

Livestock Health Monitoring Report – July 2019

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

This information is collected confidentially from livestock industry service providers.

You are welcome to distribute this report to anyone you like.

The current Livestock Health Monitoring project has now been completed but we are trying to identify funding to re-commence soon.

If you need more information on this project please contact Bruce Jackson on 0407 872 520 or rja69392@bigpond.net.au.

Previous reports are available on <http://www.tasanimalhealth.weebly.com/>

SHEEP				
Disease/condition	Number of reports/cases	Region	Details	Prevention, treatment, and other biosecurity advice or measures
Abortion	Outbreaks on several properties	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Diagnosed at scanning - 10% of maiden ewes in one, unspecified in others (aborted lambs found)	Best diagnosis is to submit 5 aborted lambs to lab for diagnosis, can take bloods for Toxo testing and vaginal swabs from ewes with evidence of recent abortion if no foetuses available. Campylobacter, Toxo, Listeria, Salmonella all possible causes.
Arthritis	Detected at abattoir on 7 days of sheep and 6 days of lamb kills. Up to 1.7% of sheep and 0.4% of lambs affected on particular days.	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Seen as swollen joints. Whole leg will be trimmed, sometimes making carcass worthless or dropping it into a lower price grade on the grid.	Removing tails at the third joint (level with tip of vulva in ewe lambs) at marking prevents many cases. Early antibiotic treatment of lame lambs may work. If Erysipelas is diagnosed in the flock then use Erysipelas vaccine.
Black Scours	A number of flocks	Southern Tasmania	Diarrhoea, loss of weight, deaths.	Usually caused by black scour worm (<i>Trichostrongylus vitrinus</i>). Treat with effective drench. May need to use a long-acting drench product if no "clean" paddocks are

				available as high levels of worm larvae will have built up on pastures sheep are on when scour develops. See WORMBOSS web site.
Campylobacter abortion	Several flocks	Northern Tasmania.	There are two types of Campylobacter that cause abortion, these outbreaks caused by the "fetus" strain.	A vaccine is available and covers both strains but the course should be completed before joining. Aborting ewes can be run with unmated ewe weaners to give them immunity. Humans can also be affected so women of child-bearing age should not be exposed to aborting ewes or afterbirth.
Cheesy gland (CLA)	Detected at abattoir on 1 days 1 of lamb kill with 0.1% of lambs affected on that day.	Southern Tasmania.	Very common cause of trimming at abattoir 20 years ago. Bacterial infection that causes abscesses in the glands – seen as lumps full of pus in front of shoulder, thigh, in groin and internally	Use of six in one vaccine has made this disease rare now, but would return if producers stopped using it.
Congenital conditions in newborn lambs (eg born with only one eye)	One lamb	Southern Tasmania.	May be caused by mutations, hereditary defects or exposure to certain plants or chemicals during development of the lamb. Normally 1-2% of Merino lambs have a congenital defect.	Euthanasia is best unless mild defect. Don't breed from any animals with congenital defects.
Contracted tendons in lambs.	One lamb each in two flocks	Southern Tasmania.	May be caused by the ewe eating weeds such as wild radish or manganese deficiency.	Lambs can recover if kept in a small yard with the ewe. Administering some manganese may help in some cases. May need to strap the fetlocks to protect them if knuckling right over.
Crow attack	20 lambs and 2 ewes on one property	Southern Tasmania.	Large numbers of hungry crows (forest ravens) attack ewes when they go down to lamb and start pecking lambs as they are born.	You can try crow traps, scare guns, providing plenty of wallaby carcasses at a location near the lambing paddock or poisoning with alphachloralose (contact David White, Biosecurity Tasmania on (03) 6478 4117)

Cysticercosis ("bladder worm")	Detected at abattoir on 16 days of sheep and 18 days of lamb kills with up to 42% of sheep and up to 11% of lambs affected on particular days.	Southern and Northern Tasmania.	Seen as small clear bags of fluid attached to liver or elsewhere in abdominal cavity of sheep at abattoir. Causes liver to be trimmed or condemned. Spread by a dog tapeworm.	Prevented by stopping dogs from eating sheep offal and/or by treating all dogs including pets with a wormer containing praziquantel every 30 days. Visiting dogs (contractors, shooters) must be treated within 2 days of arrival on property. Keep stray dogs off the property. These measures also prevent sheep measles and hydatids.
Dog attack	50 sheep in one flock	Southern Tasmania.	Dog bites are often more serious than apparent on surface.	Best assessed by vet who may drain wounds, give antibiotics and anti-inflammatories/pain relief
Dystocia (difficult birth)	Several flocks	Southern Tasmania.	Usually large single lamb that gets stuck coming out. Or twins that get tangled up.	Ewe can be assisted. Prevention: Ewes bearing single lambs should be placed in paddocks with no more than 1000 Kg of green dry matter per hectare in last 6 weeks of pregnancy.
Eye cancer	One sheep in one small flock	Northern Tasmania.	Discharge down cheek, ulcerated and raw section of eyelid.	Older sheep with white eyelids. Cull as soon as noticed.
Foot abscess	Many flocks	Widespread in Northern and Southern Tasmania.	Some severe cases seen in heavy pregnant ewes	Keep mob average BCS to 3 - 3.3, autumn or 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. Ensure culls fit to load if transported.

Footrot (virulent)	Widespread	Southern and Northern Tasmania,	Footrot actively spreading now.	Paring, footbathing, culling chronic cases, use of serogroup specific vaccines (see your vet for serogroup testing). Eradication by repeated foot inspections and culling all infected sheep could be planned for next summer. Ensure culls fit to load if transported. Prevention: Ask for a Sheep Health Declaration when buying sheep and ensure section B1 confirms flock is free of virulent footrot but still footbath and check feet on arrival . Maintain good boundary fence.
Footrot (mild, "scald")	Several flocks	Northern Tasmania	Inflammation between toes but limited under-running of heel and sole of hoof.	Regular footbathing is usually sufficient to control. Hard to eradicate.
Grass seeds	Detected at abattoir on 1 day of lamb kills with 0.2% of lambs affected on that day.	Northern Tasmania	Grass seeds penetrate skin and burrow into carcass resulting in trimming or condemnation of whole carcass.	Barley grass is usual culprit in Tasmania. Can be controlled with strategic grazing, herbicides or slashing.
Lice (body lice)	Many cases	Widespread	Sheep body lice causing fleece damage. Check for 2mm long insects with broad reddish head moving slowly away from light by parting wool 10 times down each side of 10 sheep.	Suppressive long-wool treatments can be used, watch wool handling and harvesting restrictions. Good separation of mobs if different shearing and treatment times. Use more recent lice products and good treatment technique for off-shears eradication when shorn. Complete musters, good fences. Beware goats can carry sheep lice.
Listeria	1 sheep on one property	Northern Tasmania	Sheep may have head tilt, walk in circles, die. Often associated with silage or brassica bulb feeding.	This case associated with wrapped clover silage. Remove from offending feed. Treat early with antibiotics but usually unsuccessful.

Listeria abortion	One outbreak on one property	Northern Tasmania	Abortion in late pregnancy. Often associated with silage or brassica bulb feeding.	Abortion rates usually low. No prevention or treatment apart from avoiding silage/brassica bulbs in late pregnancy if possible.
Liver fluke	Detected at abattoir on 5 days of sheep and 6 days of lamb kills with up to 4.6% of sheep and up to 3.4% of lambs affected on particular days.	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Abattoir detection, farm post mortem or Fluke eggs found in FLUKETEST on manure samples sent to laboratory. Bottle jaw, anaemia, weight loss and deaths from heavy infection.	Most fluke are adult stage in bile ducts in liver at this time of year so can use albendazole or another fluke adulticide to treat. Triclabendazole best from November to June as it kills immature fluke as well as mature fluke.
Lumpy jaw	One outbreak on one property	Southern Tasmania	Bony swelling in jaw bone, usually front of lower jaw. Possibly due to chronic infection.	Cull affected sheep.
Lumpy wool	Two properties	Southern and Northern Tasmania	Wool in hard blocks along topline.	Can treat with long-acting tetracycline during dry period, wait for 6 weeks and shear. Wool still valuable. Prevent by not yarding sheep when wet to skin.
Mastitis	One outbreak on one property	Southern Tasmania	Udder becomes either hot and swollen or cold and dark-coloured ("black udder")	Strip out as much milk as you can and administer antibiotic treatment by injection. If only one half of udder is affected ewe can produce nearly as much milk from the other half if she recovers.
Pink eye in sheep	Several flocks	Southern Tasmania	Discharge down cheeks, white areas on cornea of eye. Usually spread by flies, long grass and close contact (eg yarding)	If low prevalence and on good feed and water leave alone to self-heal as mustering can increase spread within mob. Treat with antibiotic injections. Eye ointments/sprays less effective.
Pleurisy	Detected at abattoir on 5 days of sheep and 7 days of lamb kills with up to 0.6% of sheep and up to 0.9% of lambs affected on particular days.	Southern and Northern Tasmania	Lungs stuck to chest wall. Usually results in major trimming.	Treat sick sheep with cough or respiratory distress with antibiotics. Try to avoid stress events, drench sheep carefully, avoid dusty feedstuffs.

Sarcosporidia ("Sarco")	Detected at abattoir on 6 days of sheep kills with up to 4.2% of sheep affected on a particular day.	Southern and Northern Tasmania	Small 'rice grain' whitish raised lesions on outside of food pipe (oesophagus), diaphragm and in skeletal muscles. Carcase trimmed or condemned.	Spread by cats. Takes a long time to grow so not seen in lambs. Deny cats access to sheep meat, burn or bury carcasses promptly, eradicate feral cats over large area.
Sheep measles	Detected at abattoir on 18 days of sheep and 19 days of lamb kills with up to 6.1% of sheep and up to 1.8% of lambs affected on particular days.	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Small whitish mass about half the size of a 5 cent piece protruding from the muscle of the heart, diaphragm or skeletal muscle. Carcase is trimmed or condemned if too many to trim. This is the intermediate stage of a dog tapeworm.	Prevented by stopping dogs from eating raw sheep meat. Freeze sheep meat for 2 weeks before feeding to dogs, burn/bury sheep carcasses promptly and treat all dogs including pets with a wormer containing praziquantel every 30 days. Visiting dogs (contractors, shooters) must be treated 2 days before arrival on property. Keep stray dogs off the property. These measures also prevent cysticercosis and hydatids.
Toe abscess	One flock	Northern Tasmania	Sheep go lame in one leg, foot appears normal.	Using footrot shears pare away the tip of the toe until you see a black spot, keep shaving off toe with shears until a small amount of mean pus comes out. Usually drainage is enough to cure. Can follow up with antibiotic injection.
Twins differ greatly in size	One flock	Southern Tasmania	One twin very large and one very small	Maybe a congenital problem, disease process or poor development of placenta feeding one twin.
Twin lamb disease	Several flocks	Southern Tasmania	Caused by insufficient energy in diet in last 6 weeks of pregnancy. Usually in twin-bearing ewes or ewe bearing a large single lamb.	If heavily pregnant ewes go down in last 6 weeks, inject 1/5 milk fever pack under skin and massage in well (to differentiate from milk fever). If ewe does not get up within an hour, twin lamb disease is most likely cause. Oral treatments rarely work unless you

				catch them while still able to walk but dropping out of back of mob and ‘star-gazing’.
Vaccination lesions	Detected at abattoir on 6 days of sheep and 7 days of lamb kills with up to 75.7% of sheep and up to 22% of lambs affected on particular days.	Southern and Northern Tasmania	Caused by vaccinating into the muscle, armpit, top of neck etc. Trimming can involve removing the whole hind leg or front leg.	Extra care must be taken with Gudair as large lumps often result. Vaccinate under the skin high on the side of the neck.
Vaginal prolapse	Several flocks	Southern Tasmania	Pink mass protrudes from vulva in late pregnant ewe. Ewes bearing multiples more commonly affected.	Remove tails at third joint (tip of vulva) when marking ewe lambs, keep pregnant ewes (especially twin-bearing 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. Offer hay 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	One lamb in one flock	Southern Tasmania	Lamb stiff and hunched.	Can treat with selenium drench or vaccine. Prevent by treating ewe with selenium pre-lambing.
Worms	Widespread	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Scouring weaners, adults, high faecal egg count.	Differentiate from nutritional scour or coccidia by WORMTEST. Use effective drench. Check that drench is working by repeating egg count 10-14 days later. Try to plan ‘clean’ paddocks for weaned lambs and pre-lamb drenched ewes.
CATTLE				
Cancer eye	One cow on one property	Southern Tasmania.	Starts as small ‘pimple’ on edge of eyeball, third eyelid or eyelid. May grow slowly or rapidly become ulcerated and discharge bloody fluid down side of face.	Can be easily removed by a vet and eye preserved if caught early. Later on the whole eye may have to be removed and in advanced cases where boney structures have been invaded, cannot be

				saved. Cattle with cancers that cannot be covered by the eyelid are not 'fit to load'.
Contracted tendons in calves	One calf on two properties	Southern Tasmania.	Flexor tendons are too tight and calf stands on tips of toes or knuckles over. Can be caused by the pregnant cow eating certain weeds, deficiencies of selenium, manganese, Vitamin D or E.	Keep cow and calf in small yard and feed cow, many of these self-correct. Bandage to protect front of fetlock if knuckling right over.
Facial mass	One bull on one property	Southern Tasmania	Possible causes are cancer, chronic infection.	Vet may need to biopsy to determine cause. Surgical removal or antibiotic course may cure condition.
Late abortion	2/60 heifers in one herd	Southern Tasmania	Possible causes neospora, leptospirosis, trichomoniasis, or vibrio (Campylobacter), pestivirus, congenital/hereditary factors, toxins. Brucellosis eradicated from Tasmania decades ago. The cause of many abortions not determined despite lab investigation.	Send aborted calf to lab for diagnosis. Vaccines against Vibrio and pestivirus can be used.
ALPACAS				
Wasting	One adult alpaca on one property	Southern Tasmania	Possible causes are worms, Johnes' Disease, mineral deficiencies, teeth problems, chronic infection/internal abscess or gastrointestinal tract problems etc.	This one had low calcium and phosphorus blood levels.