. This means it is very important that farmers talk to their vet or advisor to find out what is happening in their locality, and decide what tests and risk assessment they need to carry out to investigate the situation on their own farm.

Reports from around the UK:

- Case reports on the SCOPS website are of losses due to liver fluke in South and West Wales, North Wales and Cumbria
- In Scotland SRUC report that the Dumfries and Ayr area had the highest number of cases of acute liver fluke disease in early November, with cases also coming in from North Eastern Scotland
- In Wales there are numerous cases reported by AHPA. In November acute liver fluke in sheep in North and Mid Wales and a sub-acute disease in South Wales. Reports also of chronic fluke disease in Mid Wales, Cumbria, Devon and the Bristol area
- A large Welsh abattoir reports a further increase in lamb liver condemnations due to fluke, rising from 2.8% in October to more than 5% in November
- Lamb livers condemned from a farm in Leicestershire also backs up the warning that there will be high-risk farms and high-risk areas of farms even in lower risk areas. This farm had a problem with leaking water troughs on rented grazing.

Main points

- **Reports of disease continue mainly from high-risk areas, but farmers need to ask for local information and risk assess/use tests, abattoir feedback and post mortems**
- **Re-infection is a major concern. Some of the cases being reported are in animals that were treated in September and have picked up another fluke burden. Flukicides DO NOT have any residual activity. If treated animals are put back on the pasture that is infected they will become re-infected**
- **Vets are urging farmers to make sure that clostridial vaccinations are up-to-date. Black disease is a major cause of losses in cattle (and sheep) that have had their livers damaged by liver fluke**
- **While most cases of disease are associated with sheep, cases of liver fluke are being reported in cattle. It is essential cattle farmers are aware of the risks and discuss sampling/testing with their vet to avoid getting caught out**
- **Product choice is critical – Triclabendazole is still the product of choice because it kills the most immature fluke. However, farmers must be aware that there are cases of resistance to this product and they must check the status on their farm**
- **In contrast, there are reports of many instances where farmers are using adulticides in the autumn, which is adding to the instances of acute disease because immature flukes are not removed**

