

Livestock Health Monitoring Report – January 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 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.

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

The next Livestock Health Monitoring report will be out in mid March.

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

SHEEP				
Disease/condition	Number of reports/cases	Region	Details	Prevention, treatment, and other biosecurity advice or measures
Arthritis	One old ewe from one flock.	Southern Tasmania	Lame with swollen elbow joint	Cull if commercial, anti-inflammatories if a pet.
Acidosis (grain poisoning)	A number of sheep from one flock.	Southern Tasmania	Grazing stubble paddock	Die suddenly or are sick with “porridge” scour. Treat with bicarb and water. Take off grain source and feed roughage.
Bladder worm	Many lines of lambs and sheep at abattoir	Northern and southern Tasmania	Small clear cyst hanging off abdominal organs. Tapeworm head can be seen inside cyst.	Does not affect growth rates but means poor tapeworm control in dogs. Treat all farm dogs every 30 days with wormer containing praziquantel. Keep stray dogs off your property.
Cancer of ear, eye, vulva, udder	Several flocks	Northern and southern Tasmania	Usually older sheep.	Ear cancers can be removed surgically if cancer has not spread to lymph node. Best to cull such animals immediately. Cull on farm if not fit to load.
Coccidiosis in weaned lambs.	One flock	Southern Tasmania	Scouring with low worm egg count but high coccidia count.	Usually respond well to sulpha drugs. Prevention by good nutrition and not allowing lambs to concentrate on damp areas in paddock.
Copper deficiency in lambs on lucerne and in imported ewes	Two flocks.	Southern Tasmania	One associated with worm deaths.	Deficiencies may reduce immunity to worms and other disease. Copper can be very toxic in sheep, supplement carefully – injections or rumen boluses or adding copper to fertiliser can all be used. Blocks don't ensure consistent intake and oral drenching is time-consuming.
Epididymitis in ram	One case in one flock	Southern Tasmania.	A lump is felt usually just under the testicle but can be on side or top.	Can be due to trauma or infection. Ovine brucellosis should be suspected if a number of rams have epididymitis (see vet). Ram may still be fertile if other testicle in good order.

Fly strike	Many cases	Widespread in northern and southern Tasmania.	Mostly breech strike but body strike too.	Identify and correct causes of scouring. Chemical preventative treatments or frequent inspection and early treatment of strikes.
Foot abscess	Several flocks	Widespread but low prevalence within flocks.	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 (e.g. on slatted floor of shearing shed), Epsom salts on drainage point and bandage. Ensure culls fit to load if transported.
Footrot (virulent)	A number of properties	Widespread, even in Composite, Coopworth, and Dorset cross sheep.	Footrot not actively spreading unless on irrigation.	Paring, foot bathing, culling chronic cases, use of serogroup specific vaccines (see your vet for serogroup testing). Eradication by repeated foot inspections and culling all infected sheep between now and autumn break if re-infection from outside sources unlikely. Ensure culls fit to load if transported.
Intermediate footrot	Many cases, one flock	Northern Tasmania	Under-running of sole but not wall of foot in majority of cases.	Need laboratory test to confirm. Can be eradicated but is difficult. Responds reasonably well to foot bathing.
Liver fluke	A few cases in a small number of flocks at abattoir.	Northern and southern Tasmania	Seen in thickened bile ducts in liver.	Causes bottle jaw and anaemia when severe. Fluketest, egg count or post mortem to diagnose. Use drench effective against immature fluke at this time of year.
Manganese deficiency in lambs on lucerne	One flock	Southern Tasmania	Associated with worm problem in this case.	Significance of manganese deficiency unclear – can be associated with reduced growth rates, deformed legs and reduced fertility. Could prevent by adding to fertiliser but is expensive.
Organo-phosphate (OP) poisoning	Several deaths in one flock.	Northern Tasmania	Deaths after drenching with OP	Follow label directions closely. Antidote available from vet.
Ovine Johne's Disease (OJD)	One flock, one ram	Southern Tasmania	Loss of weight despite drenching. May or may not scour.	Diagnosis easiest by post mortem. Vaccinate 'keeper' lambs carefully at marking or weaning. Euthanise sheep that lose weight and don't respond to effective drench.
Pink eye in sheep	Several flocks	Southern Tasmania	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. Treat with antibiotic injections. Eye ointments/sprays less effective.
Peritonitis in a stud ram	One cases, one flock	Northern Tasmania	Depressed one afternoon, dead next morning	May have been caused by injury or blockage of urinary tract (common in shedded rams) and rupture of bladder. Make sure water troughs are clean so that rams drink enough and balance ration for calcium and phosphorus.

Ruptured udders	Multiple ewes on several properties	Northern Tasmania	One half of udder healing after tissue has died and fallen out.	Result of "black udder" at lambing – a Staph infection. Culling recommended.
Ryegrass staggers	Multiple sheep on one property	North-east Tasmania	Staggering and then go down when driven.	Remove from high endophyte ryegrass paddocks. Keep safe from drowning. Can try feeding absorbents or drench with Epsom salts and plenty of water.
Sarco	Many adult sheep from many flocks	Northern and southern Tasmania	Small white 'rice grains' through muscles of body seen at slaughter.	Common cause of trimming or condemnation of carcass at abattoir. Cats get infected by eating sheep meat and become 'spreaders'. Don't feed sheep meat to cats. Clean up dead sheep quickly and dispose so cats can't feed off the carcass. Don't let owned cats out of house. Eliminate feral cats.
Scabby Mouth	All ewes and lambs in one small flock	Northern Tasmania	Thick black scabs on lips.	Will heal without treatment within 3 weeks. Shearers may refuse to shear (can transmit to man, seen as sores, usually on hands). Vaccine available but must be used at least 10 days before natural challenge occurs.
Scald	Several flocks	Southern Tasmania	Mild lameness, moist and inflamed between toes but very little under-running if any.	Check not virulent, dot worst cases and re-examine in 10 days to see if under-runs sole or wall of hoof. Footbathing usually controls adequately, usually disappears when conditions underfoot are dry. Impossible to eradicate, cattle may be carriers.
Soft testes in ram	Several cases, one flock	Southern Tasmania	Testicles both soft. Rams should have full, springy testicles.	Rams also had low body condition due to age. Unlikely to be fertile. Cull. Offer rams high protein and energy feed for 8 weeks prior to joining aiming for BCS 3 to 3.5 at joining.
Sheep measles	Many cases from many properties seen at abattoir.	Southern and Northern Tasmania	Small white lumps seen in heart or skeletal muscles.	Does not affect growth rates but carcass has to be trimmed or may be condemned in abattoir. Prevent by treating dogs every 30 days with wormer containing praziquantel.
Sunburnt eyelids	One case from one property	Southern Tasmania	Reddened skin of eyelids, seeks shade during day.	Could also be photosensitisation from eating plants such as medics or storksbill or due to liver damage. Check gums for jaundice. Good nursing and provide good shade or protective skin cream.
Swollen muzzle	One case from one flock.	Southern Tasmania	Muzzle swollen, lamb depressed.	Probably insect, ant or snake bite or infection of tissues. Treat with antibiotics and nursing.
Worms	Many deaths in one flock.	Northern Tasmania	Lambs died suddenly with watery gut contents on new paddock, off-shears.	Worms not confirmed. May also have been plant poisoning. Fat hen (nitrate, oxalates) present in paddock. Stopped dying 2 days after drenching.
CATTLE				
Diarrhoea in cow post-calving	One case in one herd	Southern Tasmania	Recovered in a few days	May be from stress of calving. If does not stop within a few days consider testing for Bovine Johne's disease, and/or treat with drench for type 2 brown stomach

				worm (usually affects first and second time calvers).
Mastitis	One case in one herd	Southern Tasmania	Only one quarter	Intra-mammary antibiotics.
Malignant Catarrhal Fever (MCF)	One 9 month old steer in one herd	Southern Tasmania	Nasal discharge, discoloured eyes.	Virus that cattle catch from sheep. Usually sporadic cases. No effective treatment, euthanise.
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 for the three most common strains in Tasmania is available.
Pneumonia/travel sickness in cattle imported from mainland.	Several mobs of imported cattle on several properties	Northern Tasmania	Difficulty breathing 2-3 weeks after long journey.	Treat with antibiotics and anti-inflammatories. Prevention – reduce stresses and contacts with other cattle, unload for a spell during long journeys.
ALPACAS				
Grass seed in eye	One case in one herd	Southern Tasmania	Seen as discharge down cheek.	Check under third eyelid. Remove seed and use eye ointment.
PIGS				
Arthritis/foot injury	One case in one small herd	Southern Tasmania	Red and swollen around back of foot	Antibiotics and anti-inflammatories. Reduce injury hazards in pen.
GOATS				
Ascites (swollen abdomen) and neck oedema	One goat in one herd	Southern Tasmania	Never drenched. Probably worms.	Treat with effective drench.
Footrot	Many goats in one herd	Northern Tasmania	Same disease as sheep and can easily spread between goats and sheep	See virulent footrot, intermediate footrot and scald in sheep section above. Include goats if attempting eradication.