

THIN EWE PROJECT

APHA are looking to recruit farms in England and Wales who would like to investigate the cause of ill thrift in breeding ewes.

APHA and the University of Surrey are offering free postmortem examination of three thin ewes for each farm recruited for a limited time – up to the end of December 2020. These may be ewes that have been identified for removal from the flock due to poor condition at tugging or empty at scanning.

We will look specifically and test for the “iceberg diseases” OPA, Johnes, Maedi Visna and Border disease in addition to other potential causes of ill thrift and provide a report back to you to share with your farmer client. The postmortem examination and all subsequent testing will be free of charge.

Our aim is that this survey will help to inform the causes of ill thrift/poor condition in breeding ewes and samples will also be collected (anonymised) to help our research into developing new tests.

Once a farm or farms have been identified we ask you to consult with us at the Veterinary Pathology Centre so we can monitor how many farms will be put forward for this survey, numbers are limited so it will be on a first-come first-served basis.

You can find the local investigation centre by entering the first part of the farm postcode into the PME postcode finder <http://apha.defra.gov.uk/postcode/pme.asp>

Farmers who live within a one-hour drive of the VPC will be expected to deliver the three sheep to the centre. Those farmers over a one-hour drive of the centre will be eligible for free carcass collection.

We need to know in advance that carcasses are to be submitted as part of this survey so **communication with the centre is key** as we need to be able to coordinate when carcasses will be submitted. Ideally we would like the vet to take serum blood samples prior to euthanising the sheep – this might be on farm or the farmer might bring the sheep to the vet practice en-route to the centre if delivering themselves, but please discuss all possible options with us at VPC.

In addition we will send you a short questionnaire for the farmer to complete. This will need to be fully completed before we can accept animals for post-mortem examination.

We look forward to working with you on this project,

APHA and University of Surrey, Veterinary Pathology team