



FQAS NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND BEEF & LAMB FARM QUALITY ASSURANCE SCHEME

SPRING/SUMMER 2018

New Standard and Rules for 2018

The new Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (NIBL FQAS) Standard and Rules Book for 2018 has been distributed to all scheme participants. FQAS participants will be aware that Standards and Rules are formally reviewed every 3 years. The review has been taking place for most of 2017 and scheme participants have now been provided with the new book (enclosed with this newsletter).

The new Standard and Rules 2018 will come into effect from **1 June 2018**, allowing FQAS participants three months to familiarise themselves with the changes. It is this book that must be presented at inspection from **1 June 2018** onwards as the previous edition will become obsolete. A copy of the new Standard and Rules will also be available on the LMC website (www.lmcni.com) along with any relevant templates.

The main changes are outlined below:

- Increased focus on calf welfare – checks on housed calves and colostrum intake.
- New Animal Health Plan template – new format to encourage planned animal related health activities throughout the year and optional template to record significant health issues/mortality on farm.
- Consideration of antibiotic use and trying to reduce where possible, farmers are encouraged to speak with their vet before using 3rd/4th generation Highest Priority Critically Important Antibiotics (HP-CIA's).
- Veterinary Medicine Record (VMR) – date withdrawal period ends and reason for treatment must now be recorded.
- The Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use (CRRU) has led an industry initiative over the last number of years to reduce the use of second generation rodenticides. As an assurance scheme member, rodenticides can continue to be purchased as participants can demonstrate responsible use through compliance with Standard 3.19.
- Soil analysis is required to identify crop requirement if using Phosphorus Fertiliser.
- If importing/exporting slurry then records must be kept.
- Legislation now requires that anyone spraying Plant Protection Products (PPP's) such as pesticides must have a Certificate of Competence and equipment test certificates are required at specified frequencies. A new template is provided in Appendix 7c for recording application of PPP's.
- FQAS is an affiliate member of the Farm Safety Partnership and Appendix 8c raises awareness of the farm safety elements within the FQAS Standards.

All changes within the new Standard and Rules book have been clearly marked as "Amended" or "New Code".

The Farm Liaison Officer Terry White will be on hand via the FQAS helpline and various Livestock Marts to provide assistance to producers with the revised standards pre/post inspection.

The FQAS Helpline is (028) 92 633024. Dates of mart clinics are sent out via text message on a monthly basis and are published in the LMC Bulletin and LMC website.



Review of 2017- NIBL FQAS 25th Anniversary Year

The Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland (LMC) has worked continuously throughout the year to promote the 25th anniversary of the Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (NIBL FQAS) on a NI, GB and global platform.

The year commenced with an official launch of the scheme which took place on the farm of 25 year-long member Edward Carson, who is a suckler beef and sheep producer from Downpatrick.

LMC in conjunction with NIBL FQAS hosted a talk by the world renowned American Professor of Animal Science Temple Grandin at Balmoral Show last year. This event was attended by over 50 stakeholders and members. During her talk Professor Grandin focused on the importance of ensuring that farm businesses are adequately staffed as failure to do so can have huge implications on animal husbandry and animal welfare practices.

As LMC are affiliate members of the Northern Ireland Farm Safety Partnership it was decided to distribute over 1,500 high vis Farm Quality Assured vests at the 2017 Balmoral Show. This initiative was an opportunity to particularly target young children who reside on farms however LMC also provided adult vests so they could lead by example on the family farm or work place.

Also during last year's Balmoral Show, LMC launched their new FQAS Slurry Storage leaflet on the Importance of Properly Maintained Slurry Storage Facilities. The leaflet focused on the three main non-conformances relating to slurry storage facilities found on the FQAS farm inspection. The purpose of the leaflet was to inform members of how to rectify the issues found and to raise the importance of farm safety.

In July of 2017 LMC hosted a stand at the NSA sheep event in Ballymena Livestock Mart. NIBL FQAS in



conjunction with LMC focused on the benefits of joining the scheme for sheep producers and samples of lamb were offered to the public throughout the day.

NIBL FQAS also welcomed Agri Journalists from the UK to the NSA sheep event as well as taking them on a visit to CAFRE's new sheep house at Glenwherry to demonstrate how CAFRE has renewed focus on sheep health and welfare. NIBL FQAS also incorporated a visit to a 25 year FQAS member's farm which members of the FQAS Industry Board attended. Meeting with UK Journalists meant that the NIBL FQAS was able to raise its profile within the GB marketplace which is critically important for NI beef and lamb producers.

During August, LMC visited a number of '25 year' members across the country to thank them personally for their contribution to the scheme over the past 25 years. These visits gave members a chance to voice their thoughts on the scheme since its inception in the early 1990's. LMC found that feedback was very positive and these visits also identified that there is still a great need for the scheme to evolve and grow over the next 25 years.

Elsewhere, NIBL FQAS was profiled at Anuga 2017, the world's leading food fair for retail trade, food service and catering markets, which took place between October 7 and October 11.

Attending the show meant that LMC could highlight the vitally important heritage of NI beef and lamb as the event attracted over 160,000 visitors from all over the world. The challenge of Brexit is on-going and FQAS want to be at the forefront when it comes to promoting beef and lamb from NI and international food events like Anuga are essential to be able to communicate on a global platform.

LMC hosted a celebratory dinner to mark the NIBL FQAS anniversary on November 7 at the La Mon Hotel, Belfast. This event saw over 220 guests in attendance which included a number of members who have been in the scheme for 25 years along with industry stakeholders. The key note speaker was Professor Patrick Wall from University College Dublin and he stressed the importance of the high quality beef and lamb that is produced in NI and noted that with Brexit NIBL FQAS has something special to offer.

In January of 2018 LMC launched its 19th annual Schools Cookery Demonstrations Programme aimed at educating pupils on the merits of incorporating Northern Ireland Farm Quality assured beef and lamb in a healthy, balanced diet. These demonstrations are critical as they help young consumers to understand the products they are buying. There are over 300 demonstrations delivered to post primary students across NI.

LMC Launches Three-Year Beef and Lamb Promotional Campaign

LMC has kicked-off a new, three-year advertising campaign, designed to encourage people across Northern Ireland to eat more Farm Quality Assured beef and lamb. The initiative will target consumers by way of television, radio, print, online, social media and outdoor display advertising.

The home market accounts for between 9 percent and 11 percent of all the beef and lamb produced in Northern Ireland. The new advertising campaign encourages local consumers to seek out the Northern Ireland Farm Quality Assured logo in shops and if necessary to ask retailers if they stock Farm Quality Assured beef and lamb products.

Red meat is competing against other dietary protein sources and this is

particularly the case with lamb. The new campaign will aim to address some of these issues and new lamb recipes will be unveiled over the coming months.

The beef and lamb website (beefandlambni.com) is a valuable source of information regarding beef and lamb recipes, the sourcing of Farm Quality Assured beef and lamb products in Northern Ireland and the commitment to local farmers to produce cattle and sheep of the highest quality.

Social media outlets will be specifically targeted and the new campaign has already featured on television and radio since the beginning of the year.



Using Antibiotics Responsibly in Cattle and Sheep

Antimicrobials (which include antibiotics) have made a major contribution to cattle and sheep health and welfare. They are vital medicines for the treatment of bacterial infections.

The emergence of antimicrobial resistance as a serious problem in human medicine and has prompted concerns about the potential for crossover of resistant bacteria from livestock to the human population and the associated possibility of this impacting on the effectiveness of medical antimicrobial treatments.

Guidelines on responsible use of medicines are at the front of the FQAS Veterinary Medicine Book. Rule 2.3 and 2.13 in the NIBL FQAS Standard requires that participants read and sign the Code of Practice for Responsible Use of Animal Medicines on the farm and comply with withdrawal periods. At the FQAS inspection the inspector will check the Veterinary Medicine Record Book and the Herd/Flock records to ensure that withdrawal periods have been recorded and observed.

What can you do?

- Review management and biosecurity strategies to prevent disease issues that require antibiotic use on your farm.
- Discuss antibiotic use with your vet and ensure your herd/flock health plan is fit for purpose.

Rule 2.4 in the NIBL FQAS Standard requires a written herd/flock health plan which includes a farm biosecurity policy. The biosecurity plan is an aid to identify risks of disease being introduced onto the farm and that procedures are in place for minimising the risk. A written animal health plan allows a farm to demonstrate its commitment to planned animal health and preventative medicine regimes. The Animal Health Plan (Appendix A2.a) has been amended in the 2018 NIBL FQAS Standard which will allow producers to complete constructive animal health planning. In the new 2018 NIBL FQAS Standard there is a template to allow producers to record Animal Mortality and Significant Health Issues such as abortions,

clostridial diseases and BVD. The benefit of recording this information becomes clear when reviewing the animal health plan for the following year. The issues that may have developed in the previous 12 months can then form the basis for the new health plan. Producers are also reminded to review antibiotic usage on a regular basis and where possible reduce the antibiotic use in-conjunction with the animal health plan; there is an 'optional use' column in the Veterinary Medicine Records Purchase Section which will assist with this.

Producers are encouraged to consult with your vet before using Highest Priority Critically Important Antibiotics (HP-CIA's). (E.g. Marbocyl, Zactran, Draxxin, Tylan, Baytril etc)

Veterinary Medicines Record Books (VMR) can be obtained from LMC free of charge to scheme members. Contact the FQAS Helpline on: 028 92 633 024.

Using Medicines Correctly

bacteria causing the disease can be tested against antibiotics to identify which ones are likely to be effective. This is called antibiotic sensitivity testing and is recommended that producers record this information in the Significant Health Issues template within their Animal Health Plan.

Anthelmintics are categorised into groups according to the parasite they are effective against, e.g. wormers and flukicides. It is critically important to monitor how effective anthelmintic groups are on the farm. Faecal egg testing after treatment is one way of monitoring and again it is key that this information is recorded to help with future farm health planning.

When using medicines and anthelmintics it is important to use the correct dosage, medicine, administration and storage. Producers should seek professional advice if they are unsure of any aspects of administering medicines and anthelmintics to livestock.

Using the right amount of medicine is critically important. Each medicine licensed in the UK has undergone rigorous testing to calculate the optimum dosage and administration for each species it is licenced for and this information is displayed on the box, data sheet or bottle supplied with the medicine. It is vital that the correct dosage is given when treating an animal as this will help avoid drug resistance by underdosing and with over dosing animal welfare can be compromised as many medicines are toxic if too much is administered.

There are seven main routes to administer animal medicine:

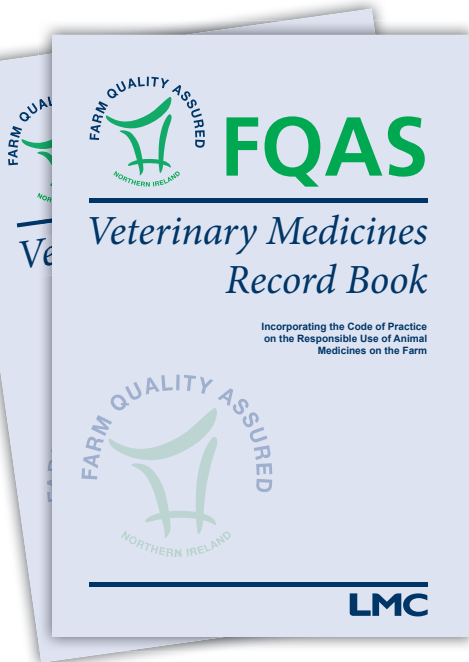
1. Subcutaneous injection (under the skin).
2. Intramuscular injection (into the muscle).
3. Intravenously (into the vein).
4. Oral drench (down the throat).
5. Pour-on (onto the skin).
6. Intramammary (up the teat).
7. Topical (spray, eye ointment).

Each medicine will have its own recommended route of administration. The data sheet will give additional information as to how much can be administered in the one site and any special precautions. The stated milk and meat withdrawal times only apply if the medicine has been given the correct dose and by the right route of administration.

Other factors to consider are:

- Cleanliness (sterile needle, sterile syringe and clean area on animal).
- Needle size (depends on the size of animal and injection site).
- Correct restraint of animals (prevent injury to animal and humans, prevents needle breaking and allows injection site to be clearly seen).

Farmers are also reminded that it is a legal requirement, under the Animal and Animal Products (Examinations for Residues and Maximum Residues Limits) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013, for all livestock producers, rearing or producing animals for the food chain, to keep complete records of the purchase and use of all veterinary medicines.



Antibiotics are categorised into different groups according to their chemical structure and the way they kill or halt the growth of bacteria. Some antibiotics are only effective against particular bacteria and are called narrow-spectrum antibiotics. Others are effective against a range of different bacteria and are known as broad-spectrum antibiotics.

Narrow spectrum antibiotics are less likely to be selected for resistance. Antibiotics vary in the way they are distributed within the body, how long they remain active after dosing and how long they persist in the animal.

Whenever possible and especially in cases where a number of sick animals are affected, samples should be taken from sick animals and submitted to a laboratory for bacterial culture. The

Source: AHDB Beef and Sheep BRP Manual 11 (Using medicated correctly for Better Returns)

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