

## ***Barbers Pole***

Just when we think the Facial Eczema season is behind us, the grass is growing, mushrooms are popping up and everything is looking rosy, a new animal health problem comes along. We have seen a few cases of it already. I am talking about *Haemonchus contortus* (love the name), commonly called Barbers Pole worm.

*Haemonchus* eggs accumulate on the pasture over the summer, and then with autumn rain they hatch on mass. Last years lambs, two tooth ewes and young alpacas are most at risk of infection. They inhabit the abomasum (4<sup>th</sup> stomach) and suck blood from the stomach lining.

Relatively small numbers can rapidly cause severe anemia and even death. The symptoms are related to the anemia and show as the animals lying down a lot, slowly wandering around the paddock and wobbly in the rear end. Unlike other parasites, the number of eggs in the faeces do not necessarily correlate well to the numbers of worms in the animal so faecal egg counts are not always as useful for this parasite as for others. Often there is no scour so people do not immediately consider drenching.

Most of our quality drenches will cover *Haemonchus*, we recommend Matrix or Vetdectin, but because of the high level of eggs on the pasture, repeat drenching after about three weeks is often required.

Unfortunately, we see every year lambs that have been treated with cider vinegar and garlic. I say unfortunately because the lambs die, but they do have healthy looking worms.

