

# Parasitology Case Study



Hybu Cig Cymru are co-ordinating an implementation of an Action Plan for Parasite Control in Wales, along with a number of other partners. For more information about Parasite Management please call Hybu Cig Cymru on 01970 625 050.

*This is one of a series of articles about parasite management.*



## Team work helps to combat drench resistance

The discovery of resistance to white drenches proved to be a real wake-up call for the Castle Hill Estate in Llanilar, Ceredigion. Since then, Peter Loxdale and Geraint Jones have been working closely with their vet to counteract anthelmintic resistance and, in doing so, they have not only reduced the quantity of drench used and time spent drenching but have also developed a very valuable relationship with their vet.

“In 2002 we had problems with the ewe lambs losing condition. Elfed Lewis of Ystwyth Veterinary Surgery, recommended that we carry out a faecal egg count and the results which came back indicated white drench resistance,” said Peter. “Thankfully resistance was limited to the one family of drenches but that was worrying enough. We now have a meeting with Elfed every January when we go through our Flock and Herd Health Plan to ensure that we have the right strategy in place for parasite management for the year ahead.”

Elfed continues to provide help and advice whenever it is needed throughout the year and this dialogue has seen the relationship between the farm and vet change considerably. It has moved from one in which the vet was only called out when there was

a real problem to one in which the vet acts as an adviser and both the farm and the vet work together to prevent problems from arising in the first place.

The Castle Hill Estate, which farms 850 Mules and 300 Beulah Speckledfaced ewes, used to drench lambs every 4 weeks and ewes twice a year. Now animals are monitored and drenched only when it is needed and Castle Hill shepherd Geraint Jones has seen a considerable saving in time and money. He said, “It only takes 5-10 minutes to collect mob samples. We send them in to the VLA labs in Aberystwyth early in the morning and they usually have an answer back to us the same day. Drenching on need means that this has now become a one-man job and has saved a full week’s work – time which has had considerable knock-on benefits for the general management of the flock and the farm.

By drenching only when required, Castle Hill has reduced the use of drench by 1-2 drenches over the season with an additional cost saving of around £500. The benefits of parasite monitoring in terms of cost, time and veterinary support have therefore been considerable. “Parasite management has become a key part of our Flock and Herd Health Plan,” adds Peter. “Rather than being a ‘form-filling exercise’ the Plan is now very much a live working document and with anthelmintic resistance on the increase it is something which we cannot afford to ignore.”