Endaf and Huw Morris
Gydros Farm, Cwmpennaner, Cerrigydrudion

WLBP HEALTH PLANNING CONSULTATION HELPING CONWY FARMER

Vet Dyfrig Williams (left) and farmer Endaf Morris attending to a sheep.

Endaf and Huw Morris farm approximately 270ha of improved hill Pasture at Gydros Farm, Cwmpennaner, Cerrigydrudion. In the spring of 2007 they completed a WLBP herd health plan with vet Dyfrig Williams of Wern Vets, Ruthin. During the on farm meeting the discussion turned to trace elements. For the past four years, growing and weaned lambs have been supplemented with a trace element drench on a monthly basis which has resulted in improved growth rates and an apparent reduced susceptibility to diseases such as pneumonia and coccidiosis after weaning. It is likely that the initial problem of growing and weaned lambs not thriving had arisen following the improvement of the hill pastures with a resulting lock-up of minerals such as copper, selenium and cobalt.

With the marked improvement seen in growing lambs it was decided to assess the trace element status of the breeding ewes as young lamb mortality was greater than expected with no obvious husbandry or single disease problem to account for it.

There are many ways of measuring trace element status, such as liver biopsies, muscle biopsies, forage analysis, blood samples but none is ideal for every element. Due to ease and availability of the tests they decided to start by blood sampling a group of six ewes to test for any copper, selenium or cobalt deficiency.

50% of the ewes sampled showed blood copper levels below the expected normal range and one ewe showed low blood Selenium levels. No disorders such as swayback or white muscle disease commonly attributed to copper and selenium deficiency respectively had been diagnosed on the farm although deficiency low blood copper and selenium levels have been associated with higher lamb mortality and low blood copper and cobalt with poor growth rates.

FACTFILE

- 270ha mostly improved hill pasture
- Farm beef and sheep
- 1400 Welsh and Welsh cross ewes producing fat lambs
- Breeds own replacements
- 40 suckler cows producing store cattle

Dyfrig said, "Due to difficulty in interpreting blood results and differences between growing seasons, it is difficult in many practical farm situations to evaluate if supplementing with a trace element will have a positive effect on production. Care should always be taken when supplementing sheep with copper as they are very sensitive to high copper levels either through the feed or other supplementation which can lead to toxicity and death. At Gydros it was decided that with 50% of ewes showing a low blood copper levels then a degree of supplementation was justified."

There are many mineral preparations on the market such as drenches, blocks, mineral powders, boluses etc, some containing complex mineral chelates, others simple inorganic salts. Due to the variable intake of licks and powders and also the lack of conclusive and repeatable evidence that chelated minerals have any benefit over simple inorganic salts for ruminants, Dyfrig prepared a drench containing Selenium, Iodine, Cobalt and Copper. This drench was given pre tupping and 4 weeks before lambing

"I noticed a marked improvement in lambing results this year, with improved lamb health" said Endaf. Dyfrig added. "Although it is impossible to attribute this to improving the trace element status of the ewe due to exceptionally good weather seen during lambing, this year's structured health planning has enabled Endaf and I to monitor and review the situation each year and decide if changes to the supplementation regime is required. This could save Endaf both time and cost as his drenching procedure is based on a targeted need."

For further details of the scheme contact WLBP on 01970 636688.

WLBP acknowledge the help and support of the Welsh Assembly Government, Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer.

Endaf a Huw Morris
Fferm Gydros, Cwmpennaner, Cerrigydrudion

YMGYNGHORIAD CYNLLUNIO IECHYD WLBP YN HELPU FFERMWR O GONWY

Y milfeddyg Dyfrig Williams (chwith) a'r ffermwr Endaf Morris yn archwilio dafad.

Mae Endaf a Huw Morris yn ffermio tua 270ha o tir mynydd wedi'i gwella ar Fferm Gydros, Cwmpenanner, Cerrigydrudion. Yn ystod gwanwyn 2007, cwblhaodd y ddau gynllun iechyd buches WLBP gyda'r milfeddyg Dyfrig Williams o Filfeddygon Wern, Rhuthun. Yn ystod y cyfarfod ar y fferm, trodd y drafodaeth at elfennau hybrin. Yn ystod y pedair blynedd diwethaf, rhoddwyd drensh elfennau hybrin yn fisol i'r ŵyn oedd yn tyfu ac ŵyn wedi'u diddyfnu. Canlyniad hyn fu gwell cyfraddau twf ac roedd hi'n ymddangos fod yr ŵyn yn llai tueddol o ddioddef o glefydau fel niwmonia a cocsidiosis ar ôl diddyfnu. Mae'n debygol fod y broblem gychwynnol o ŵyn sy'n tyfu ac wedi'u diddyfnu ddim yn ffynnu wedi codi am fod y porfeydd mynydd wedi'u gwella a bod mwynau fel copr, seleniwm a chobalt o'r herwydd wedi'u cloi.

Gyda'r gwelliant amlwg yn yr ŵyn oedd yn tyfu, penderfynwyd asesu statws elfennau hybrin y mamogiaid bridio oherwydd roedd mwy o ŵyn na'r disgwyl yn marw – heb unrhyw broblem amlwg yn ymwneud â hwsmonaeth neu glefyd penodol.

Mae sawl ffordd o fesur y statws elfennau hybrin, megis biopsïau afu, biopsïau cyhyrau. dadansoddi porfwyd, cymryd samplau gwaed – ond nid yw'r un yn ddelfrydol ar gyfer pob elfen. Oherwydd rhwyddineb ac argaeledd y profion, penderfynwyd dechrau drwy gymryd samplau gwaed o grŵp o chwe mamog i weld a oedd unrhyw ddiffygion copr, seleniwm neu gobalt.

O blith y mamogiaid a samplwyd, roedd lefelau copr 50% ohonynt yn is na'r disgwyl ac roedd gan un famog lefelau isel o seleniwm. Ni chafwyd diagnosis ar y fferm o unrhyw anhwylderau megis tindro neu bwd y cyhyrau, sy'n berthynol i ddiffyg copr a seleniwm, yn y drefn honno, ond mae lefelau isel o gopr a seleniwm yn y gwaed wedi bod yn gysylltiedig â chyfradd uwch o farwolaethau ymhlith yr ŵyn, a lefelau isel o gopr a chobalt yn y gwaed a chyfraddau twf gwael.

FFEIL FFEITHIAU

- 270ha o dir mynydd wedi'i wella yn bennaf
- Cig eidion a defaid
- 1400 o famogiaid Cymreig a Chymreig croes yn cynhyrchu ŵyn i'w lladd
- Anifeiliaid amnewid yn cael eu bridio ar y fferm
- 40 o fuchod sugno yn cynhyrchu gwartheg stôr

Dywedodd Dyfrig: "Oherwydd anhawster wrth ddehongli canlyniadau profion gwaed a'r gwahaniaethau rhwng y tymhorau tyfu, mae'n ymarferol anodd ar ffermydd i werthuso a yw defnyddio elfen hybrin atodol yn gwella'r cynnyrch. Dylid bod yn ofalus drwy'r amser wrth roi copr ychwanegol i ddefaid oherwydd maent yn sensitif i lefelau uchel o gopr un ai drwy'r porthiant neu ychwanegyddion eraill a all arwain at wenwyno a marwolaeth. Yng Ngydros, penderfynwyd bod modd cyfiawnhau ychwanegyn mwynol am fod 50% o'r mamogiaid yn dangos lefelau isel o gopr."

Mae yna nifer o gynhyrchion mwynol ar y farchnad megis drenshis, blociau, powdwr mwynol, bolysau, etc., ac mae rhai'n cynnwys celadau mwynol cymhlyg, ac eraill yn cynnwys halwynau anorganig syml. Oherwydd y cymeriant cyfnewidiol o lyfeini a phowdwr a diffyg tystiolaeth bendant ac ailadroddol fod mwynau celadol yn well na mwynau anorganig syml i anifeiliaid sy'n cnoi cil, paratôdd Dyfrig ddrensh yn cynnwys Seleniwm, Ïodin, Cobalt a Chopr. Rhoddwyd y drensh hwn cyn hwrdda a pedair wythnos cyn wyna.

"Gwelais welliant amlwg yn y canlyniadau wyna eleni, ac roedd iechyd yr ŵyn yn well," meddai Endaf. Ychwanegodd Dyfrig: "Er nad yw'n bosib priodoli hyn i wella statws elfennau hybrin y famog oherwydd y tywydd eithriadol o dda a gafwyd yn ystod yr wyna, mae'r cynllunio iechyd strwythuredig eleni wedi galluogi Endaf a fi i fonitro ac adolygu'r sefyllfa a phenderfynu a oes angen newid y drefn. Fe allai hyn arbed amser a chost i Endaf oherwydd mae'n drensio yn ôl gofynion targed."

I gael manylion pellach am y cynllun, cysylltwch â Cynhyrchwyr Cig Oen ac Eidion Cymru ar 01970 636688.

Mae Cynhyrchwyr Cig Oen ac Eidion Cymru yn cydnabod cymorth a chefnogaeth Swyddfa Prif Swyddog Milfeddygol Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru.