

Dosing at housing

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The major parasite problems around housing are initially liver fluke, gutworms and lungworm, and later lice, mites, and coccidia in calves. Following housing, cattle do not pick-up any new worm or fluke infections, as these occur mainly at grazing on pasture. Effective treatment at housing can therefore keep animals virtually free of worms and liver fluke until they are back on pasture in spring. It is a good time to carry out dung samples to check that your parasite control has been effective.

Health information at slaughter captured by the Beef HealthCheck programme can also be helpful to see if liver fluke are a problem on the farm. Liver fluke has been decreasing in recent years and it is possible that animals might not need a dose against them. However, 2023 has seen a particularly rainy summer, ideal conditions for liver fluke to thrive, so speak to your vet about testing and optimum treatment. Antiparasitic products can also work for more than one type of parasite, so it is important to discuss which product is best for your farm depending on the parasite control plan in your herd.

- Make sure to only use combination products if it is necessary to target multiple parasite types, e.g. use a wormer and flukicide product only if targeting both gut worms and liver fluke.
- Using a product targeting the inhibited larvae of the stomach worm *Ostertagia* at housing can reduce the risk of serious disease in late winter/ early spring. Products containing levamisole (yellow drench) are not effective against these inhibited larvae. Instead use a product from the clear drenches (macrocyclic lactones) or certain white drenches (benzimidazoles).
- If treating animals for lice and mites, make sure to treat all in-contact animals in the group. If there is a heavy infestation, a re-treatment might be needed 3-4 weeks later after the eggs hatch, as the treatments do not kill the eggs.
- When treating for liver fluke, ensure the product works for the stage of the liver fluke life cycle that is expected to be present i.e. in the first 8-12 weeks after housing either use a product that is effective against immature liver fluke or re-treat if necessary after this time. A dung sample 8 weeks after treatment at housing can be taken to check whether additional fluke treatments are needed.
- Always check the withdrawal period for finishing animals and dairy cows.