



Advice Note for Abortion Control in Sheep with no Vaccines

General advice (for more specific advice, please contact the surgery)

1. Any aborting ewe is potentially infectious, so isolate them from other sheep until any discharges have cleared up (about 4 weeks in some cases)
2. Aim to lamb any replacements as a separate group to the main lambing flock. While this will create extra work it may save infection in the flock in later years

Toxoplasma

The infection will affect all stages of pregnancy. If you have known areas of high cat concentration then aim to keep any unvaccinated sheep here until about 2 weeks before tugging. Then aim to keep them away from this area until after lambing.

Treatment

Feed can be medicated with Deccox, but it has to be fed throughout pregnancy. Even then, it may not work. The disease is spread by young cats - so if you have a scraggy old tom on the farm, keep him - as he'll keep the rest out.

Enzootic Abortion (EAE)

Infection is ewe to ewe and is only spread at lambing time. A ewe that becomes infected this year will not abort until next year. There are two likely scenarios:

1. An infected vaccinated flock with unvaccinated replacements. Any infected ewe will contaminate an unvaccinated animal.
2. An unvaccinated, EAE free main flock with infected replacements. A few animals aborting amongst a flock free of EAE could be serious. A lot of ewes would become infected and then abort next year. Whilst the vaccine is excellent it cannot give complete protection to an already infected ewe

Treatment

Long acting oxytet at two week intervals from about week 13 of pregnancy. The oxytet will reduce losses, but not eliminate the problem.

Prevention

Replacements should be lambed in a separate group to the main flock and strict cleanliness will be needed when moving between them - clean overalls and gloved hands. This will involve a lot more work, but as the infection is ewe to ewe, it should stop spread.

Late Vaccination

As it is a live vaccine it cannot be given in pregnancy. We understand that there may be some late available vaccine. If this is the case then you could consider lambing the replacements slightly later than usual.

Other Causes of Abortion

Salmonella and Campylobacter are the commonest other causes. There is no treatment, but ewes should be isolated and given antibiotics if ill.