

Livestock Health Monitoring Report – February 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-April.

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
Abscess in head region of ram	One case in one flock	Southern Tasmania	Swelling and discharging pus. Caused by fighting.	Surgical drainage at lowest part of abscess. Treat with antibiotics.
Aural haematoma (blood clot in ear) in rams	One case in one flock	Southern Tasmania	One ear swollen like an over-stuffed pillow. Caused by fighting.	Will eventually shrink back to a wrinkled ear if left alone. Can be drained by vet. Check it does not turn into an abscess which will require draining.
Black udder (healing phase)	Several flocks	Northern and southern Tasmania	Looks like a pink octopus hanging from one side of udder.	Result of udder tissue dying and falling out after acute Staph mastitis at lambing time. Best to cull affected animals – there are a lot of blood vessels in the mass and it cannot be removed easily via surgery.
Blindness and deaths in weaned lambs	One flock	Northern Tasmania	Lambs suffering from blindness. Some lambs died in creek	A number of native plants growing along creek but none identified as causing blindness if consumed. Weaned lambs recovered with sight returning.
Bloat in lambs on lucerne or clover	Several flocks	Northern and southern Tasmania	Lambs found dead and bloated	Can be due to true frothy bloat, pulpy kidney or red gut. Diagnosis by post mortem. Frothy bloat can be prevented by adding bloat oil to troughs. Administer PK booster and offer roughage (i.e. hay).
Burns from bushfires	20-30 sheep in two flocks	Southern Tasmania	Lung damage, burnt feet and lips most serious injuries.	Triage affected sheep: Euthanise any sheep down, having trouble breathing or with severe lip or hoof damage ASAP. For animals with less severe injuries nurse on good feed, administer antibiotics and pain relief and cover. Re-examine every few days and euthanise if they deteriorate. If they only have singed wool there is no need for treatment. If animals are suffering from burnt teats only then mark them and check once healed.
Cancer of ear/eye/vulva/udder	Several flocks	Northern and southern Tasmania	Usually seen in older sheep.	Ear cancers can be removed surgically if cancer has not spread to lymph node. Best to cull such animals immediately. Destroy on farm if not fit to load.
Dog attack	A small number of sheep in one flock	Southern Tasmania.	Dog bites are often more serious than apparent on surface.	Best assessed by vet who may drain wounds, and administer antibiotics and anti-inflammatories/pain relief.
Epididymal lesions in rams	A low % of cases in three flocks	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, but some severe cases seen in rams.	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 (i.e. on slatted floor of shearing shed) Epsom salts on drainage point and bandage. Ensure culls are fit to load if transported.
Footrot (virulent)	A number of properties	Widespread, even in composite, Coopworth, and Dorset cross sheep. One large flock with trace forwards to other large flocks.	Footrot actively spreading unless on irrigation, the rest chronic cases.	Control via 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 are fit to load if transported. Ask for a Sheep Health Declaration when buying sheep and ensure section B1 confirms flock is free of virulent footrot.
Grass seeds	Many cases	Widespread	In eyes, mouth, body (seen at slaughter)	Remove seeds from eyes and mouth – regular checks in race if sheep have to graze off bad paddocks. Prevention: grazing management, strategic herbicides or mow/ slash/mulch to remove seed heads.
Hindlimb incoordination	One case in one flock	Southern Tasmania	Back legs have abnormal gait	Usually an injury. Separate from mob, place with a few sheep in small paddock and allow time to recover. Could administer anti-inflammatories.
Lice (body lice)	Many cases	Widespread	Sheep body lice causing fleece damage.	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 and ensure good fencing. Beware, goats can carry sheep lice.
Liver fluke	One flock	Southern Tasmania	Seen as bottle jaw and anaemia, drop out back of mob when driven.	Causes bottle jaw and anaemia in severe cases. Complete Fluketest, egg count or post mortem to diagnose. Use a drench effective against immature fluke at this time of year.
Lumpy jaw	A few cases in one flock.	Northern Tasmania	Hard bony swelling under chin.	Cull if animal is losing weight.
Ovine Brucellosis	A number of cases in one flock.	Southern Tasmania	Lamb marking % depressed. Can also result in more late lambs and some abortions.	Feel contents of scrotum, if there are any hard lumps close to testicle in more than 5% of rams get a vet to check and maybe bleed some rams for testing. Can be eradicated by bleeding/testing rams every 30 days and buying rams from accredited properties.
Ovine interdigital dermatitis (OID)	One flock	Southern Tasmania	Redness between toes, can be a bit raw.	Caused by different bacteria than footrot. Usually seen when feet are constantly wet (i.e. on irrigation). Can have lab testing conducted to prove it is not footrot. Does not progress to under-running of hoof and is easily cured by foot bathing or placing sheep on dry paddocks.
Pink eye	Several flocks	Southern Tasmania	Discharge down cheeks, white areas on cornea of eye.	If low percentage affected 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 are less effective.
Pneumonia	Several cases in one flock on lucerne.	Northern Tasmania	Deaths, difficulty breathing	Diagnosis via post mortem. Administer antibiotic treatment to affected animals (best caught early). Remove from lucerne if possible.

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. Best to cull .
Ryegrass staggers	Multiple sheep on one property	North-east Tasmania	Staggering and collapse 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.
Soft swelling of chest wall	One case, one flock	Southern Tasmania	Soft swelling of lower part of chest wall	May have been a bruise/blood clot that separated, result of dog biting and holding fleece, or a toxic bite/sting.
Soft testes in ram	Several cases, several flocks	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.
Vaccination abscess	A number of cases in two flocks	Southern Tasmania	Lumps under skin at vaccination site or abscess in muscle if vaccinated too deep.	Use short needles (¼ inch for shorn, ½ inch for woolly) and vaccinate high on side of neck (never in top of neck, armpit or into back leg), especially if using Gudair.
Worms	A number of cases in one flock.	Southern Tasmania	Scouring weaners, high faecal egg count	Drench for worms. Check that drench is working by repeating egg count 10-14 days later.
CATTLE				
Caecal impaction in steer	One case in one herd	Southern Tasmania	Lack of appetite most usual symptom.	Vet treatment may involve surgery or dosing with oil to loosen impaction.
Eye damage	One case in one herd	Southern Tasmania	Check if eyeball ruptured.	This case severe and the remainder of the eye was removed surgically.
Pink eye in cattle	Several herds	Northern Tasmania	Discharge down cheeks, white areas on cornea of eye.	Can treat with eye ointment or injections, glue patch over eye, suture eyelids. Prevention – vaccinate against the three most common strains in Tasmania is available.
Wire injury to leg	One cow on one property	Southern Tasmania	Wire can be buried in leg or cut off circulation causing an amputation wound if twitched around leg	Treat with antibiotics and anti-inflammatories. May require surgery/stitching. Prevention – clean up old fences, loose wire.