

Biobest currently offers a range of testing for sheep both to monitor at the flock and group level and to investigate in case of clinical disease.

Tests available to HiHealth Flockcare members and non-members include:

- Parasitology - to assess worm and fluke burdens and assess efficacy of treatment with anthelmintics/flukicides
- Biochemistry - with profiles to address specific issues such as trace element status, pre-lambing nutritional status and diagnosis of metabolic disease in the peri-parturient period, and a range of tests that can make up tailored profiles to assess other problems such as thin ewes, stiff lambs
- Serological / PCR testing for important infectious diseases including Border Disease Virus, Maedi Visna, Liver Fluke and Johne's disease.

We have recently added new packages to investigate thin ewes and to test high value animals before entering your flock for some of the diseases you really don't want to buy in.

'Thin ewe' package includes serology testing for Maedi Visna, Johne's disease and Caseous Lymphadenitis (CLA) together with parasitology testing for worms and fluke. The package is designed to investigate the more common infectious causes of chronic ill thrift in adult sheep. The package includes testing of individual blood samples from 10 thin ewes and 10 dung samples from the same group of sheep which will be pooled at the lab for composite worm egg count and liver fluke / rumen fluke egg examination. The cost is £215 for testing on 12 sheep. Please phone for advice on how best to use this package and whether it is the best option for your flock. A detailed history can often provide clues as to what the problem may be and more targeted, and possibly cheaper, testing may be appropriate.

Annual testing of 12 thin cull ewes is also a starting point in assessing the disease status of your flock. Testing higher numbers would be advantageous in large flocks, but this must be balanced against cost. Although accreditation schemes are available for some sheep diseases, they may not be applicable to all flocks, and this is one low-cost way of gathering evidence to promote the health status of your flock as actively monitoring for the so-called 'iceberg' diseases of sheep.

The **'Pre-purchase / quarantined sheep'** package includes Border disease PCR, Maedi Visna and CLA ELISAs, Johne's disease PCR and parasitology testing (worm egg count and liver fluke coproantigen ELISA). Screening for disease in purchased stock, by veterinary examination and laboratory testing, before they join the flock means you can avoid introducing diseases. The parasitology testing element may be best used to check the efficacy of treatments given during quarantine to ensure resistant parasites are not brought into your flock. Timing of testing will depend on what treatments are used but if standard SCOPS advice is followed then 14 days post-treatment will suffice for both worms and fluke using the tests described. The cost is £65 per sheep.

