

Sustainable Control of Parasites in Sheep

How Safe Are Your Sheep from Sheep Scab?



Contents

- Important facts you need to know about Sheep Scab
- The why and how of diagnosing sheep scab
- Effective treatments for sheep scab.



Important Facts About Sheep Scab



Sheep to sheep contact is the main source of disease spread, but contaminated trailers and lorries are also a risk.



The mites can live in wool tags for up to 16 days making rubbing areas a source of infection to other sheep.



Shearing, scanning or other shared equipment, including greasy overalls and moccasins can also spread the mites.



Up to 60% of a flock, which can take several months, can be infected before any clinical signs are seen. This means you cannot tell if sheep you bring in are carrying scab just by looking.



Sheep scab is an allergic reaction by the sheep to the faeces of scab mites as the graze on the surface of the skin.



The life cycle of the mite is 14 days and the population of mites doubles every 6 days

Diagnosis Of Sheep Scab

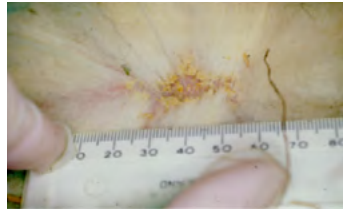
Using medicines such as wormers or injectables simply as insurance or 'just in case' not only leads to problems with resistance but it is also expensive and often doesn't provide the control we need.

Sheep scab is no exception. Itching and wool loss in sheep can be due to a number of things other than scab mites, for example lice or a dermatitis. To make sure that we treat effectively we must have a diagnosis.

There are two ways your Vet can diagnose sheep scab: Skin Scraping & Blood Test

Skin Scrapes

Skin scrapes allow us to collect mites from the skin surface of the sheep. This is the quickest way to obtain a diagnosis when sheep are clinically affected as the mites can easily be collected from the edge of lesions. In the early stages it can be difficult to find mites, even if they are present. This method cannot be used to identify animals which are infected but not yet displaying any clinical signs.



Sheep Scab Blood ELISA test

The sheep scab blood ELISA test allows us to detect antibodies which the sheep produces in response to infestation. These antibodies are only produced following sheep scab infection and can be detected as quickly as two weeks following exposure.



"I had an outbreak of sheep scab this spring after a neighbour's infected sheep got into one of our fields. It wasn't obvious there was a problem until many weeks later when our Vet confirmed scab using a skin scraping. The problem was that by then it had spread to other groups of sheep. We have now added extra fencing to make us secure in the future and if by chance we did get rogue sheep in our fields I would definitely use the blood test to check for any infection, not wait for clinical signs."

Charles Sercombe.

"I used the blood test to help decide if my sheep needed treatment before going back to the fell. I have long championed the need for a quick, efficient and accurate method of diagnosis to help reduce unnecessary treatment. As farmers, we only have two options to treat sheep scab, injectable ML (macrocyclic lactones) or OP dips." says Will. "As well as giving the information on whether a treatment is required, the results are also helpful as part of an overall flock health plan. It is impossible to be certain if a sheep has scab without a diagnosis, yet thousands of sheep are treated every year on the basis of 'prevention is better than cure."

Will Rawling.

Treatments For Sheep Scab

There are just two types of treatment available for sheep scab: An organophosphorus (OP) plunge dip or endectocide (injectable group 3-ML). Recently there have been confirmed reports of resistance in scab mites to the injectables so we now need to be very careful how we use these medicines, in particular making sure that scab is present before using them.

TAKE THE PLUNGE!

...NOT A SHOWER

OP must get down to the skin to kill sheep scab mites. This can only be done by plunge dipping sheep for one minute.









OP dip is only authorised for use as a plunge dip. It must not be used through showers or jetters.

More information go to www.scops.org.uk

The Table below shows details of the different product types:

| Active | Product name(s) | Method of application | Protection period for sheep scab | Withdrawal period (Days) | Other external parasites? |
|---------------------------|--|---|---|--|--|
| 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 |

*Paracide is the other Diazinon dip but this is currently unavailable.

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