

Faecal Egg Counts for Sheep, Cattle and Horses.

By Joshua Anderson– Wheatley - Laboratory Scientist

The testing of animal faeces for the presence and quantity of parasite eggs is a helpful tool to determine if there is a need for worming treatment. The Veterinary Service and DoA are able to help do this by carrying out Faecal Egg Counts (FEC) on suitable samples from Sheep, Cattle, and Horses.

What do I do for a FEC?

The first step to getting a FEC is to get it booked in with the DoA laboratory – this can be done by calling 27355 and asking to speak with Josh Anderson-Wheatley (Laboratory Scientist) about FEC, or by emailing JWheatley@naturalresources.gov.fk

You will then have to complete a FEC Submission Form which is available to download on our Website: <https://www.falklands.gov.fk/agriculture/doa/services/laboratory> or hard copies are available from the DoA and Veterinary Services.

Samples should ideally be submitted to the Laboratory on **Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday.** **It is essential that the samples are fresh** – samples should ideally be collected straight from the rectum of the animal, or from the ground immediately after defecation. Once collected, samples should be **refrigerated until you are able to transport them** to the DoA, this should be done no later than **48 hours** after the samples collection.

Never freeze samples as this destroys the eggs and ruins the count.

Are there any limits on dropping off samples?

Samples should only be delivered to the DoA during **the Government opening hours 08:00-12:00, 13:00-16:30 Monday-Wednesday** as a member of staff will need to be present to accept the samples and ensure they are stored appropriately until they can be processed in the lab.

We ask that samples are **not dropped off on Thursday or Friday**, as we may not be able to process the samples immediately. The later in the week they arrive, the higher the chance that the sample won't be processed within that same week, leading to a higher chance of an incorrect count with the sample.

How much do I need to collect?

Each sample should be collected in a clean pot (available from the DoA on request) or Ziplock bag and immediately sealed. Samples should be **about the volume of a Ping-Pong ball** in total. The number of samples to be collected depends on the size of the group of animals that you are testing:

10 or less animals, - a sample from each animal is required.

11 to 50 animals, - 10 samples are required.

51 to 200 animals, - 20 samples are required.

Over 200 animals, - 30 samples are required.

There may be times when you wish to have animals processed individually, if this is the case it must be made clear upon submission of the samples.

What will this cost me?

The FEC service is still currently **free-of-charge for farmers**, all you need to pay for is getting the samples to the DoA.

Why should I be doing FEC?

The FEC is important to **monitor the general health** of your animals, and ensure that they get the **appropriate treatment** such as de-worming.

It is also a requirement of the **Responsible Wool Standard** that in Section B, subsection AW3 (Animal Management), **AW3.5** states that “measures shall be taken to prevent or control parasite infections such as, gastro-intestinal worms.” and so, the use of the FEC service would ensure that you are able to comply with this requirement.