

## Livestock Health Monitoring Report – March 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-May.

If you need more information on this project please contact Bruce Jackson on 0407 872 520 or [ria69392@bigpond.net.au](mailto:ria69392@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
Abscess in head region of sheep	One case in one flock	Southern Tasmania	Swelling and discharging pus.	Surgical drainage at lowest part of abscess. Administer antibiotics.
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. Give PK booster and offer roughage (i.e. hay).
Cleft palate	One flock	Northern Tasmania	Open slit in top of inside of mouth (hard palate)	Genetically inherited. Cull affected animal and its sire and dam if known.
Cryptorchid	One flock	Southern Tasmania	Only one testicle in scrotum.	Genetically inherited. Cull affected animal and its sire if known. Usually still fertile but cryptorchid lambs hard to mark properly resulting in stags.
Engorgement on plums	One sheep in one small flock.	Southern Tasmania.	Same symptoms as grain poisoning	Drench with bicarb or rumenotomy (surgery) to remove excess fruit from rumen.
Epididymal lesions in rams	A low % of cases in three flocks.	Southern Tasmania.	A lump is felt inside scrotum usually attached 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.
Fighting deaths in rams	One property	Southern Tasmania	Death can be from broken neck, other fatal injuries or infection subsequent to wounds.	Make sure rams have plenty of room to get away if attacked by other rams. Vaccinate with 5-in-1 to prevent 'Big Head disease' (Clostridial infection). Separate and treat injured rams.
Footrot (virulent)	A number of properties	Widespread,	Footrot actively spreading on irrigation, the rest chronic cases.	Paring, foot bathing, culling chronic cases, use of serogroup specific vaccines. Can plan to eradicate by repeated foot inspections and culling all infected sheep next summer if re-infection from outside sources unlikely. Ensure culls 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.
Grain poisoning	Many cases in one flock	Southern Tasmania	Ewes over-fed pellets in late pregnancy	Affected sheep can be given bicarb in water plus offered hay. Introduce pellets/grain slowly, 50 g/head/day for 2 days then increase by 50 gram/head/day every 2 days. When well settled on full ration can feed every 3-4 days.
Hernias (abdominal)	A number of cases in one flock	Northern Tasmania	Bulge in abdomen wall	These suspected to be caused by compressed air handler. Best just left alone, very hard to repair surgically.
Ill-thrift	A small to moderate number of cases in many flocks	Southern and northern Tasmania	Mostly in weaners. Poor growth rates.	Most dryland pastures over summer do not have enough energy or protein for weaner sheep and even adult dry sheep will lose body condition. Graze sheep on fodder crops, irrigated pastures or supplementary feed as required. Worms (especially Nematodirus in autumn), fluke, footrot, chronic pneumonia and sometimes selenium, copper or

				B12 deficiency can also cause ill-thrift.
Laminitis in ewes on grain	20% of ewes in one flock	Southern Tasmania	Reluctant to walk, hind legs affected most.	Take off grain, offer hay. Treat with antihistamines if possible. Re-introduce grain slowly.
Leg fracture	One case in one flock	Southern Tasmania	This case had healed with lower half 90 degrees out of alignment.	Broken bones in sheep heal well if skin unbroken but must be splinted properly. Must have padding between splint and leg, splint must extend one joint above and one joint below the break. Antibiotic cover and pain relief.
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. Ensure 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 fences. Beware goats can carry sheep lice.
Nematodirus in weaner sheep	Many cases in several flocks.	Northern and southern Tasmania	Diarrhoea with distinct smell, poor growth rates, Nematodirus faecal egg counts may not be high.	Very common in weaner sheep in autumn. Treat with an effective drench. Watch for scours/dags in autumn.
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. Buy rams from accredited properties.
Photosensitisation	Several rams on one property	Southern Tasmania	Skin peels off face and ears. Can be due to liver damage or plant pigments.	Blood sample for liver damage check, spore count pasture for Pithomyces (facial Eczema) spores, check water for blue-green algae, poisonous plants and pigment plants (e.g. storks bill or medics). Treat with anti-inflammatories, offer deep shade, move to new paddock.
Pneumonia	Several cases in one flock	Southern Tasmania	Deaths, difficulty breathing	Diagnosis at post mortem. Administer antibiotic treatment of cases (best caught early). Reduce stress and exposure to dusty feed.
Prolapsed uterus (chronic)	One case in one flock	Southern Tasmania	Long pink organ hanging from vulva. May be damaged.	Can be tied off and surgically removed by vet. Otherwise euthanise. Not fit to load.

Red gut	Multiple lambs on several properties	Northern and southern Tasmania	Sudden deaths, bloated carcass. Lambs on irrigated lucerne or clover pastures	Due to twisted gut. Provide roughage or move lambs onto other pasture for a day or two every week.
Ruptured eyeball	One ram on one property	Southern Tasmania	Eyeball shrunken in socket.	Administer antibiotics and pain relief/anti-inflammatories if recent or infected. Best not to surgically remove eye.
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, culling recommended. Offer rams high protein and energy feed for 8 weeks prior to joining aiming for BCS 3 to 3.5 at joining.
Toe abscess	Several cases, several flocks	Northern and southern Tasmania	Very lame, no swelling, a small amount of grey pus in toe area when pared back.	Pare toe area and follow any defect/black spot back up hoof to drain small abscess and relieve pressure. Antibiotics help but usually draining the abscess is enough.
White muscle disease	A number of cases in one flock.	Southern Tasmania	Lambs stiff and unable to walk far. Pale muscles seen at post mortem.	To save animal, drench with selenium in water. Prevent with selenium in pre-lamb drench for ewes and selenium in 5-in-1 vaccine at marking.
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.
<b>CATTLE</b>				
Arthritis in aged cow	One case in one herd	Southern Tasmania	Lame, swollen joint	Administer anti-inflammatory treatment or cull.
Ataxia and loss of condition in recently calved cow	One case in one herd	Southern Tasmania	Weak in hind legs, thin.	Administer antibiotics and inflammatory treatment or cull.
Black pizzle in bullocks	Several cases in one herd	Southern Tasmania	Black area on end of sheath.	Probably an ulcer due to a rich diet high in protein. Treat with antibiotic/anti-inflammatory cream applied daily. Drop protein level in diet if possible.

Liver Fluke	Multiple cases in one herd	Southern Tasmania	Diagnosed at post mortem, at slaughter or by blood or faeces tests.	Treat with flukicide that kills immature fluke at this time of year, plan treatment for adult fluke in late winter/early spring. Fence off areas where fluke snail can survive.
Pink eye in imported cattle	One herd	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 – a vaccine for protection against the three most common strains in Tasmania is available.
Photosensitization in dairy cows	Several cattle on one property	Northern Tasmania	Red skin on nose, ears, udder, white areas, may peel later. Unsettled, milk drop, kicking at udder, seeking shade.	Treat with antibiotics and anti-inflammatories or antihistamines. Blood sample to check for liver damage. Offer deep shade. Check Pithomyces spore count in pasture (facial Eczema), blue-green algae in water source, Rough Dogs Tail (Acute Bovine Liver Disease), poisonous plants or pigment plants such as storks bill or medics in paddock.
Pneumonia in imported cattle	Several cattle on one property	Southern Tasmania	Discharge from nose, difficulty breathing.	Treat with antibiotics and anti-inflammatories. May require repeated courses.
Swollen flank/pizzle in young bull	One bull on one property	Northern Tasmania	Swollen flank and pizzle.	Fighting injury. Treat with antibiotics and anti-inflammatories.
Woody tongue	One cow on one property	Southern Tasmania	Tongue may stick out a bit, lose condition. Have trouble eating.	Tongue is hard and swollen. Glands around throat area can be enlarged. Vet can give intravenous injection or course of oxytetracycline antibiotic.
<b>PIGS</b>				
Erysipelas	Several pigs in one herd	Southern Tasmania	Can be seen as “diamond skin”, abortion or arthritis	Penicillin is a very effective treatment for acute cases. A vaccine is available for prevention.
Lice	One herd of pigs	Southern Tasmania	Pig lice are larger than most other lice and can be mistaken for ticks.	Injections or washes can be used to treat. Washes must be repeated in 15 days.
<b>DEER</b>				
Photosensitisation	Several deer in one herd	Southern Tasmania	Skin peels off face and ears. Can be due to facial Eczema (rare) blue-green algae in water supply, liver damage from poisonous	Treat with antibiotic cover, cortisone or antihistamines, access to deep shade, move off suspect paddock or water source. Pithomyces spore count pasture, check water for blue-green algae, check for poisonous or pigment plants.

			plants, or plant pigments.	
<b>GOATS</b>				
Dog attack	One goat on one small farm	Southern Tasmania	Often a lot of tissue damage under the skin.	Vet may drain wounds, stitch skin, administer antibiotic cover and anti-inflammatories/pain relief.
<b>ALPACAS</b>				
Coccidiosis in a cria	One cria on one small farm	Southern Tasmania	Diarrhoea main sign and high coccidia "egg" count in faeces	Oral treatments can cure, seek advice from vet.