Livestock Health Monitoring Report – October 2018

The Tasmanian Livestock Health Monitoring Report is a pilot project designed to confidentially gather information on diseases and conditions in livestock in Tasmania, with some emphasis on sheep and Southern Tasmania.

The project has been established to convince our overseas trading partners that we don't have livestock diseases that they are concerned about, to keep our valuable export markets open and to stop risky imports coming in.

This information is collected confidentially from livestock industry service providers.  
The next Livestock Health Monitoring report will be out in early December.

If you need more information on this project please contact Bruce Jackson on 0407 872 520.

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| **SHEEP** | | | | | |
| **Disease/condition** | **Number of reports/cases** | **Region** | **Details** | | **Prevention, treatment, and other biosecurity advice or measures** |
| Abortions | Two cases | Southern Tasmania | Both undiagnosed. One in maidens. | | Toxoplasmosis and Campylobacter are common causes but Listeria, Salmonella and a number of other causes possible. Vaccine available for Campylobacter. |
| Arthritis in lambs | Many cases | Widespread | Lambs several weeks after birth, or after marking become lame, swollen joint/s. | | Infection via navel after birth or orally can be reduced by encouraging good colostrum intake in first 12 hours of life. Have ewes on good feed so they start to lactate without delay. Post-marking arthritis reduced by removing tails at third joint (level with tip of vulva in ewe lambs). Submit recently affected lambs or joints to laboratory to culture for Erysipelas and use vaccine if detected. |
| Black scour worm (Trichostrongylus) in XB lambs | Several flocks | Southern Tasmania | Ewes did not receive long-acting anthelmintic pre-lambing. | | Long-acting drenches or capsules given to pre-lambing ewes. Faecal egg count monitoring sheep in winter. Prepare ‘clean” lambing paddocks if possible. |
| Bloat in pet lambs after feeding | One flock | Southern Tasmania | Often caused by Sarcina bacteria infection of lining of 4th stomach | | Can relieve gas distension of 4th stomach with needle but needs careful placement. Antibiotics can control the Sarcina infection. Feed milk at room temperature, don’t make milk up too rich. |
| Conjunctivitis in poddy lambs | One flock | Northern Tasmania | Yellow discharge down cheeks, red lining of eye socket. | | Make sure it isn’t entropian (turned in eyelids). Antibiotic ointment or injections. |
| Contracted tendons in front legs in lambs | One flock | Northern Tasmania | Lambs unable to walk, properly. Unable to stretch front legs out fully. | | This case has been associated with low levels of Manganese. |
| Dermo (Lumpy wool) | Widespread | Southern and Northern Tasmania | Usually young sheep in wet years, also seen in lambs this year. | | Long-acting oxytetracycline injection after it stops raining, wait 6-8 weeks and shear. Wool still saleable. Prevention- avoid yarding sheep when wet to the skin. |
| Downer ewe | One case | Southern Tasmania | Leg and foot problems. | | Foot-paring, cull if chronic arthritis. |
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| Fly strike | Many cases | Widespread | Mostly breech strike | | Identify and correct causes of scouring, spray-on fly chemical at marking. |
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| Foot abscess | Many cases | Southern and Northern Tasmania | Foot abscess was relatively common in heavy ewes, especially if bearing multiples, not shorn recently or in crops with muddy conditions underfoot. Most cases in healing phase now. | | Keep mob average BCS to 3 - 3.3, pre-lamb shear, reduce interdigital skin injury, walk through 5-10% formalin footbath weekly. Treat with long-acting broad-spectrum antibiotics, keep feet dry eg on slatted floor of shearing shed, epsom salts on drainage point and bandage, preferentially feed to prevent pregnancy toxaemia. |
| Footrot | Several properties | Widespread | Footrot actively spreading in lambs and ewes. | | Responding well to footbathing. Plan eradication if possible when conditions underfoot dry out. |
| Lice | Many cases | Widespread | Sheep body lice was prevalent in some areas even after backlining last shearing with older insecticide families. | | Suppressive treatments can be used, watch wool handling and harvesting restrictions. Good separation of mobs if different shearing/treatment times. Use more recent lice products and good treatment technique for offshears eradication when shorn. Complete musters, good fences. |
| Navel ill (infected belly button) in 1 week old lambs | Multiple cases, especially on irrigated paddocks | Southern and Northern Tasmania | Wet and mushy around the belly button (umbilicus) | | Try to lamb in clean paddocks without too much mud. Good colostrum intake in first 12 hrs of life. Can treat with broad-spectrum antibiotics. |
| Nose cancer in aged ewe | One case | Southern Tasmania | Crusty growth or erosion on nose | | Surgery not usually possible. Euthanasia. |
| Pulpy Kidney in lambs | One outbreak | North Tas | Ewes not vaccinated pre-lambing | | Vaccinate ewes pre-lambing. Vaccinate lambs at marking and weaning. May need to use 8-in-1 or 3rd vaccination if losses occur later, esp if on pure Lucerne or clover. |
| Pink eye in sheep | Several flocks | Southern Tas | Discharge down cheeks, white areas on cornea of eye. | | If low prevalence and on good feed and water leave alone to self-heal as mustering can increase spread within mob. Antibiotics can be injected. Eye ointments/sprays less effective. |
| Pneumonia in aged ewe | One ewe in one small flock | Southern Tas | Respiratory distress. | | This one responded well to antibiotics. |
| Rectal prolapse | Two separate individual cases | Southern Tasmania | | One had rectal mass, the other had tail butted off very short at marking. | Remove tails at third joint (level with tip of vulva in ewe lambs) |
| Redgut | Over 80 deaths | Widespread | | Redgut on lucerne/clover. Seen as sudden death and rapid bloating. Dark red twisted intestines on post mortem. | Provide access to roughage |
| Rickets | One outbreak in XB lambs | Northern Tasmania | | Seen as broken bones, lameness, paralysis especially after handling. Usually woolly lambs on cereal crops in winter. | Usually respond to Vitamin ADE injections but must be handled carefully to prevent more fractures. |
| Scabby Mouth | Many cases | Widespread | Low prevalence in lambs at marking | | Vaccinate lambs at marking. |
| Scaley poll lesion in polled ram | One case | Southern Tasmania | Scaley areas mainly around area where horns normally grow from | | Probably due to keratin production by skin. Ointments may assist in softening scales for removal. |
| Scrotal hernia in ram lambs | Southern Tas | One flock | Intestines come through into scrotum. | | Could be repaired surgically, but is heritable so ram lambs should be culled. |
| Scrotal mange | Southern Tas | Several flocks | Bare crusty area at bottom of scrotum. Can affect pasterns as well in severe cases. | | May result in lowered fertility if more than 10 square cm of scrotum affected. See vet for treatment. |
| Scouring with low egg counts | Many cases | Widespread | Egg counts 160 or less | | Possibly dietary – low dry matter content in pasture or plants such as capeweed, lambs could have E coli, coccidia or Yersinia as well and may respond to Sulpha drugs or antibiotics. |
| Sudden deaths of ewes on clover | 1 outbreak | Southern Tasmania | Undiagnosed, could be bloat or pulpy kidney | | Provide roughage, introduce to clover when not hungry, re-vaccinate against PK. |
| Vulval deformity in ewe lambs | 1 flock | Southern Tasmania | Urine staining of breech wool. May be genetic, due to toxins or infections of vulva. | | Investigation to determine cause. |
| Vaginal prolapse | 1 flock | Southern Tasmania | Not just in multiple bearing ewes. Flock has low copper levels – not a classical risk factor. | | Tail length to third joint, keep ewes on flatter ground in last few weeks of pregnancy, keep BCS 3 to 3.3. Don’t feed salt or swedes in last 1/3 of pregnancy. Have hay available if on low dry matter feed. Shear in last third of pregnancy. Maintain steady body weight from start of mating to scanning. |
| White muscle disease in lambs | 2 | Northern Tasmania | Lambs became stiff in the legs when mustered for marking. More common in good clover years. | | Treat ewes with selenium in pre-lambing drench or vaccination, with intra-ruminal pellets every 3 years or add selenium to fertiliser every 2 years. Affected lambs can be given oral selenium and can recover with good nursing. |
| Wool break | Several flocks | Southern Tasmania | Sheep shed fleece or staple can be easily pulled apart. | | Caused by any stress but usually nutritional or disease event eg black udder at lambing, sudden restriction of feed, so prevention is reducing risks of such stress events. |
| **OTHER SPECIES** | | | | | |
| Bovine virus diarrhoea (BVD) in steer | One 2 year old steer. | Northern Tasmania | Acute illness with ulceration of mouth, diarrhoea. Caused by pestivirus. | | Usually just odd case. Rehydration and antibiotic cover to treat. Usually die. |
| Difficult calving in heifer herd | Multiple cases in one herd | Southern Tasmania | Large calves | | Don’t let heifers get over-fat or over-feed in last third of pregnancy. Use bulls selected for low birth-weight on heifers. |
| Mastitis in cow. | One case in one herd | Southern Tasmania | Udder or milk abnormal. | | Antibiotics via teat canal or by injection. |
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| Nitrate poisoning in cattle on brassicas | One outbreak | Southern Tasmania | Sudden deaths. | | Remove from paddock. Nitrate levels often increased in stressed crops, can do laboratory tests. Make sure cattle are not too hungry when introduced to brassica crops. |
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| Photosensitisation with liver damage in cows | Multiple cases on two properties | Northern Tasmania | No rough dogs tail weeds or blue-green algae present | | Remove from paddock, provide deep shade to protect from sunlight. Multivitamin injections, antibiotic cover if necessary. |
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| Pink Eye in cattle | Several herds | Southern Tasmania | Discharge down cheeks, white areas on cornea of eye. | | Can treat with eye ointment or injections, glue patch over eye, suture eyelids. Prevention – vaccine against the three most common strains in Tasmania is available. |
| Pneumonia/travel sickness in cattle | Two mobs of imported cattle | Southern Tasmania | Difficulty breathing after long journey. | | Treat with antibiotics and anti-inflammatories. Prevention – reduce stresses and contacts with other cattle during long journeys. |
| Scouring in 6 week old calves | One herd | Southern Tasmania | Green scour. Negative for worms and common infectious causes. | | May be dietary, check for weeds etc. |
| Wooden tongue | One cow in one herd | Southern Tasmania | Tongue sticking out a bit, not eating | | Vet can give sodium iodide in the vein or antibiotics. |
| Worms in goat | One goat one herd | Southern Tasmania | Scouring, losing weight | | Confirm with egg count. Treat with drenches registered for goats or off-label as per vets instructions. |
| Flystrike in Alpaca | One alpaca in one herd | Southern Tasmania | Brown damp area around breech | | Treat - clip and use larvicidal treatment. Prevention – keep worms under control, avoid dietary upsets. |
| Pneumonia in Alpaca | One alpaca in one herd | Southern Tasmania | Respiratory distress | | Antibiotics and good nursing. |
| Scouring and deaths in piglets | One litter affected | Southern Tasmania | Two sows farrowed in same area and older piglets drank all second sow’s colostrum before newborns could. | | Farrow sows separately. Scour treatment: antibiotics, rehydration and good nursing. |