

Worm Control in Red Grouse Supplementary Information

MEDICATED GRIT

1 Medicated Grit - Introduction

- 1.1 Grit is an aid to digestion and the provision of plain (un-medicated) grit can be beneficial if supplied to grouse, in areas where there is little natural grit. This will also reduce the time that grouse must spend foraging for grit.
- 1.2 'Medicated grit' was developed in the 1980s. It is a quartz grit, of a size to appeal to grouse, and it is coated with a carrier fat, in which a wormer has been impregnated.
- 1.3 Currently the wormer (anthelmintic) drug is *Flubendazole*, which is widely used in other livestock systems and works well as a split dose drug.
 - 1.3.1 Split dose drugs work by allowing the animal to take in small amounts of the anthelmintic over a period of days, which then accumulates in the body.

2 Veterinary Prescription and Record Keeping

- 2.1 The user (not the grit supplier) **MUST** obtain a prescription for medicated grit from a Vet.
- 2.2 To justify issuing a prescription, the Vet will require evidence of high worm burdens in the grouse population (see Section 5 in the Guidance).
- 2.3 When not in use, medicines **MUST** be kept in a locked store and used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- 2.4 Manufacturers' and prescription withdrawal periods **MUST** be observed.
- 2.5 Records of medicated grit prescriptions **MUST** be kept for five years, in line with other animal husbandry enterprises.
- 2.6 Records **should** include: identity of the medicine, inclusion rate, quantity, date of purchase, name and address of supplier, medicine batch number(s), expiry date(s), date placed on the moor, location of grit boxes, date grit withdrawn, and the date of the first shoot.

- 2.7 To comply with the 28-day withdrawal period (see the Veterinary Medicines Regulations) it is essential to know your neighbour's shooting plan. Medicated grit **should** not be available on your land within 28 days of the end of your neighbour's shooting season, as grouse incursions can occur.
- 2.8 Medicated grit may be supplied during the grouse shooting season (12 August – 10 December), after shooting has finished for the year.

3 Placement

- 3.1 The individual point at which grit is supplied to grouse is known as a 'Gritting station'.
- 3.2 Gritting Stations:
 - 3.2.1 Are usually established using plain, quartz grit.
 - 3.2.2 Spacing and layout is dependent on grouse density, with the aim of establishing at least one station per pair of grouse.
 - 3.2.3 **Should** be located sensitively, mindful of the landscape and local environment; for example avoiding permanent standing or running water.
 - 3.2.4 **Should** be mapped, preferably with GPS.
 - 3.2.5 **Should** use trays to contain the grit and reduce environmental contamination.
- 3.3 Only a small quantity of medicated grit is required at each station; 500g of grit will last a pair of grouse 7 months.
- 3.4 The medicated grit container **should** be designed in way that can prevent grouse access to the grit when required.
 - 3.4.1 Containers can have 2 separate compartments, one for plain and one for medicated grit with a lid that can be secured to prevent access to one of the compartments.
 - 3.4.2 Gritting stations may be sources of disease themselves and container size and cleanliness **should** be monitored.
- 3.5 Slightly raising the station above ground level will aid drainage and potentially reduce disease transmission.
- 3.6 Gritting stations **should** not be placed above the height of the surrounding heather / vegetation canopy. Siting gritting stations on very large mounds will not enhance their function.
- 3.7 Over winter, placing gritting stations in naturally exposed positions may be beneficial, as these are likely to have less snow covering than more sheltered places.

DIRECT DOSING

4 Direct dosing

- 4.1 Direct dosing is a short-term tool for reducing worm burdens in grouse, as an alternative to medicated grit.
- 4.2 Practitioners **MUST** gain a complete understanding of the conditions of the current Open General Licence before contemplating catching up birds for treatment (see Further Information).
- 4.3 A Vet **MUST** provide a prescription for the oral wormer.
- 4.4 Practitioners **should** seek advice from a vet about dosage, and the techniques and equipment to be used for oral drenching (gavage).
- 4.5 Planning for catching and treating **should** consider grouse welfare. Large soft nets should be used and wet weather avoided.
- 4.6 Working at night on moorland from moving vehicles can be hazardous for operators and appropriate risk assessments **MUST** be carried out.