



Best Practice Use of Injectable Scab Treatments

There are only two treatment choices for sheep scab, an injectable 3-ML endectocide or an organophosphate (OP – diazinon) plunge dip. Resistance in scab mites to the injectable 3-ML products has been confirmed in the UK, which means we need to be increasingly careful about how we use them, and this may involve using an OP dip. To guard against the development of resistance in scab mites to OP, this treatment must only be used as a plunge dip according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Before you start you need to consider:

- **Are the sheep definitely infested with sheep scab?** [Get a diagnosis first!](#) Itching could be due to other conditions such as lice.
- **What impact will using an injectable have on my roundworm control plan?** Speak to your vet or animal health advisor about this.
- **Is clean* pasture available post-treatment if I need it?** (*An area that has not carried sheep for at least 3 weeks).
- **How many sheep do I need to treat?** Sheep can be infested with scab for up to several weeks or months without showing any clinical signs. During this time they are able to spread mites so it is important that all sheep, not just those showing symptoms on a holding are treated for scab, which includes any neighbouring sheep that may have been in contact.

Selecting the Product (see table below):

- Scab mites can survive off sheep for up to 17 days. Some injectables do not have any licensed persistency so if one of these is used the treated sheep should be put into a 'clean' field, NOT returned to the same field they have just come out of. It is also important to treat all sheep in a flock/mob on the same day.
- When choosing the product make sure you know if you will need to inject once or twice to treat sheep scab. For those products where 2 injections are indicated, it is critical that the second injection is given at the correct t interval (see below). This is because not all mites feed at the same time and because mites are only exposed to the treatment and killed when feeding, two treatments are essential to avoid some mites surviving.
- Withdrawal period may be an important consideration as this varies significantly between the different product options.
- Make sure you know the dose rate and ask for enough product to treat all the sheep to their weight. Remember, not all ivermectin injectables are licensed for use against sheep scab so check the list below. You should not use a combination injectable unless you definitely need the additional anthelmintic treatment (closantel).



Treatment Options for Sheep Scab (August 2021)

Active	Product name(s)	Application method	Protection period for sheep scab	Withdrawal period (days)	Other ecto parasites treated / warnings
Diazinon	Gold Fleece*	Plunge Dip	Up to 8 weeks	49	Lice, Keds, Blowfly & Ticks <i>Do not use a 2-LV (yellow) wormer within 14 days of dipping.</i>
Ivermectin (injections)	Ivomec Classic Molemec Noromectin Multi Panomec Paramectin Multi Premadex	Subcutaneous. Two injections required to treat sheep scab.	None treatment only. Clean pasture and segregation from untreated sheep post treatment required.	37 or 42 (check individual product)	Nasal bots
Doramectin (injection)	Dectomax	Intramuscular	None treatment only. Clean pasture and segregation from untreated sheep post treatment required	70	Nasal bots
Moxidectin 1% (injection)	Cydectin 1% Zermex 1%	Subcutaneous. Two injections 10 days apart required to treat sheep scab.	28 days	70	Nasal bots <i>This product should not be used in sheep that have had Footrot vaccine.</i>
Moxidectin 2% (injection)	Cydectin 20MG/ML Zermex 20MG/ML	Subcutaneous at base of the ear.	60 days.	104	Nasal bots

Scab Mite Resistance to 3-ML:

- If you have treated sheep following a diagnosis of sheep scab but they still appear to be infested (i.e. they are itching more than 2 weeks after treatment) it is important to report it to the manufacturer and your vet and/or merchant.
- Do not just retreat with another injectable, as this could waste your time and money and further add to resistance developing.
- Administering the injection correctly is essential to avoid the risk that ineffective treatment, such as under-dosing or animals being missed, is mistaken for resistance.
- Go to [SCOPS Scab mite resistance to endectocides](#) for a guide on how to record and report a suspected lack of efficacy.



Using an Injectable Correctly

1. All sheep should be treated

- Always read the datasheet carefully before starting. Go to VMD Product Information Directory for more information.
- Scab mites are highly contagious so all sheep in the affected group should be treated, as well as any that have been in contact. Scab mites can be passed on clothing and equipment so if there is any doubt, all sheep on the farm should be treated. Neighbouring farms should also be informed so treatment of adjacent flocks can be co-ordinated. The suspected source of the outbreak should also be informed.

2. Dose at the rate recommended for the heaviest in the group.

- Weighing a few of the biggest sheep in a group is essential so that they can all be dosed at the rate recommended for the heaviest sheep in the group. If there is a wide range in weight across the group, then it may be sensible to sub-divide the animals into smaller weight matched groups and dose accordingly. It is also important to check the scales are accurate before starting and always look at the dose rate for the product as it can change.

3. Check and calibrate the injection equipment

- Farmers must always check the injection equipment is working correctly and that it is calibrated regularly to ensure that it delivers the required dose. This means before every treatment session and also during the day if large numbers are being treated.
- Make sure you have handling facilities that allow you to restrain the sheep for injection and where you can be sure that you will not miss any within a group.

4. Use the correct injection technique

- Injection technique is a vital part of ensuring that the endectocide dose the animal receives is effective. Injections should be given either subcutaneously or intramuscularly at the recommended site of injection, following manufacturer's instructions. For example, for long-acting moxidectin, the site of subcutaneous injection is the base of the ear.
- When given subcutaneously, care should be taken to ensure the needle is inserted correctly by parting the fleece and should be withdrawn from the skin with pressure applied at the point of insertion for several seconds to prevent leakage.

5. After Treatment

- Check you are turning out to a clean area (no sheep for the last 3 weeks) if using a non-persistent product.
- Following injectable treatment, the scab mites are killed but remain on the sheep. These dead mites and their faecal allergens may continue to cause itching and clinical signs for some time after successful treatment.
- If you are concerned that treatment has not been successful, please contact the manufacturer so that the case can be reported and advice can be given on how best to proceed.