

AHDA

ANIMAL HEALTH DISTRIBUTORS ASSOCIATION
ENHANCING RESPONSIBLE PRESCRIBING



As an organisation representing its membership, and with 'a seat at the table' on a national level, AHDA is launching a campaign in 2022 to take a closer look at the prescribing process for POM-VPS products, with a particular focus on anthelmintic resistance.

A number of key industry groups and organisations are well aware of the challenge that anthelmintic resistance poses to farmers and the wider sheep industry, and have already put in place policies and procedures to manage anthelmintic resistance.

AHDA has carried out some background work to obtain information on the number of doses of different anthelmintics sold onto farm in 2020, which was based on lambs over the growing season. This information is being used to benchmark the current situation, and outlines what needs to be done to achieve greater awareness of, and make positive improvements to, prescribing protocol.

Initially triggered by anthelmintic resistance in lambs, the scope of AHDA's work on prescribing has now broadened to include endoparasites, ectoparasites and vaccines. AHDA also aims for this work to include all species receiving POM-VPS medicines.

It is the responsibility of animal medicine prescribers, including AHDA members and their employees, i.e. RAMAs (SQPs), to provide accurate information on the correct combination of wormers to ensure resistance does not become a more prominent issue.

Therefore, in its unique position, and with the collective power and influence of its members, AHDA has set out a number of action points to improve animal health and welfare through managing resistance.

Working alongside other industry organisations and groups, AHDA aims to achieve five key areas of action:

Move from verbal prescription to written or recorded prescription

By introducing mandatory written or recorded prescriptions for every prescriber, this would set an industry standard and would mean that all prescribing is balanced across the board, no matter where the prescription was made.

This would increase the emphasis on the prescribing process and give the opportunity for the prescriber to inform and educate the end user. The information would be recorded and would act as a reference for both the prescriber and for the end user.

There would be a clear audit trail filed by the prescriber for future reference that would include the number and weight of animals to be treated and the amount of product prescribed, alongside the other mandatory information required under the VMR.

This may mean the prescribing process could take more time, but that additional time and detail will positively endorse the prescribing process and, once implemented, would become an integral part of the process.

Compulsory anthelmintic resistance CPD taken within each two-year cycle for RAMAs (SQPs)

AHDA Council has recommended that in the current two-year CPD period, which began in July 2021, there should be an element of compulsory farm CPD, with a focus on resistance and its management, and will be included within the existing points target. This has been agreed by the AMTRA Council and Board, and AHDA will be entering into discussion with other RAMA (SQP) registration bodies.

The CPD in question gains extra points, earning 10 points per hour rather than the 4 to 8 points per hour typically given to other CPD. All AMTRA Farm RAMAs (SQPs) (those in categories R, G, K, L) must gain at least 24 points of this enhanced farm CPD by the end of the current CPD period (30 June 2023).

Make faecal egg counting a normal and essential process in the prescribing of anthelmintics

Currently, faecal egg counting is recognised as being a useful indicator in assessing the need to use an anthelmintic product. If used correctly after treatment, it is also a reliable indicator to assess the effectiveness of a product in reducing the worm count. This does not mean that other factors and methods should not be taken into account.

However, faecal egg counting is currently used by only a small minority of sheep farmers. AHDA, together with others in the industry, would like to see this adopted as normal practice.

AHDA is currently working towards this goal by exploring ideas and initiatives to improve sampling accuracy and speed of testing.

Focus on pack sizes to ensure they meet prescribing requirements

Whilst it will always be a challenge for manufacturers to offer the ideal range of pack sizes for every product, AHDA is keen to reduce the use of larger pack sizes, particularly the 10-litre pack size which can't be directly used to dose from. Currently, the product has to be decanted into flex-packs to enable it to be used safely.

As required by the regulations, the pack size prescribed should be the minimum to give one treatment for the animals being treated, in order to ensure safe use and accurate dosing.

Aim to create a specific and active animal medicine plan for each flock/herd owner

Planning ahead is best practice for any business, and this is no less true for livestock owners. AHDA is developing an animal medicine plan template that RAMAs (SQPs) can use with farmers so that, at a convenient time of the year, much of the detail can be gathered in preparation for the season ahead.

Creation of the plan requires a detailed and valuable dialogue with the farmer, and when the point in the year comes around, the plan may be used to inform the prescribing process, supporting RAMAs (SQPs) in their role.



**The Animal Health Distributors Association (UK) Ltd –
AHDA - represents around 300 companies across the farm
animal, companion animal and equine sectors.**

Membership of AHDA is drawn primarily from animal health product retail distributors across the UK, as well as veterinary medicine producers and animal health equipment manufacturers, and represents over 80% of the POM-VPS (Prescription Only Medicine – Vet, Pharmacist and SQP) and NFA-VPS (Non Food Animal –Vet, Pharmacist, SQP) UK animal medicines market.

AHDA members employ the majority of Registered Animal Medicine Advisors - RAMAs (SQPs), typically stocking and prescribing licensed animal medicines to livestock farmers, smallholders and companion animal owners.

The overriding mission and purpose of AHDA is to support RAMAs (SQPs) in their role, working with other industry organisations and bodies to protect their right to sell and supply the range of prescription animal medicines not requiring veterinary diagnosis.

AHDA has a board member place on the following:

Responsible Use of Medicine in agriculture Alliance – RUMA
Animal Medicine Regulatory Authority – AMTRA

AHDA is represented on the following bodies:

Sustainable Control of Parasites in Sheep – SCOPS
Control of Worms Sustainably – COWS
Sheep health and welfare group – SHAWG



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