

PSGHS NEWS

Premium Sheep and Goat Health Scheme in conjunction with SRUC



2019 Issue

MV & CAE Scheme Rule Changes

Welcome to the latest edition of PSGHS News. If you are a member of either the Maedi Visna or the Caprine Arthritis Encephalitis scheme you will know that with effect from 1st January 2019 there were some updates to the scheme rules.

The changed rules are in regards to the testing of purchased accredited animals, screening of any non-accredited animals that are on the same holding as an accredited flock/herd, and importing of 'accredited' animals or genetic material. More information on the updated rules and an explanation of why we have made these changes can be found on **pages 4 and 5**.

Certification Advice

We advise all of our members or anyone trading accredited stock to make use of the certificates that the PSGHS provides. If you are buying accredited animals we recommend always asking the seller for a copy of their certificates – this will allow you to see that the accreditation is in date and give you extra confidence in your purchase. If the seller is accredited but doesn't have their certificates they can be requested from our health schemes office. We also advise that when testing purchased animals you forward a copy of their certificates with the samples as evidence of their accredited status.

It is also good practice to offer copies of your certificates to the buyer when you are selling your own stock, even if they are not members of the health scheme. They may decide that they want to join at some point and having access to this information could make their application easier. You can also check up to date accreditation status of members by using the online database at www.psghs.co.uk (if a member does not appear this is because they have not opted-in to having their details shared online).

While we have always supplied certificates with a duration of one year, with members having to request new certificates after this time, we are now moving to supply certificates that cover the whole duration of a member's accreditation, until their next Routine Periodic Blood Test is due.

How we Report MV Results

When we report test results for PSGHS members we report full details and ear numbers for non-negative results and a statement that all other samples have been tested negative. Unfortunately we are unable to manually type hundreds of ear tags into our reports.



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Suspended Status

A common misinterpretation of the nature of the health schemes often arises when a single or multiple animals test positive for the disease and the flock accreditation is suspended.

An accreditation status applies to a whole flock, rather than individual animals being accredited/non-accredited. We are often asked if accreditation can be restored if a single animal or small number test positive, by simply culling or removing these animals from the flock. Accreditation cannot be regained in this way and the flock will be given a status of 'Suspended' until further testing can be done.

In the case of MV/CAE, the scheme vet will request that the positive animals are either re-tested (depending on circumstances) or removed from the group. If they are re-tested it must be between three to six weeks after the initial positive test. If they re-test positive or it is decided that they will not be tested again then they must be removed (preferably to slaughter), then two qualifying tests on the rest of the flock must be carried out, the first being done at least 6 months after the last positive animal was removed, then another 6 to 12 months later. Once both tests have been passed the flock is accredited once more.

It is important to do the further testing in this way as it is possible that the infected animals may have spread the disease within the flock, without the other affected animals testing positive at the time as the disease can take 6 months to show in the blood. The disease may have been incubating in some animals at the time of sampling, or they may not have yet picked it up from the positive animals, due to further contact while waiting for results or infectious materials being picked up later in the environment. This is why it is important to remember that the accreditation has to be applied at a flock level, where there have been cases of a disease they cannot be treated as isolated incidents as the same circumstances that lead to the test positive animals being infected have the potential to be shared by all animals in their cohort.



A Crash Course in Genomics for Animal Breeding!

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This new online Vetnomics Webinar for animal breeding covers dairy, beef, sheep, goats and poultry. By the end of this course participants will have knowledge of the latest animal genetics research, gain confidence in emerging technologies and understand the underlying mechanisms of genetic progress for data interpretation and implementation on their farm. The Vetnomics Webinar is available all year round 24/7 so that you can learn at a pace that suits you.



To book the webinar go to www.sruc.ac.uk/vetnomicsonline and email cpdforvets@sac.co.uk with details of your membership

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VE N O M I C S

Abortions at Lambing



Abortions are an inevitable part of lambing time and it is important to think about how you are going to deal with them. Remember that the most common diseases causing abortion can infect people and cause serious illness. Pregnant women must not be in contact with sheep at lambing time or handle dirty overalls and equipment used in the flock. Gloves should always be worn when lambing ewes and hands washed thoroughly afterwards. It is best to assume that all abortions carry a risk of disease spread to other ewes and people.

- Isolate and identify all aborted ewes - they may have discharges which will contaminate the environment and infect other ewes
- Dispose of the lambs, placentas, and any dirty bedding

It might not be practical to investigate every abortion but if two or more occur within a short space of time you should take steps to identify the cause. A flock/group rate of more than 2% should definitely be investigated.

- The best way to reach a diagnosis is to take whole aborted lambs and placentas to your local veterinary laboratory
- Submitting fresh material from several ewes will increase the chance of a diagnosis being made
- Placentas are very important for the diagnosis of EAE
- Where distance is a problem your vet can collect samples to post

It is better to try and reach a diagnosis during lambing time as you may be able to take steps to reduce your losses. Only limited testing for a small number of diseases can be carried out on blood samples collected after lambing.

- If EAE is diagnosed your vet may advise injecting some ewes with antibiotics, particularly if the lambing period is over a long time
- If infection with Toxoplasmosis is to blame check that feed stores are cat proof and avoid using the top layer of bales
- If Campylobacter or Salmonella is the problem be careful not to transfer infection via wellies, tyres, equipment, hands and clothes to other groups of sheep. Moving ewes to a new field or reducing the stocking density, e.g. by turning out housed ewes, can help but is often not practical. Turning feed troughs upside down will stop birds contaminating the feeding surface with faeces
- Listerial abortions are often associated with silage feeding. Feed the best available silage and clear away any that is uneaten before supplying more

A diagnosis can allow you to plan for the future. This could include vaccination, rodent control, silage management, food storage, or changes to the management of replacements.



Rule 2.5.2 – Non-MV/CAE accredited animal screen

If accredited and non-accredited animals are kept on the same holding, a screen of 12 non-accredited animals must be performed at the time of every Routine Periodic Blood Test.

- The flock's/herd's vet selects the animals that are to be tested – preferentially thin and/or non-productive ewes/does
- If any animal tests antibody positive in the screen the flock/herd will be classified as "high risk" and the accredited flock will revert to one-yearly testing
- A negative screen **does not** indicate freedom from MV/CAE infection in the non-accredited flock/herd and strict biosecurity between accredited and non-accredited animals should always be maintained

Despite the low incidence of break downs in accredited flocks/herds, MV and CAE are on the rise in non-accredited commercial flocks/herds around the UK. Even when following the correct biosecurity procedures to maintain separation between accredited and non-accredited flocks/herds, having both on the same holding remains one of the greatest risks to the accredited status of your animals. While the screen of 12 non accredited females cannot be used to completely rule out the presence of MV or CAE in a flock/herd, choosing the oldest, thinnest animals for the screen will give the best indication if the disease is present or not.

Rule 4.1.2 – Adding MV/CAE accredited animals to an MV/CAE accredited flock/herd

All MV/CAE accredited animals added to an MV/CAE accredited flock/herd must be tested between 6 and 12 months after arrival.

- Failure to comply with this rule will lead to the flock/herd reverting to one yearly testing
- Although not compulsory, it is strongly recommended that all added animals regardless of age and accreditation status are also tested at the time of purchase before being added to the accredited flock/herd

Although sourcing MV/CAE accredited animals is the best way to prevent disease being introduced to your flock/herd, there is always some level of risk. Unfortunately we have seen cases where members have broken down with MV/CAE due to the purchase of accredited animals, not because there was a problem with the flock/herd of origin, but because of issues around biosecurity in transport or at a mart.

For members who are on two or three yearly testing, this means that in the past they could have recently carried out their Routine Periodic Blood Test, purchased an accredited animal that has somehow brought disease onto their holding and then spread the disease throughout the flock/herd for the best part of two or three years before being picked up, during which time animals may have been sold to multiple other owners, requiring extensive tracing to be done to make sure all potentially affected owners are notified.

Although we have always advised that best practice is to isolate and test any animals at the time of purchase (even accredited animals), the introduction of the rule to test added accredited animals within 6 to 12 months of purchase will provide much more control over any potential spread of the disease if introduced in this way.

Rule 4.1.3 & 4.1.4 – Imported animals, semen and embryos

Imported animals, semen and embryos that are accredited under a non-UK scheme must be kept isolated or not used/implanted until authorisation is given by the PSGHS vet to add them to an accredited flock.

- All imported animals with recognised non-UK MV/CAE accreditation will require testing as per Rule 4.1.2
- Imported animals that are not accredited under a recognised non-UK accreditation scheme will require testing as per Rule 4.1.5

While MV/CAE accreditation is available for owners in other countries, the rules of these schemes and their methods of testing may differ from those of the PSGHS schemes. For this reason the PSGHS vets have to be able to review the standards of the foreign scheme for imported animals, semen or embryos before being added to a flock/herd or used/implanted.

Our aim is to make all of our schemes as robust as possible, while also maintaining a level of practicality for our members. By responding to issues that arise and updating our rules accordingly we are able to keep improving and strengthening our schemes. Accrediting your animals for MV or CAE and sourcing accredited stock for purchase is still the best way to control the diseases within your flock/herd. As well as the biosecurity and regular testing that the schemes involve, there is also the added benefit of having our health scheme vets able to discuss your situation with your own vet on an individual basis in order to help gain accreditation or deal with any problems that arise.

Co-Grazing

The rules of our Johne's Disease schemes for both sheep/goats and cattle warn against co-grazing, due to the fact that certain strains of the disease can infect all of these species. This has always been an advisory rule, as we acknowledge that for some farms it is not possible or practical to graze their animals separately. Also, there is an increased interest around conservation grazing, sustainability and the potential habitat benefits of co-grazing, leading to some confusion over the overall value of co-grazing.

While we still advise that best practice is to graze sheep/goats and cattle separately, we highly recommend that for those who wish to graze them together, or cannot avoid this, that it is worth testing both species for Johne's Disease. If your sheep or goats are in our accreditation scheme then any co-grazing cattle can be tested using pooled faecal samples, or vice versa. Alternatively accreditation for Johne's Disease for the cattle could be achieved through the Premium Cattle Health Scheme.

Other points to remember are that Johne's Disease can survive for a long time on pasture, so accredited animals should not be grazed on a field that has had non-accredited or untested animals of any species on in the previous 12 months. Also, while this advice is in the interest of best practice for Johne's Disease accreditation, there could also be risks of other diseases that are infectious to multiple species such as Leptospirosis and BVD/Border Disease.



Analytical Services

Analytical Services are provided by the Agri-Environmental laboratory within SAC Consulting Veterinary Services. The lab offers independent and high quality testing for:

- Soils
- Silage, animal feed and forages
- Plants
- Manures
- Water
- Vitamins/minerals in veterinary samples

The majority of tests are UKAS accredited, providing an extra level of confidence in the results that are given for testing. Our standard practice is that all submitted samples are preceded by a control sample. As the control sample has known values, this allows our technicians to ensure that the lab equipment is correctly calibrated and that the correct methodology is being used in order to get accurate results. This commitment to consistency and accuracy is an advantage over non-UKAS accredited labs that offer similar tests and gives us further confidence in the service we provide.

Email asd@sac.co.uk for more information.



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PSGHS Advisory Group

The PSGHS Advisory Group is made up of industry and breed society representatives who meet once a year, as well as an annual conference call, to discuss the health schemes, provide member feedback and help us make improvements where needed. We are extremely grateful for the time and effort that the board commit in support of PSGHS.

The group consists of:

- Phil Stocker (National Sheep Association)
 - Jonathan Barber (Charollais Sheep Society/NSA)
 - John Matthews (Goat Veterinary Society, British Goat Society)
 - David Knowles (Lleyn Sheep Society)
 - Robin McIlrath (Suffolk Sheep Society)
 - Andy Barr (Texel Sheep Society)
 - Harriet Fuller (Sheep Veterinary Society)
- As well as SAC Consulting Veterinary Services members:
- George Caldow (Head of Veterinary Services)
 - David Wilson (PSGHS Veterinary Manager)
 - Alison Braddock (Business Development Manager)

2019 SHOWS and EVENTS

Throughout 2019, SAC Consulting Veterinary Services will be exhibiting at a number of shows and events around the country to promote both the Premium Sheep & Goat Health Schemes and the Premium Cattle Health Scheme. We use these events as an opportunity to run prize draws and exclusive show offers and they are a great chance for us to meet our existing health scheme members as well as people wanting to join.

Follow us on Twitter and like our Facebook page to keep up to date with where we will be and make sure you come and meet our team!

Dates for your diary:

NSA Central Region	24th January	Bakewell, Derbyshire
Dairy Tech	6th February	Stoneleigh, Warwickshire
NSA Welsh Sheep	21st May	Llandwrog, Gwynedd
NBA Beef Expo	23rd May	Crooklands, Cumbria
Scotland's Beef Event	30th May	Oldmeldrum, Aberdeenshire
NSA North Sheep	5th June	Settle, North Yorkshire
NSA Highland Sheep	12th June	Thurso, Highlands
NSA Sheep South West	18th June	Burrington, Devon
Royal Highland Show	20th – 23rd June	Ingliston, Edinburgh
Great Yorkshire Show	9th – 11th July	Harrogate, North Yorkshire
Royal Welsh Show	22nd – 25th July	Builth Wells, Powys
UK Dairy Day	11th September	Telford, Shropshire
Westmorland Show	12th September	Crooklands, Cumbria
Borderway Agri-Expo	1st November	Carlisle, Cumbria
AgriFest South West	6th November	Exeter, Devon
AgriScot	20th November	Ingliston, Edinburgh

Meet The Team



George Caldwell, Head of Veterinary Services, BVM&S, MSc, CertCHP, Dip ECBHM, FRAGS, MRCVS

Having previously been centre manager of the St Boswells Disease Surveillance Centre, George became Head of Veterinary Services in 2017. George's areas of expertise include disease surveillance, disease control programmes and infectious diseases of ruminants.



David Wilson, MA BVMS DSHP DipECSRHM MRCVS

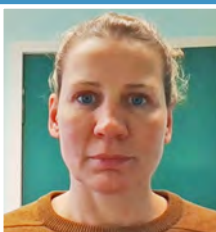
David is Centre Manager of SRUC St Boswells Disease Surveillance Centre, and is the veterinary lead for the MV/CAE Accreditation Scheme. Having graduated from the Universities of Oxford and Glasgow, David worked for over 20 years in mainly farm animal practice in the Borders, Lothians and Northumberland, including 10 years as a lecturer in the Edinburgh University Vet School Farm Animal Practice. He is a RCVS Specialist in Sheep Health and Production, and a Diplomate of the European College of Small Ruminant Health Management.

Outside work, David enjoys family life and is a keen musician, playing horn with the Meadows Chamber Orchestra and Scottish Sinfonia.



Heather Stevenson, BVMS, DSHP, MRCVS

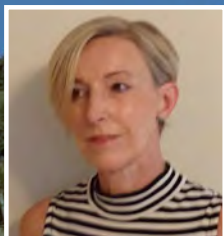
Heather has been a Veterinary Investigation Officer at our Dumfries centre since 2005. Graduating from the University of Glasgow, Heather worked in mixed practice in Ayrshire, New Zealand and Cumbria before joining SACCVS. On a day to day basis she carries out post-mortem examinations, reports laboratory results to veterinary practices, and has involvement in both the sheep and cattle health schemes. She has an interest in parasitology, particularly liver fluke, and is currently secretary of the Sheep Veterinary Society.



Barbara Watson, BVMS, MRCVS

Having graduated from the University of Glasgow, Barbara joined us in 2017 as a Veterinary Investigation Officer at St Boswells and is also responsible for the Scrapie Monitoring Scheme.

Outside life at SAC, Barbara is a member of the British Trust for Ornithology and a keen rugby player.



Julie McDiarmid
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