

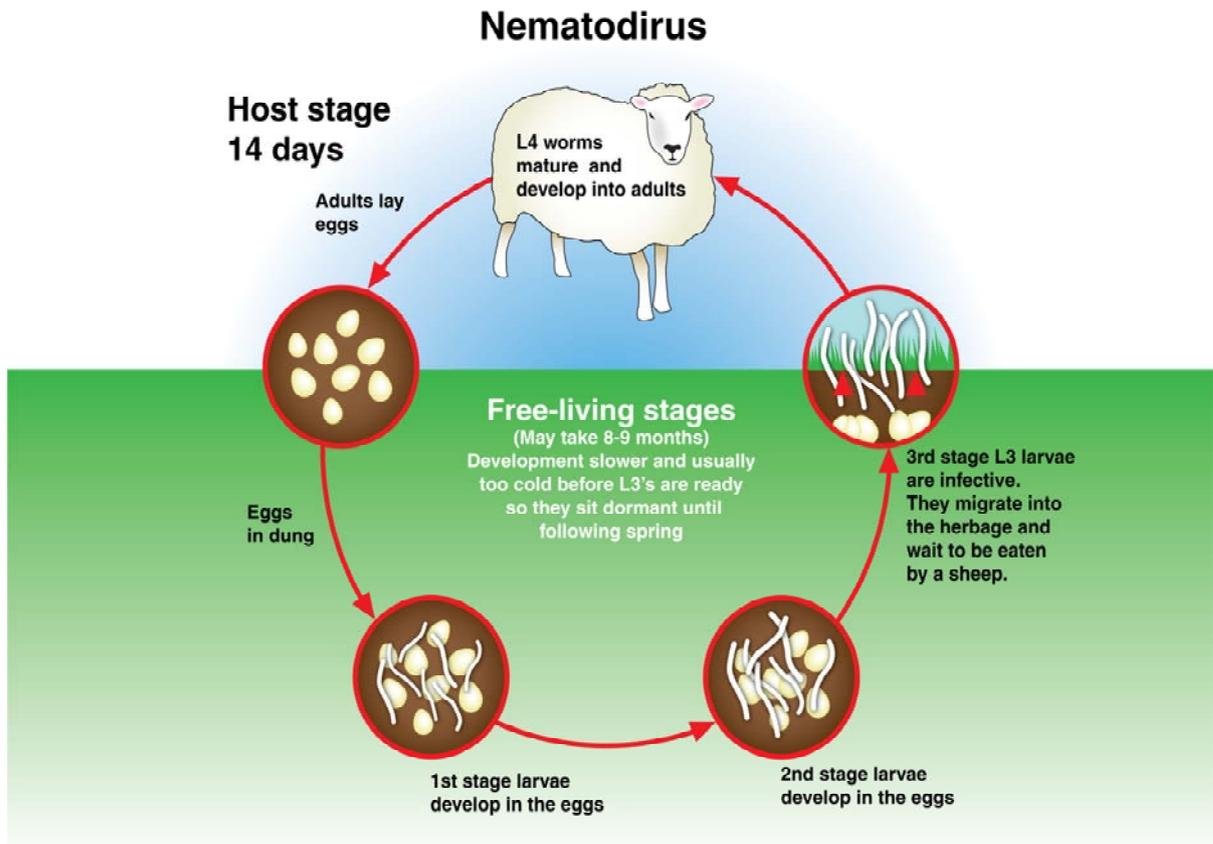


NEMATODIRUS

The Disease

Nematodirosis is a particularly nasty disease in lambs, causing a high number of mortalities and stunting the growth of many others. It is caused by the worm, *Nematodirus battus*, which has a different life-cycle to other sheep worms. Under certain climatic conditions it can strike very quickly, with little or no warning.

The main difference in the life-cycle of *Nematodirus battus* compared with other parasitic worms, is that development to infective larvae takes place within the egg and infection passes from one lamb crop to the next year's crop. Cold weather delays hatching, so when we get a sudden change in temperature, as we have this year, it can trigger a mass hatch. If this coincides with the time when lambs are starting to take in significant amounts of grass (over about 6 weeks old), the result can be devastating.



Risk Assessment

Nematodirosis can strike very quickly. You can't afford to have a 'wait and see' policy and because the damage is done by large numbers of immature larvae that are not producing eggs, Faecal Egg Counts (FECs) are not a reliable indicator of the risk. Rapid action is often required and this has to be based on a risk assessment and the forecast for your area.

The main risk factors to consider are: (tick those that apply to you)

Risk factor:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
➤ Are your lambs grazing pasture that carried lambs last spring? <i>If you tick above then one or more ticks below and your lambs are at risk:</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ Are they old enough to be eating significant amounts of grass? (generally 6 –12 weeks of age but may be younger if ewes are not milking well)	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ Do you have groups where there is also likely to be a challenge from coccidiosis? For example mixed aged lambs are a higher risk	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ Has there been a sudden, cold snap recently followed by a period of warm weather?	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ Have you got lambs that are under other stresses e.g. triplets, fostered, on young or older ewes.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Treatment

If you decide you need to treat for Nematodirus, then SCOPS advises farmers to use a white (1-BZ) drench. (See SCOPS website or click below for a list of products:

<http://www.scops.org.uk/content/Know-Your-Anthelmintics-2016.pdf>

These are still highly effective against this parasite on most farms and suitable for young lambs. Check that treatment is effective by taking a FEC 10 days after treatment. Remember it may be necessary to treat lambs more than once depending on the spread of ages in a group and subsequent weather conditions