

Over the years we have been collecting lots of anecdotal evidence on the benefits of regular faecal egg counting (FEC) from **FECPAK** clients. Now, through the EU-funded PARASOL project, we are collecting data from 10 farms across the UK to assess how much difference regular FEC can make to their parasite control programme. At the halfway point in the project, this is how one of our project farms has been getting on...

Dave Knight, Wydon Farm, Minehead

Dave has responsibility for a 620 ewe crossbred flock on his family farm on the West Coast of Somerset. He has been keen to explore how new technologies can improve the enterprise since he returned from College.

According to Dave, "It took a bit of effort to change the mindset to go out and pick up samples but this is now much quicker and easier as I have learnt the best time of day to go and do it. It is much easier than the hassle of getting all of the ewes and lambs in to drench when it is not needed. Usually seeing some scouring lambs is an indicator to us of when to treat. Last spring we had lambs that had clean bums and the faeces we were picking up were very dry hard pellets. However the FEC showed up as over 1000epg and therefore helped to pick up a problem before it got serious. Last autumn we had lambs scouring like mad but egg counts were low! They would usually have been drenched."

Progress to date

Dave has:

- Done 80 FEC tests during the past 18 months
- Changed ewe treatment around lambing:
 - Normal practice would be treating 6 weeks post lambing.
 - This year most ewes treated at lambing following FEC monitoring.
- Seen variation in worm burdens between lamb groups:
 - Some groups only needed drenching once up to 1st September in 2007.
 - Some groups needed 3 drenches before that date.
- Identified certain fields that seem to be heavily infected and so will be trying to alter his grazing management to deal with that.

Drench Resistance



Drench resistance testing on Dave's farm

A full drench resistance test has been done and results showed a failure to both the white (Group1, BZ) and Levamisole (Group 2 LM) wormers. They had suspected white drench resistance but the Levamisole result was a shock and concern as they didn't think they had used a drench from this family in the last 12 – 15 years. It is possible that these resistant worms were brought in with purchased replacement ewes. A useful reminder for everyone to maintain your quarantine drenches!