

EXTERNAL PARASITES

Overview

There are three main external parasites to watch out for in Sheep in New Zealand, - ticks, lice & flies.

Casues & Symptoms

Ticks

The NZ cattle tick (*Haemaphysalis longicornis*) is commonly found in the warmer parts of NZ and while this tick favours cattle, it also feeds on sheep.

Adult ticks generally start laying eggs in November when conditions are warm and wet, adults are commonly seen feeding on sheep between December and February.

Ticks cause blood loss, irritate the animal and the salivary secretions can have toxic effects. Young animals are most affected when heavily parasitized by ticks, causing significant blood loss, anaemia and often subsequent death.

Lice

Louse populations are highest in winter when the sheep's winter coat is dense, providing the perfect warmth for egg development to occur. When temperatures start to climb in spring and summer, temperatures within the coat become too high and egg laying stops.

Signs - Sheep that are infested with lice tend to rub against everything and are often seen nibbling at themselves.

SHEEP: A GUIDE TO Parasites

Constant rubbing can damage the fleece over large areas of the body, resulting in visible patches of wool loss. Heavy burdens can negatively impact poorly conditioned or diseased sheep, cause fleece damage, and can become a significant welfare concern.

Flystrike

Flystrike is particularly common in the warm and wet months between December and April.

Sheep that have long unshorn fleece, especially prior to summer, are most at risk. Blowflies are attracted to the foul odour that is emitted from urine stained areas of the fleece, laying eggs directly on the wool.

Signs - early signs of flystrike can be very difficult to observe. Sheep may appear restless, nibble at areas of the body, seek shade or stamp their feet. You may see flies hanging around your sheep. Sometimes affected sheep will not show any signs until a significant amount of maggots are present. Only at this stage will the wool fall out, the fleece become blackened and sores become obvious.




Management/ Prevention/ Treatment

Shearing - should be done twice a year, in November; before the weather gets wet and warm and again in June. However, one type of blowfly (Australian green blowfly) can strike even clean, well-shorn sheep, therefore we recommend checking skin along the back regularly during summer.

Preventive spraying - For optimal flystrike prevention, the products in the table below are best applied in anticipation of a fly season. Apply to dry wool. If it is raining, then the application should be delayed.

Preventing Scours - Flies will be attracted to any smelly moist areas; therefore any cuts or injuries should be monitored closely, and your sheep should be on a drenching program specific for its age group.

Refer to the table below for products and doses.

Parasite	Product	Dosage
Ticks	<p>Very effective product against ticks, however not licensed for sheep.</p> <p>NB: care must be taken to ensure that there is no run-off into the eye following application</p>	<p>4 mL per sheep / lamb</p> <p>- 2 mL on top of head (not on wool)</p> <p>- 1 mL under each front armpit (2mLs total)</p> 
Lice & Flystrike	<p>For optimal flystrike prevention, Cyrex is best applied in anticipation of a fly season. Provides long term protection (up to 12 weeks).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mix 4 mL of Cyrex with 2L water Apply half the solution to the back and half the solution to the front (tummy) of the sheep using a watering can. The wool should be completely soaked with the solution. <p>For best results, Cyrex should be applied to dry wool. If it is raining then the application of this product should be delayed, unless the application is for active flystrike treatment purposes.</p>

INTERNAL PARASITES

Overview

- Adult sheep are at lower risk of parasite related health issues. Adults develop immunity to internal parasites, which prevents severe infection.
- Sheep under 18 months old DO NOT have good immunity yet, hence need drenching.
- On lifestyle blocks, where animals are often grazing the same pasture year-in, year-out and worm burdens on pasture are high. It is safest to drench at intervals stated below.
- If animals are going onto pasture that hasn't been grazed by sheep for 12 months, drenching intervals can be extended.
- Reducing the stock density (number of animals on the farm) can help reduce the challenge of parasites on pasture.
- Cattle and horses carry different parasites to sheep, so all help to "mop up" each others parasites. Beware, however, that goats and alpacas SHARE sheep parasites so

make the problem worse.

Symptoms

- Pale mucous membranes
- Dull coats
- Weight loss
- Diarrhea
- Loss of appetite
- "Bottle jaw" edematous (excessive amount of fluid) under the jaw

Management/ Prevention/ Treatment

Ensure correct and accurate dosing when drenching.

New animals arriving on property:

- Keep separate from other animals for a week (allows you to monitor general health too)
- Give a quarantine drench, (such as Zolvix oral) regardless of drench history
- Repeated drenching will encourage parasites to develop drench resistance faster, meaning our



Sheep with Bottle Jaw - a sign of parasites

drenches may stop working on your farm.

Minimize the risk of drench resistance by:

- Dosing animals to their correct body weight
- Use oral drenches with multiple drench agents in them
- Drenching adults only as required
- Graze cattle and horses through the paddocks

When to call us

- If you notice sudden weight loss or poor body condition
- Lethargy, reluctance to move or

Animal age	Product / Dose	Product Usage
Weaning to 12 months old	Tape drench Every 4 - 5 weeks May to January	Treats tapeworm & other worms
	Triple Drench Every 4 - 5 weeks May to January	Triple action so better cover than tape drench, but <u>does not treat tapeworm</u>
	Barbers Pole drench February to April (Barbers Pole danger period)	Provides 42 days protection but has 56 day meat with-holding. Alternatively can use a triple drench every 3 weeks during the Barber's Pole season.
> 12 months old	Triple Drench	Any time of year as indicated (e.g. old, thin or ewes carrying twins)
	Barbers Pole drench February to April (Barbers Pole danger period)	Provides 42 days protection against Barbers Pole Worm but has 56 day meat with-holding. Alternatively can use a triple drench every 3 weeks during the Barber's Pole season.

NB: drench intervals can be extended in dry summers and cold winters

*Updated Nov 25