



## **Participant Information Sheet/Information about the research**

**Title of study:** Determining the prevalence of liver fluke (*Fasciola hepatica*) in cattle and sheep the UK and attitudes of farmers surrounding it through the use of a questionnaire and faecal parasite testing.

**Name of researcher:** Alice Buckner

**Contact details of the researcher are given at the end.**

I would like to invite you to take part in my study. Participation is entirely voluntary, and this information sheet will explain why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please feel free to talk to others about this study and, if you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me.

### **What is the purpose of the study?**

This study is going to look into liver fluke (*Fasciola hepatica*) in cattle and sheep in the United Kingdom. In particular, how widespread it is and how farmers are tackling it. Liver fluke costs the economy a great deal and leads to reduced growth and production rate of livestock, also being one of the main reasons livestock livers are condemned at slaughter. This research will contribute to the body of knowledge about this parasite and provide valuable information about where it can be found currently, and what those in the livestock industry know about it. A questionnaire will be used to ask farmers about the livestock they keep (e.g. how many, what type, what for) and characteristics of their farm (e.g. amount of grazing land and presence of natural bodies of water), as well as if livestock are treated for liver fluke, and if so how this is done. In the previous version of this form a free faecal egg count test was offered. However due to time and resource limitations it is now no longer being offered to those completing the survey on and after the date this version (3.0) of the Participant Information Form is available. The outcome of this research will contribute towards my MSc thesis, with it also hopefully leading to a published journal article (all data collected and published will be anonymised).

### **Am I eligible to take part?**

You have been invited to take part either because you have expressed an interest in this study or because you fit the criteria in order to be included. To take part you must own, or work on (and have the owner's permission), a farm in the UK that houses sheep and/or cattle with a herd size of at least 20.

### **Do I have to take part?**

Participation is completely voluntary. You should only take part if you want to and choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in anyway.

### **What will I be asked to do?**

If you agree to take part then I will ask you to do the following:

1. Complete an eConsent form – this can be found at the start of the questionnaire at <https://liverflukeuol.weebly.com>
2. Complete the questionnaire – You can access it via <https://liverflukeuol.weebly.com>.

The main outcomes of this research will be published on the same website you visited to fill out the survey. No personal information will be published, and all data and results will be anonymous. This is just so you are able to see the outcome of the research if you are interested.

### **Will I be paid expenses for taking part?**

You will not be paid to take part in this research. In the previous version of this form a free faecal egg count test was offered. However due to time and resource limitations it is now no longer being offered to those completing the survey on and after the date this version (3.0) of the Participant Information Form is available.

### **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

The outcomes of the research will provide information on how farmers in the UK are tackling liver fluke and how widespread it is, which will hopefully be useful to you. The outcomes of this study will be published on the same website you used to take the survey (<https://liverflukeuol.weebly.com>). This research will also contribute to current knowledge of liver fluke prevalence and aid other scientists in their research and planning.

## **What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

Filling out the questionnaire will take time, although the questions have been made as concise and short as possible.

## **Will anyone know I have taken part?**

The information we collect will be handled in confidence. No one will know you have taken part, and you will not be able to be identified in the final write-up of the research.

However, recruiting a large number of participants will be useful in order to gain a suitable amount of data and so sharing the premise of this study with friends or colleagues who may also be eligible would be appreciated. If you do wish to invite others to take part please direct them to <https://liverflukeuol.weebly.com> so they can complete the questionnaire. The results of your test will not be shared with them, and vice versa.

## **Where will my data be stored?**

The data obtained from the study will be stored securely on the university OneDrive in password protected files. Only the researchers will have access to it. Paper copies will be stored in a secure cabinet/office at the University. The data from this study *may* be put in an Open Access repository for other researchers to use in future research. If so, responses will be anonymised and any personal data (e.g. contact details) will be removed.

Information such as email addresses and farm addresses will be kept until the end of the study (September 2021) and then deleted.

## **What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?**

You are free to withdraw at any point from this study, without having to give a reason, by contacting [abuckner@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:abuckner@lincoln.ac.uk).

If you choose to withdraw from the study, the information you have given us up to this point will be deleted/destroyed. However, once the anonymised data set has been created it will not be possible to remove your anonymised data from the analysis. I will let you know if this is the case.

The study will be written up as part of my MSc qualification and may be published in relevant journals. The published results will be available at <https://liverflukeuol.weebly.com>.

## **Who is organising and funding the research?**

This research is being conducted by the University of Lincoln and is being funded by the student (Alice Buckner).

## **Who has reviewed the study?**

All research conducted by the University of Lincoln is looked at by an independent group of people, called a Research Ethics Committee, to protect your interests.

## **What if there is a problem?**

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak to the researcher, who will do their best to answer your questions. The researcher's contact details are given at the end of this information sheet. If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this by contacting [ethics@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@lincoln.ac.uk).

## **Further information and contact details**

Alice Buckner: [abuckner@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:abuckner@lincoln.ac.uk)

Supervisors: Dr Sheena Cotter ([scotter@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:scotter@lincoln.ac.uk)) and Dr Simon Clegg ([sclegg@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:sclegg@lincoln.ac.uk))

## **Information compliance**

The University of Lincoln is the lead organisation for this study and will be the data controller for this study. This means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

The university's **Research Participant Privacy Notice** (<https://ethics.lincoln.ac.uk/research-privacy-notice/>) explains how we will be using information from you in order to undertake this study.

If you feel that we have let you down in relation to your information rights then please contact the Information Compliance Team by email on [compliance@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:compliance@lincoln.ac.uk) or by post at Information Compliance, Secretariat, University of Lincoln, Brayford Pool, Lincoln, LN6 7TS.

You can also make complaints directly to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The ICO is the independent authority upholding information rights for the UK. Their website is [ico.org.uk](http://ico.org.uk) and their telephone helpline number is 0303 123 1113.