

Livestock Health Monitoring Report – November 2020

The Livestock Health Monitoring program collects confidential/anonymous information on livestock diseases and conditions observed by rural service providers in Tasmania and produces a monthly report that is circulated as widely as possible amongst Tasmanian livestock producers and service providers. It is based on a successful pilot project conducted in 2018-19.

See <http://www.tasanimalhealth.weebly.com/> for previous reports.

The program is designed to keep Tasmanian livestock producers and rural service providers up to date on what livestock diseases and conditions are currently occurring in Tasmania. This should mean earlier diagnosis, more effective treatment and better prevention of future outbreaks.

Information from these reports may be used to help convince our overseas trading partners that we don't have certain livestock diseases that they are concerned about, thus keeping our valuable export markets open and stopping risky imports coming in.

This program should also help detect an outbreak of emergency animal disease earlier, allowing effective action to stamp it out, or reduce its impact.

The program has a sheep industry emphasis, but all common livestock species are covered. The National Sheep Industry Biosecurity Strategy lies at the core of the program (see www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/nsibs)

Funding is provided by Animal Health Australia (with support from Sheep Producers Australia and Wool Producers Australia) and by DPIPW. Private veterinarians coordinate the project.

You are welcome to distribute this report to anyone you like. The next Livestock Health Monitoring report will be out in mid-January.

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

For farm biosecurity plans, animal health declarations and information on biosecurity practices see: www.farmbiosecurity.com.au/

Remember:

Report any suspicion of an Emergency Animal Disease to the Hotline on 1800 675 888

- Never feed animal protein such as meat meal to any ruminant including sheep.
- Use NVDs and NLIS tags properly so that we can 'contact trace' quickly if we have to.

SHEEP				
Disease/condition	Number of reports/cases	Region	Details	Prevention, treatment, and other biosecurity advice or measures
Arthritis	Detected at abattoir in 0.1% of lambs.	Northern and southern Tasmania	Seen as lameness and swollen joints. Whole leg will usually be removed, often 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. See fact sheet on: https://sheepconnecttas.com.au/disease-factsheets/
Cysticercosis ("bladder worm")	Detected at abattoir in 7.6% of lambs and 11.9% of mutton carcasses.	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 at least 2 days before arrival on property. Keep stray dogs off the property. These measures also prevent sheep measles and hydatids. See fact sheet on: https://sheepconnecttas.com.au/disease-factsheets/
Ear cancer	One sheep in one medium sized flock	Southern Tasmania	Crusty swelling or ulceration starting on tip or edge of ear.	Vet can remove the cancer if caught early enough. Check no swelling of the gland (lymph node) that drains that area as cancer can spread to the gland. Make sure it is 'fit to load' if transported.
Entropion (turned in eyelids)	Several lambs in large flock	Northern Tasmania	Discharge from eye usually detected at marking. Eyelid/s turned inwards, and eyelashes rub on cornea.	Some cases will be corrected by simply turning eyelids out the right way. Can inject ½ ml of antibiotic just under skin of eyelid/s to turn eyelashes outwards, surgery also possible.
Fly strike	Many cases	Wide- spread in Northern and southern Tasmania.	Mostly breech strike but body strike too and even on end of tails after they drop off after using rings.	Identify and correct causes of scouring. Chemical preventative treatments or frequent inspection and early treatment of strikes.
Foot abscess	Many flocks	Widespread in northern and southern Tasmania.	Swelling of one toe, hot, painful and discharge puss in acute stage, Most in healing phase now.	Keep mob average BCS to 3 - 3.3, autumn or pre-lamb shear, reduce interdigital skin injury and 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 fit to load if transported.
Footrot (virulent)	A number of flocks	Southern and northern Tasmania	Mostly chronic cases persisting after spring spread period.	<p>Paring, foot bathing, culling chronic cases, use of vaccine. Eradication by repeated foot inspections and culling all infected sheep could be planned for this summer. Ensure culls are fit to load if transported.</p> <p>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 fences. See Ute Guide for Tasmania: https://www.wool.com/globalassets/wool/sheep/welfare/other-</p>

				husbandry/footrot--a-guide-to-identification-and-control-in-the-field--tas-2019.pdf
Footrot (mild, "scald")	A number of flocks	Northern and southern Tasmania	Inflammation between toes but limited under-running of heel and sole of hoof.	Regular foot bathing is usually sufficient to control during spread period and usually disappears with dry weather. Hard to eradicate.
Grass seeds in eyes	Several properties	Southern Tasmania	Grass seeds (usually barley grass) get under third eyelid and cause irritation of cornea (surface of eye) causing discharge down cheeks	Grass seeds must be removed manually from eye, then use a spay or ointment to control infection. Barley grass can be controlled with strategic grazing, herbicides or slashing.
High worm egg counts	Several flocks	Southern and northern Tasmania	Diarrhoea, slow growth rates	Treat with effective drench (check that current drench family is working by doing a DRENCHCHECK). See WORMBOSS web site.
Lice (body lice)	Many cases	Widespread. Up to 80% of flocks in some areas.	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.	See LICEBOSS for a full practical guide to managing and preventing sheep body lice.
Liver fluke	Detected at abattoir in 4.5% of lambs and 11.3% of mutton carcasses.	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 infestation.	Most fluke are adult stage, in bile ducts in liver at this time of year, but pickup of immatures will be starting about now. Triclabendazole is best treatment from November to June as it kills immature fluke as well as mature fluke. See fact sheet on https://sheepconnecttas.com.au/disease-factsheets/
Liver abscess	Many abscesses in one liver. Detected at abattoir and caused concern because it looked like hydatids.	Southern Tasmania	Can be caused by grain feeding and mild acidosis.	Hard to diagnose in live sheep. Prevent by introducing any concentrate ration slowly (e.g. 50g per sheep/day for first few days then increase by 50g every few days.
Lumpy wool (dermo)	Two properties	Southern and northern Tasmania	Wool in hard blocks along topline, in addition to legs and around top of hoof/back of pastern ("strawberry footrot")	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	Two ewes in two small flocks	Southern and northern 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.
Nephritis (kidney damage)	Detected at abattoir in 1.1% of lambs	Northern Tasmania	Kidneys are swollen, white spotted or scarred.	Infection via urinary tract. Prevention: make sure lambs have access to good quality water and have been trained to drink if source of water (e.g., troughs vs dams) changes at weaning.

Ovine Johnes' Disease (OJD)	Ten ewes died or destroyed in one medium sized flock	Southern Tasmania	Adult sheep over 2 yrs old waste away over several months and die despite drenching.	Quickest diagnosis is by post mortem. Prevent by vaccinating lambs at marking with Gudair vaccine. If confirmed present in the flock, cull any sheep over 18 months of age that waste away and don't respond to drenching. See factsheet on: http://www.ojd.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/OJD_factsheet.pdf
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 (e.g. yarding)	If low prevalence and infected animals are 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.
Photosensitisation	One ewe in one small flock. Associated with mastitis.	Northern Tasmania	Skin peels off face and ears.	Give access to deep shade. Can apply zinc cream. Treat for any infections. Remove from any source of liver damage or plants like St John's wart or storksbill.
Sarcosporidia ("Sarco")	Detected at abattoir in 1.2% of mutton carcasses.	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. See fact sheet on: https://sheepconnecttas.com.au/disease-factsheets/
Selenium deficiency	6 large flocks	Southern Tasmania	Detected by blood testing. Some sheep had an unsteady gait when shedded (not a common sign of selenium deficiency)	Deficiency is widespread in northern and southern Tasmania and the Bass Strait Islands. Deficiency can cause white muscle disease (usually in lambs), slow growth rates in young sheep, reduced immunity to footrot and other diseases and reduced fertility. See factsheet: https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0016/111355/Selenium-deficiency-in-sheep.pdf
Sheep measles	Detected at abattoir in 12.9% of lambs and 6.2% of mutton carcasses.	Northern and southern Tasmania	Small whitish masses about half the size of a five 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 carcass meat for two 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 two days before arrival on property. Keep stray dogs off the property. See fact sheet on https://sheepconnecttas.com.au/disease-factsheets/
Strawberry footrot	One flock	Northern Tasmania	Can be lame if coronary band just above hoof is affected. Scabs and crusts on lower leg, coronary band and back of pastern.	Treat as for 'dermo' – see earlier.
Toe abscess	Several ewes in one flock	Northern Tasmania	Very lame but no swelling, heat or under-running. Small amount of grey puss in toe area.	Carefully pare back the toe, following any black track up front of toe until puss released. Usually no further treatment needed apart from antiseptic spray.

Vaccination lesions	Detected at abattoir in two lines of sheep that had to have most carcasses trimmed.	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. Never vaccinate into the muscle. For details see: https://www.zoetis.com.au/livestock-solutions/pdfs/zoetis_gudair-product-information-2018.pdf
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. See WORMBOSS

CATTLE				
Disease/condition	Number of reports/cases	Region	Details	Prevention, treatment, and other biosecurity advice or measures
Benign footrot	One bull in one herd	Southern Tasmania	Lameness, no under-running of hoof but inflammation between toes	Move to dry area, spray between toes with disinfectant, spray every day. Footrot bacteria detected on smear only so assuming it is benign footrot as cattle usually don't get infected with virulent footrot.
Cancer eye	Five cows on several different properties	North/south/north west 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 saved if caught early. Later on the whole eye may have to be removed, and in advanced cases where boney structures have been invaded, the cow cannot be saved. Cattle with cancers that cannot be covered by the eyelid are not 'fit to load'.
Cough in young cattle	Several yearlings in one small herd	Northern Tasmania	Can be due to lungworms or viral diseases that infect the respiratory tract.	Treat with drench that covers lungworm. Antibiotic cover if showing signs of pneumonia.
Dystocia (difficult birth)	1 heifer in one herd	Southern Tasmania	Calf not delivered within 3 hours of start of birth process.	Heifers should generally be 300kg+ at mating and grow at up to 1 kg per day in last third of pregnancy. Need to be observed frequently over calving period. Assist birth if no progress after 3 hours.
Foot abscess	1 bull in a herd of 60 cattle, plus another report	Southern Tasmania	Swollen foot, may discharge, very lame. Wet conditions.	May respond to antibiotics and move to dry area. Sometimes need surgical drainage and curette.
Inter-digital dermatitis	15 in herd of 45	Southern Tasmania	Reddened between toes. Sheep benign footrot can be a cause but in this case a Fusiformis bacterium	Foot bathing, antiseptic spray between toes or inject antibiotics, move to drier ground if possible.

Liver damage	Two deaths and 3 others affected in one small herd	Southern Tasmania	Possible causes Acute Bovine Liver Disease, blue-green algae (both more common in autumn) poisonous plants (e.g. ragwort or liver fluke)	Remove from source, treat for fluke. Provide good feed, shade, clean water.
Mating injuries to hind legs.	Several bulls in several herds	North/south/north west Tasmania	Bull becomes lame during mating period.	Remove from cow mob, rest in small paddock or yard, give anti-inflammatories, check for foot injuries and between toes for 'scald'.
Pestivirus	Several runt calves in one beef herd. Milk test positives in a dairy herd.	Northern Tasmania	Pestivirus can cause early resorption of foetus, abortions, stillbirths and permanently infected (PI) runt calves that grow poorly and usually die by 18 months of age	Herd status can be assessed by blood tests or milk tests. PI animals can be detected by blood or skin sample tests. Control programs based on vaccination or exposure to PI before mating. For more information see: https://www.mla.com.au/research-and-development/animal-health-welfare-and-biosecurity/diseases/reproductive/pestivirus/ Use a Cattle Health Declaration to ensure you know status of cattle (including bulls) that you buy: https://www.farmbiosecurity.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/National-Cattle-Health-Declaration.pdf
Pink Eye	One herd	Northern Tasmania	Discharge down cheeks. Cornea whitish, can go yellow and eye can rupture.	Start treatment early. Separate affected cattle, use spray, antibiotic injection into eyelids, eye patches or vet can stitch eyelids.
Pneumonia – chronic, fibrotic	1 cow died in mob of 45	Southern Tasmania	History of eating mouldy pea straw. Lungs very fibrous (scarred) on post mortem.	Fungal (mould) infections will not respond to the usual antibiotics. Good nursing and euthanise if too distressed.
Ringworm	One herd of young cattle	Southern Tasmania	Scaley circular areas of hair loss usually around head and neck.	Usually heal up eventually if left alone. Antifungal ointments or iodine can be rubbed into lesions. Can spread to man so precautions must be taken.
Scour in young cattle	One young bull in one small herd	Northern Tasmania	Most likely worms or dietary but could be viral or bacterial infection.	Treat with broad spectrum drench and offer hay. May require antibiotics and/or rehydration if severe.
Sheath inflammation in bull during mating	One bull in herd	Southern Tasmania	Can be due to Infectious Rhinotracheitis (IBR) virus or congenital deformity causing injury during mating attempts.	This one was kicking at sheath and dropping inner lining in and out. Confirmed IBR and healed within 2 weeks with some antiseptic irrigation of sheath and removed from cow mob. Observe bull serving to detect congenital deformities.
Vaginal prolapse	One cow	Southern Tasmania	Causes or risk factors not known.	Vet can replace, suture in.
Warts	One heifer in small herd	Northern Tasmania	Cauliflower-like growth anywhere on body but often around head.	Normally only seen in young cattle. Will normally self-cure if left alone. A vaccine can be made up if warts persist or are very extensive.

ALPACAS				
Disease/condition	Number of reports/cases	Region	Details	Prevention, treatment, and other biosecurity advice or measures
Jaw abscess	One adult alpaca on one property	Southern Tasmania	Possible causes are injury and infection, penetrating grass seeds, problems around teeth.	Surgical drainage, antibiotics may work in some cases. This one euthanised.
GOATS				
Disease/condition	Number of reports/cases	Region	Details	Prevention, treatment, and other biosecurity advice or measures
Wasting internal parasites, cryptosporidium, rotavirus	10 in small herd, mainly young ones but some adults	Southern Tasmania	May be associated with high stocking density, low intake of colostrum within 48 hours of birth.	Treat parasites with drench (two drenches 12 hours apart with a white/clear combination drench usually effective), antibiotics not effective against rotavirus or cryptosporidium so rehydration solutions and good nursing.
Itchy skin	One goat	Southern Tasmania	Can be due to sarcoptic mange. This one suspect insect bites and Staph infection.	Insect repellents. Antibiotics for staph infection.