

When should I dose my lambs for worms?



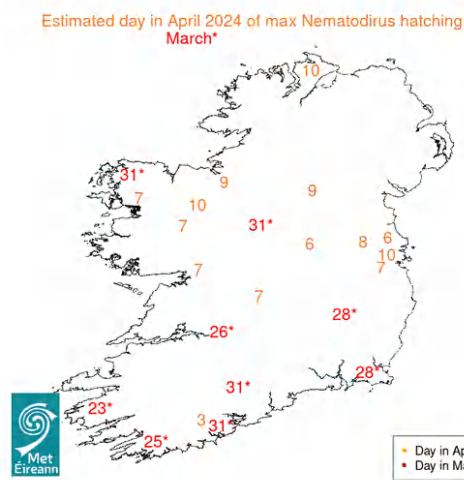
April & May is when most sheep farmers will look to giving lambs their first worm drench. Timing will vary depending on several factors including; weather, location etc. Nematodirus is the worm of most concern at this time of year for young growing lambs. Met Eireann have issued a Nematodirus battus forecast for March/April

<https://www.met.ie/2024-nematodirus-forecast>

[Click here](#)

This forecast gives an indication on when Nematodirus battus will hatch in various regions and areas of Ireland. The forecast this year predicts an earlier Nematodirus hatch than normal, mainly due to the mild and wet conditions this Spring.

Estimated day in March and April 2024 of max Nematodirus hatching.



What is NEMATODIRUS and why should I be concerned?

Nematodirus is a severe parasitic disease of lambs six to twelve weeks of age which become infected by ingesting large numbers of infective larvae from grazing on contaminated pasture. The life cycle of N. battus is unlike that of other roundworms in that eggs deposited on pasture do not hatch until the following year to release the infective larvae. After ingestion by lambs, Nematodirus larvae invade the wall of the intestine.

Disease is characterised by profuse diarrhoea, dehydration and weight loss.

Calves may also be similarly affected. In outbreak scenarios, lambs can be seen congregating around water troughs due to the severe thirst that develops. Adult sheep are unaffected by the parasite. Before they can hatch, the eggs have to undergo a period of cold weather followed by warmer temperatures of 10°C or more. If these conditions occur over a short period of time, triggering a mass hatch, and it coincides with the time when lambs are starting to take in significant amounts of grass (over about six weeks old), the result can be devastating.

Main risk factors



If your lambs are grazing pasture that carried lambs last spring and you answer yes to one or more of these questions, your lambs are at risk.

Are they old enough to be eating significant amounts of grass? (generally 6-12 weeks of age but may be younger if ewes are not milking well)

Has there been a sudden, cold snap recently followed by a period of warm weather?

Do you have groups where there is also likely to be a challenge from coccidiosis? For example, mixed aged lambs are a higher risk

Have you got lambs that are under other stresses e.g. triplets, fostered, on young or older ewes?

<https://sheepproducts.ie/>

HOW TO TREAT NEMATODIRUS?



White drenches (Benzimidazole) are the recommended treatment. While there is resistance to white wormers by roundworms later in the season, there is no resistance to Nematodirus. White drenches (Benzimidazoles) are the recommended treatment for Nematodirus infections as these drenches are effective against both larval and adult stages. As reinfection can occur, lambs may require repeated treatment at 2 - 3 week intervals. Lambs will get immunity to Nematodirus once they have come in contact with it, and generally it will not affect their performance in mid-summer. During the summer lambs can be infected with other parasites like strongyle worms which may need treatment.



FENBENOR 2.5% ALBEX 2.5% TRAMAZOLE 2.5%

It is important to know the symptoms of Coccidiosis in lambs as the symptoms are very similar to Nematodirus. Coccidiosis can be suspected if scouring is still occurring after dosing for Nematodirus. If you have a difficulty diagnosing or deciding on what treatment, it is important to consult your veterinary surgeon, as they will provide a correct diagnosis and give recommendations on the best products to treat for both Nematodirus and Coccidiosis.