

# OPA/Jaagsiekte risk management

OPA is a progressive viral disease causing lung tumours resulting in exercise intolerance, weight loss, and eventual death in affected animals. OPA virus affects all breeds of sheep and has been identified across all regions of the UK. OPA control strategies have been limited by the lack of an effective screening test for live animals. The basis of control in affected flocks has been the identification and culling of suspect sheep.

## Lung Scanning- a new diagnostic tool

1. Lung scanning provides a diagnostic tool which supports an OPA RISK REDUCTION STRATEGY.
2. Lung scanning can identify developing tumours before clinical signs appear and therefore aids EARLIER IDENTIFICATION OF AFFECTED ANIMALS.
3. Monitoring sheep over a period of time with REPEATED SCANS CAN INCREASE CONFIDENCE IN THE RESULT.
4. Lung scanning is a positive development but it does have limitations; it CANNOT GUARANTEE ABSENCE OF OPA

More information on OPA can be found in Moredun's fact sheet on OPA or on their website at <http://www.moredun.org.uk/research/practical-animal-health-information/disease-summaries/ovine-pulmonary-adenocarcinoma-opa-or>

# Lung Scanning Strategies

Research which will demonstrate the value of different targeting and monitoring strategies is underway while systematic work by veterinarians in the field is building up experience and confidence in the technique. At this point in time two approaches are being adopted.



## 1. Scanning to Reduce the Risk of the Introduction of OPA



Lung scanning at purchase within a quarantine period can be used to identify sheep with OPA including those in the early stages of tumour development. This approach **REDUCES THE RISK OF INTRODUCING OPA affected sheep** into a new flock. The technique cannot guarantee animals are free of disease; however, risk reduction is likely to be enhanced by further monitoring at 6-12 month intervals.

## 2. Scanning in OPA affected flocks

Lung scanning could be adopted as the basis of a test and cull policy in affected flocks, allowing the earlier removal of OPA affected animals whilst the sheep are still of some cull value. In addition, removing OPA cases earlier will reduce the exposure of other sheep in the flock to the OPA virus and should result in a decrease in the number of new infections.



A programme of repeated annual scanning is likely to be required to make a positive impact on flock health.

**DEVELOP an OPA RISK  
REDUCTION STRATEGY WITH YOUR FARM VETERINARIAN**

