



RIVERINA LOCAL
LIVESTOCK UPDATE

July



Local Land
Services

Case study:

THE CASE OF THE LAZY LAMBS

District Veterinarian Sophie Hemley



CASE HISTORY:

A mob of Merino ewes and lambs were mustered into the yards for the mob's second lamb marking. A split lamb marking was chosen due to the extended joining period resulting in the early lambs getting overly large for the catcher. The ewes and lambs were in the yards overnight prior to the smaller lambs being marked and the entire mob being let back out onto a wheat crop with ~30cm high foliage. As the sheep walked from the yards five large lambs started to become shaky until they progressively became laterally recumbent (lying flat). Two lambs died within the hour.

CLINICAL EXAMINATION:

On clinical examination the down lambs had:

- Marked pyrexia (temperatures over 40 degrees celcius)
- Laboured breathing
- Froth on their muzzles
- Two lambs did not respond when you picked up their legs and the other lamb would have muscle tremors when touched

Intravenous calcium was administered by the veterinarian to four lambs, resulting in three of the four lambs standing and starting to graze.

DIAGNOSIS: Hypocalcaemia.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Hypocalcaemia (low blood calcium) is a non-seasonal, feed related condition. The most likely factor to cause hypocalcemia in sheep grazing cereal crops (or lambs in a feedlot eating cereal grains for that matter) is the disproportionately low calcium in comparison to phosphorus. For optimal body function, the calcium to phosphorus (Ca:P) ratio in a diet should be 2:1. Studies have shown large variation in winter wheat crop Ca:P ratios, however the exact figures do not need to be known to effectively prevent clinical disease. Hypocalcaemia events are most commonly diagnosed in animals that have the highest calcium requirements such as late pregnant ewes, lactating ewes and weaner/rapidly growing lambs.

WHY DID HYPOCALCEMIA DEVELOP IN THESE LAMBS?

These lambs were old enough to be grazing the winter cereal crop, the combination of low dietary calcium and rapid growth lead to low blood calcium, any increase in activity in animals with low blood calcium can lead to clinical disease. These factors combined with the time spent off feed and the stress of being yarded, increased the body's use of remaining blood calcium and resulted in clinically affected animals.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PREVENT?

Fortunately the prevention against hypocalcaemia is cheap and easy! Providing a loose lick with calcium carbonate (limestone) is the best. You can either mix your own loose licks (1 part coarse salt: 2 parts limestone: 1 part causmag) or you can buy pre-made loose licks. Lick blocks do provide some calcium supplementation, however the level of calcium in these products compared to the amount of the block that a sheep will consume in any one day, typically means that daily requirements cannot be met with lick blocks alone.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

<http://www.flockandherd.net.au/sheep/reader/hypocalcaemia-ii.html#:~:text=Hypocalcaemia%20in%20sheep%20is%20a,ewes%20and%20in%20multiparous%20ewes.&text=Apart%20from%20a%20link%20to,occur%20on%20oxalate%20containing%20pastures.>



Case study:

A CASE OF BAAAD FEET

District Veterinarian Kristy Stone



CASE HISTORY:

A mob of 220 Merino ewes were noticed to be displaying signs of lameness. The ewes had begun lambing that week and a few ewes that hadn't yet lambed had become recumbent and died. The sheep were grazing a paddock of improved pasture with a height of 15-20cm that had been rested prior to lambing.

CLINICAL EXAMINATION:

In order to minimise any disruption during lambing, the mob was inspected quietly in the paddock and two recumbent ewes were able to be examined closely. The recumbent ewes each had one foot with a purulent discharge (pus) and mild interdigital dermatitis (scald). The remaining three feet were normal.

DIAGNOSIS:

Based on the history and clinical observation, a diagnosis of foot abscess was made. Virulent footrot was excluded based on minimal inflammation of the skin of the interdigital space and no under-running of the horn. Differential diagnoses for lameness in sheep includes virulent or benign footrot, foot abscess and strawberry footrot.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Foot abscess generally occurs with prolonged wetting of the skin when grazing long, wet pastures. Trauma can also cause a foot abscess to develop. Typically only one foot is affected and lameness can be severe. Affected animals can lose condition and ewes in late pregnancy can be susceptible to developing pregnancy toxaemia.

Affected ewes are best treated with an antibiotic injection to treat the infection. Foot bathing can help dry out the foot but should be first discussed with your veterinarian, particularly if dealing with late pregnant ewes.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PREVENT?

Foot abscess can be difficult to prevent. Avoiding paddocks with poor drainage and wet muddy areas such as yards and laneways can help reduce the disease. Keeping ewes in ideal body condition and not allowing them to become overfat can also reduce their risk of developing abscesses.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0013/314410/Foot-abscess-in-sheep.pdf



Announcements + additional warnings

OPTIONS OF PAIN RELIEF FOR LAMB MARKING ON THE MARKET:

Producers, industry and consumers are all contributing to an increasing awareness and expectation to utilise available pain relief for lamb marking. Pain relief for Merino lambs being mulesed is now common practice, however providing pain relief for tail docking and castration is varied and much less common. Knowing what products are available and choosing the most appropriate pain relief for your production system can be difficult. However, introducing routine pain relief into the lamb marking program has the potential to reduce the time taken by lambs to mother up post marking, helping to reduce the impact this often stressful event has on the lambs growth and development.

The below table shows all available registered pain relief products that can be used in lambs in NSW:

Product Name	Active ingredients	Description & how it's administered	Veterinary Prescription Needed?	WHP	When would it be useful?
Tri-Solfen 	Lignocaine(fast acting pain relief), bupivacaine (longer acting pain relief), adrenaline (reduces bleeding), cetrimide (antiseptic)	Gel spray applied to the wound providing antiseptic and local anaesthetic.	No	90 days	When there is an open wound - mulesing, surgical castration, gas knife tail docking (i.e. not using rings).
Buccalgescic 	Meloxicam	Oral liquid to be put between the molar teeth and cheek.	Yes	10 days	General pain relief provided no matter which tail docking or castration method used.
Metacam20 	Meloxicam	Sub-cutaneous injection providing anti-inflammatory action and analgesia. Ideally administered prior to being in the cradle.	Yes	11 days	General pain relief provided, no matter which tail docking or castration method used.
Numnuts 	Lignocaine	Injection while castrator or tail ring is applied using Numnuts applicator providing anaesthetic to the area injected.	Yes	0 days	When using the Numnuts applicator to apply castrator and tail rings.
For a comprehensive break down of the cost of all of the above products per lamb please see: http://www.flyboss.com.au/sheep-goats/management/breech-modification/pain-relief-faqs.php					

The most effective approach to managing pain in lambs would be to utilise a systemic pain relief (meloxicam either in the form of Buccalgescic or Metacam20) and a topical anaesthetic (Tri- Solfen if there is an open wound or Numnuts if using rings). This approach is called multi-modal pain relief. If you are introducing pain relief to your lamb marking program for the first time, one form of pain relief will be beneficial alone.

Contact your local district veterinarian and they can assist you in discussing what would best suit you and your lambs.

NEW FLYSTRIKE RISK MANAGEMENT PLANNER TOOL: TEST DRIVERS WANTED NOW!

Paraboss has developed a new interactive tool which is ready for release, but some real test drivers are wanted. The new tool is designed to show annual flystrike risks specific to your location and shows how your risk is influenced by the wrinkle, dag and breech within your Merino flock. By considering the timing of shearing, crutching and treatments, the tool is able to optimise treatment times for you and compare different management systems.

If you are interested in being involved, please email admin@paraboss.com.au, with the following details:

- Your name
- Nearest town
- Postcode
- Role you have in the Australia sheep industry (e.g. farmer, advisor, vet, rural merchandise staff, etc).
- If you have any sheep, breed and number.

Upcoming online events

GRAHAM CENTRE LIVESTOCK FORUM

Livestock producers will be able to tap into practical research to improve their production in an online and interactive Forum to be hosted by the Graham Centre for Agricultural Innovation on Friday 31 July.

The program includes producers sharing their experiences, panel discussions with industry experts and new beef and sheep industry research that can be applied directly on-farm.

Key topics for discussion include containment feeding, sheep reproduction, genetic benchmarking in the merino industry, dual purpose mixes and cover cropping, extracting more value from cull cows and multi-breed genomic evaluation in beef cattle.

Check out the full program: www.csu.edu.au/research/grahamcentre/events/2020-graham-centre-livestock-forum

The Graham Centre is a research alliance between Charles Sturt University and the NSW Department of Primary Industries.

During this time of isolation it's important to stay connected and keep up-to-date with industry advancements and there'll be plenty of opportunities to network with other producers and the researchers in the interactive online platform.

The Forum will be held from 9am to 1pm on Friday 31 July and will cost \$10 to attend. Registrations are now open and people can sign up for alerts about the Forum: <http://eepurl.com/g4u4pH> or for more information contact Toni Nugent on 0418 974 775.

The 2020 Forum is supported by Meat & Livestock Australia, Riverina Local Land Services, Animal Health Australia, ProWay Livestock Equipment and Sheep Connect NSW.

Our pick: Webinars + podcasts

In or Out of Drought: Manage Your Pregnant Ewes

In this episode Nathan Scott joins to discuss the risk factors for disease in pregnant ewes. Nathan does a great job at explaining the diseases, what's making a ewe high risk to experience disease and how to best manage a poorer body condition score ewe vs an excessively conditioned ewe. The very relevant issue of lameness and the impact that it has on pregnant ewes is also discussed.

The episode can be found under the Sheep Connect New South Wales series on the Podcast app.

Managing Bloat in Cattle

A webinar delivered by Dr Bruce Allworth which discusses the management options for bloat in cattle. Bloat is one of the biggest challenges that comes with such a productive season. Bruce covers treatment, prevention and what the most cost effective options for management are.

The webinar can be viewed at any time on the MLA website: <https://www.mla.com.au/extension-training-and-tools/productivity-and-profitability-webinars/>

The Best Age to Wean Prime Lambs

Another webinar delivered by Dr Bruce Allworth in which he discusses what the best time is to wean crossbred lambs off crossbred ewes. The timing of ewes lactation, what to be basing your decisions off and what would best suit your business is all covered.

The webinar can be viewed at any time on the MLA website: <https://www.mla.com.au/extension-training-and-tools/productivity-and-profitability-webinars/>

Follow us at [@locallivestockvets](https://www.instagram.com/locallivestockvets) on Instagram to see photos and videos direct from the paddock!



CONTACT YOUR CLOSEST DISTRICT VETERINARIAN

WAGGA

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Dione Howard - 0428 115 134 or 6923 6300

YOUNG

Evie Duggan - 0427 147 939 or 6381 4700

NARRANDERA/GRIFFITH

Sophie Hemley - 0427 696 895 or 6960 1300

HAY

Courtney Simkin - 0427 418 006 or 6990 1304

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