

Tasmanian Livestock Health Report – August 2024

The Tasmanian Livestock Health Report summarises information on livestock diseases and conditions observed by rural service providers across Tasmania.

See www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/tas-health for previous reports and to register for a free email subscription, or join the [Tasmanian Livestock Health Facebook group](#)

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

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

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

Also see the Resources section at the end of this report.

Seasonal Disease Alerts

Arthritis in lambs: If you have more than the odd case it may be worth asking your vet about testing for Erysipelas. There is a vaccine for Erysipelas.

Campylobacter, Listeria and Toxoplasmosis abortion in sheep: Many flocks will have finished lambing, but if lamb marking figures are less than 90% for singles or less than 170% for twin mobs, and exposure losses are not to blame, blood tests on dry ewes at marking or weaning can detect Campylobacter and Toxoplasmosis antibodies as evidence of recent infection.

Black scour worms: high egg counts are being seen. Monthly worm egg counts on weaner sheep are recommended.

Bloat: has been seen in lambs on lucerne on misty overcast days.

Body lice: in sheep are still common. Now is a good time to inspect.

Brown stomach worm: resistance to macrocyclic lactone (ML) drench family is common. Could become more dominant with warmer, dryer weather.

Drench resistance: resistance to white, clear and macrocyclic drenches is relatively common and any other drench can also fail.

Footrot and scald: are actively spreading now.

Grass tetany: cows from 1 week before, to 4 weeks after calving that are on short green grass especially if fertilised with potash and/or nitrogen. Cows that are overweight and taken off feed for handling are particularly at risk. Prevent by feeding Causmag on hay.

Hypocalcaemia (milk fever) in ewes: can be seen in ewes during lactation, especially on lush cereal, short rotation ryegrass or lush pasture – feed some hay and/or a calcium/magnesium/salt dry lick. Have calcium injection on hand.

Johne's Disease (JD) in cattle: will also show up now in stressed cows.

Listeria: nervous signs and deaths in sheep and cattle on silage, brassica bulbs or pasture.

Liver fluke: Eggs can be present in Fluketests now, but blood tests are the best way to detect in live animals. This is a good time of year to kill adult fluke. Consider a flukicide other than triclabendazole.

Lucerne red gut: seen as sudden death with a very bloated carcass on lucerne or clover. Offering roughage such as hay, straw or alternating between pasture and the lucerne/clover can help prevent cases.

Milk fever: can be seen in lactating dairy cows, especially older Channel Island breeds.

Phalaris staggers: cases can show up for a number of weeks after removal from toxic pasture.

Pneumonia: has been common this year in ewes and lambs. Seen as depressed downers, don't always have a nasal discharge.

Pleurisy: is common, slowing prime lamb growth rates and resulting in trimming at the abattoir. Check MLA's [myFeedback](#) to see if there is any data on your flock.

Pulpy kidney (PK): Make sure lambs get a booster if going onto rich feed such as clover or lucerne. Vaccinating ewes protects their lambs up to marking, 3-in-1 is cheaper than 5- or 6-in-1 and gives same PK immunity.

Toe abscess: can be a problem if sheep's feet are continually wet and not trimmed recently.

Weaned lamb scours: If lambs are scouring and worm egg counts are zero or very low then coccidia, Yersinia or Campylobacter gut infection could be involved; consult with your vet on best options for diagnosis and treatment.

Choriptic mange in cattle: is active now but usually self-cure as the weather warms up.

Ovine Johne's disease (OJD): Is showing up in 6-tooths and older sheep under stress.

White muscle disease: If lambs get stiff and stop walking when mustered for marking, suspect white muscle disease.

Biosecurity story of the month – Pestivirus in cattle

Pestivirus is the sixth most costly cattle disease in Australia. Exposure of non-immune cattle during pregnancy can cause resorption of the embryo, abortion, stillbirths, newborn calves that die within a few days with or without nervous signs, and persistently infected (PI) calves that never grow properly and usually die before they reach 18 months of age, depending on what stage of pregnancy the female is at when infected.

Non-immune females exposed to Pestivirus from 40 to 120 days of pregnancy usually produce a PI calf. Most spread is due to contact with a PI.

Twenty-four herds in Northern Tasmania were tested for Pestivirus antibodies recently by collecting blood samples from about 5% of animals presented for pregnancy diagnosis. Twenty-one herds had evidence of exposure to Pestivirus.

Of eighteen mobs of heifers tested, 14 were positive, with between 11% and 100% of the mob immune. Seven mobs were all negative or had less than 50% immune and therefore vulnerable to reproductive problems if infected during pregnancy. Two mobs had PI animals in them, with 90-95% of their herd-mates immune to Pestivirus reproductive loss. Vaccinated heifers were all immune.

Two of 12 mobs of first calvers were still vulnerable to Pestivirus reproductive loss even though other mobs on the same property were positive for Pestivirus. Of 6 older cow mobs tested, all had sufficient immunity.

So what can we conclude from this real-life study?

1. Pestivirus is very common in Northern Tasmanian beef herds. There is no reason to think that it is any less common in other regions or in dairy cattle.
2. If there is a PI in a heifer mob, most of the mob will be immune by the time they are first mated.

3. Heifers and even first calvers can be vulnerable to Pestivirus reproductive loss even on properties where other mobs are immune.

So the easy answer appears to be expose your un-mated heifers to a PI. But if this strategy is effective, you will soon run out of PIs. Buying in PIs has backfired on some properties because they also imported disease such as Johne’s disease and *Mycoplasma bovis*.

The alternative is to test heifer mobs to determine whether they are immune or not. If they are, you don’t need to take any action, though some vets advocate testing for PIs and eliminating them. If they are vulnerable, you can either vaccinate or use enhanced biosecurity to try to protect them during pregnancy.

Pestivirus is usually transmitted by direct (“nose to nose”) contact, through infected semen, and less commonly by blood-sucking flies or contact with contaminated objects such as cattle handling equipment. So, biosecurity in this case means keeping those vulnerable animals at least one paddock away from other cattle, putting them through yards at least two days after other cattle, and transporting in washed trucks.

It's worth noting that bulls can look normal but still be a PI. Mate vulnerable heifers with bulls that have been tested and have antibodies to Pestivirus.

Vaccine is effective but expensive, so you need to compare the cost of a vaccination program with the risks of reproductive loss if vulnerable females are accidentally exposed to Pestivirus during pregnancy (which could be significant).

Hotel quarantine pays off again

A mob of sheep was purchased and placed in a paddock on their own. Several days later lameness was observed and virulent footrot diagnosed by a veterinarian. The mob was removed from the property before footrot could spread to other sheep on the property.

Isolation of all introductions of any species is always a good principle. For how long? 14 days is good, 30 days is better. Quarantine drench, check for lameness and lice, vaccinate if necessary, and investigate any illness. If in doubt call your veterinarian.



Diseases and conditions seen in August 2024

SHEEP				
Disease/condition	Number of reports/cases	Region	Details	Prevention, treatment, and other biosecurity advice or measures
Abortion	One abortion in one large flock	Northern Tasmania	One rotten and one normal twin aborted – typical of Toxo	Best diagnosis is to submit 5 aborted lambs to lab for diagnosis. Bloods for Toxo testing and vaginal swabs from ewes with evidence of recent abortion can be tested if no foetuses are available. Campylobacter, Toxo, Listeria, Salmonella all possible causes.
Abscess	One ram in one medium flock	NW Tasmania	Swelling on side of neck in this case.	May settle with antibiotics and anti-inflammatory under veterinary supervision. If not, surgical draining (vet job) and antibiotics usually effective.

Arthritis, infectious	One wether hogget in one large flock	Northern Tasmania	Seen as lameness and swollen joints. Whole leg will usually be removed at slaughter, often making carcase 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. Make sure orphan lambs receive sufficient colostrum within 24 hours of birth. 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/
Black udder in ewes	One ewe in one large flock.	Northern Tasmania	One half of udder goes cold and grey, blood-stained fluid can be milked out of teat. Often caused by a Staph bacteria.	Acute cases caught early – treat with antibiotic and pain relief. If teat is cold and dead, remove it so toxic fluids can drain. Isolate from flock. A lot of udder tissue will die, must be gently cleaned out and can heal up over time.
Body condition score low	A number of sheep and lambs in a number of flocks.	NW, Northern and Southern Tasmania	Body condition less than BCS 2	Usually not enough feed. Worms, fluke, and specific deficiencies (copper, selenium, B12) and diseases eg footrot may also be involved.
Bloat in lambs on lucerne or clover	Small number of lambs in one large mob.	Southern Tasmania	Lambs found dead and blown up	Differentiate from pulpy kidney or red gut by postmortem. Frothy bloat can be prevented by adding bloat oil to troughs, feeding supplements with preventatives, offer lick blocks. Give PK booster and offer roughage (eg hay).
Coccidiosis	A number of weaners in one large flock	Northern Tasmania	Moderate to high coccidia counts and zero worm eggs.	These responded to sulpha drug treatment under veterinary supervision.
Cysticercosis (“bladder worm”)	Detected at postmortem in one aged ewe.	Southern Tasmania.	Seen as small clear bags of fluid attached to liver or elsewhere in abdominal cavity of sheep and lambs. Causes liver or ‘runners’ to be 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/
Cast	A number of composite ewes in one large flock	Southern Tasmania	Maternal ewe in good condition.	Overfat maternal ewes get on their back and cannot regain their feet. Often die of bloat or are attacked by crows etc when down. Keep ewes at condition score 3.3 – 3.6. Check them frequently if they are overweight and getting cast. Mark and cull at next opportunity.
Copper deficiency	Three of 3 weaners tested in one large flock.	Southern Tasmania	Diagnose with liver tests. Blood test not reliable. Pasture analysis also valuable.	Seen as swayback, reduced fertility, white bands in black wool, bone fragility. Deficiencies may reduce immunity to worms and other disease. Copper can be very toxic in sheep, so supplement carefully – injections, rumen boluses or adding copper to fertiliser (expensive) can all be used. Blocks don’t ensure consistent intake, oral drenching is time-consuming.
Crow attack	A number of lambs and ewes on one	Southern Tasmania.	Large numbers of hungry crows (forest ravens) attack	You can try crow traps, scare guns, providing plenty of wallaby carcasses at a location near the lambing paddock or poisoning with alphachloralose (contact David White, Biosecurity Tasmania on (03) 6478 4117)

	large property		ewes when they go down to lamb and start pecking lambs as they are born.	
Cud stain	One sheep in one small flock	Northern Tasmania	Green stain around mouth.	Can be due to molar teeth missing and grass impacting in mouth, paralysed cheek (probably due to vaccination injuring facial nerve), grass impacting between cheek and molars, other mouth injuries, young sheep cutting teeth, tongue damage or infection.
Dags	Wide-spread often affecting majority of the mob.	NW, Northern and Southern Tasmania	Due to scouring.	May be due to worms, gut infection (eg Salmonella, Yersinia, coccidia), nutritional factors. Have a WORMTEST egg count done and ask the laboratory to check for coccidia, culture for Yersinia and Salmonella if egg counts are low. Check paddock for plants such as capeweed. Crutch. The Dealing with Dag Advisor Manual is available at www.wool.com/flystrikelatest .
Deaths in lambing ewes - sepsis	A small number of ewes in one large flock	Southern Tasmania	Infection of damage to uterus or vagina after difficult or assisted birth.	Ewes that have a difficult/assisted birth usually benefit from antibiotic and anti-inflammatory treatment under veterinary supervision. Vaccinate ewes with 5 or 6 in one pre-lambing.
Deaths in ewes nearing lambing	A number of deaths on a number of farms	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Multiple causes associated with malnutrition, OJD, worms, hypocalcaemia, pneumonia, other causes	If more than the odd sheep dies it may be worth having post mortems carried out to diagnose cause/s so that appropriate treatment and prevention can be given. Often these postmortems detect significant problems affecting productivity of the whole mob.
Dermo (lumpy wool)	One young sheep in one large flock, plus 2 others in 2 small flocks	Northern Tasmania	Wool in hard blocks along the topline, sometimes on lower legs and/or muzzle.	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. See: https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0013/314320/9819-Lumpy-wool--Primefact-986.pdf
Difficult births (primary dystocia)	A number of ewes in one large flock	Southern Tasmania	Mixed age ewes above BCS 3 had a number of difficult births.	Ewe can be assisted. Prevention: Ewes bearing single lambs should be kept at BCS to 3 and placed in paddocks with no more than 1000 Kg of green dry matter per hectare in last 6 weeks of pregnancy and over lambing. Use low birth weight prime lamb sire with narrow shoulders over merino ewes. A small number of dytocias are inevitable.
Drench resistant worms	Multiple resistance including to moxidectin in one large flock.	Southern Tasmania	Many brown stomach worms found in 4 th stomach after drenching with a triple and then a moxidectin LA.	See WORMBOSS for strategies to manage and prevent drench resistance.
Downer ewe	A number of deaths in one medium flock	Southern Tasmania	Recently lambed, low BCS, drench resistant worms.	In general treat with calcium injection, antibiotics and anti-inflammatories under veterinary supervision plus effective drench. An effective drench required in this flock. Prevention: feed low BCS ewes better to get them to BCS 2.8 (singles) or 3 (twin-bearing) by lambing. Offer limestone/causmag/salt mix from scanning on. DrenchTest or DrenchCheck.
Dystocia (difficult birth)	A number of flocks	NW, Northern and Southern Tasmania.	Usually large single lamb that gets stuck coming out. Or twins that get tangled up.	Ewe can be assisted. Prevention: Ewes bearing single lambs should be body condition score 2.8 to 3 and placed in paddocks with no more than 800-1000 Kg of green dry matter per hectare in last 6 weeks of pregnancy.

Eagle attack	One weaner in one large flock and one lamb in one medium flock	Southern Tasmania	Eagles can predate on small sheep and lambs, usually when they are already compromised.	Eagles are protected. They prefer live catch when feeding their young but can be offered carcasses closer to roosting and nesting sites.
Enlarged knees due to thickened skin	Small number of rams in one large flock	Southern Tasmania	Fibrous pad on front of knees	These rams had chronic scald and were grazing on their knees. Such animals often have a bare patch on brisket as well from lying down a lot.
Entropion (turned in eyelids)	Several lambs in one large flock	Southern 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 under veterinary supervision just under skin of eyelid/s to turn eyelashes outwards. Surgery also possible.
Eye fold (lachrymal pouch) infection	Two ewes in one medium flock	Northern Tasmania	Yellow-orange discharge from pouch on one side, down cheek below fold.	Check for grass seed. Clean and apply antiseptics.
Fleece derangement	Several sheep in one small flock.	Northern Tasmania	Wool staples hanging out from surface of fleece.	Usually body lice but can also be itch mite, grass seeds, shedding genetics etc. Inspect closely for lice, grass seed and take appropriate action.
Foetal death	One ewe in one large flock	Southern Tasmania	Stressed downer ewe in low body condition.	Foetus can die inside ewe. Sometimes aborted, sometimes mummify (dry up), but usually ewe dies of toxemia. Prevented by preventing/early treatment of condition affecting ewe.
Foot abscess (heel abscess)	A number of twin-bearing ewes on good pasture in one large flock, one ewe in one medium flock.	Northern Tasmania.	Swelling of one toe, hot, painful and discharge pus in acute stage.	Keep mob average BCS to 3 - 3.3, autumn or pre-lamb shear, reduce interdigital skin injury, walk through 5-10% formalin footbath weekly. Treat with long-acting broad-spectrum antibiotics (under vet supervision), keep feet dry eg on slatted floor of shearing shed, epsom salts on drainage point and bandage. Ensure fit to load if transported.
Footrot, virulent	Ongoing problem in one medium flock, detected in purchased mob on one other property.	Southern Tasmania	Active spread now.	At this time of year footbathing and vaccination boosters (if already primed with previous footrot vaccination) are the only useful short-term treatment strategies. Long-acting oxytetracycline antibiotics under veterinary supervision are useful to treat chronic cases when conditions are dry. Prevention: Ask for a Sheep Health Declaration when buying sheep and ensure section B1 confirms flock is free of virulent footrot but still footbath, quarantine, and check feet on arrival. Footbath sheep returning from shows. Maintain good boundary fence. See Ute Guide for Tasmania: https://www.wool.com/globalassets/wool/sheep/welfare/other-husbandry/footrot--a-guide-to-identification-and-control-in-the-field---tas-2019.pdf
Footrot (intermediate)	One medium flock	Southern Tasmania	Under -running of hoof horn only extends part way up the sole of the hoof. Can be eradicated but	At this time of year footbathing and vaccination boosters (if already primed with previous footrot vaccination) are the only useful short-term treatment strategies. In longer term paring, footbathing, culling chronic cases, use vaccine. Eradication by repeated foot inspections and culling all infected sheep can be executed this summer. Ensure culls fit to load if transported. Prevention: Ask for a Sheep Health

			causes less production loss than virulent footrot.	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 fence. See Ute Guide for Tasmania: https://www.wool.com/globalassets/wool/sheep/welfare/other-husbandry/footrot--a-guide-to-identification-and-control-in-the-field---tas-2019.pdf
Grass tetany	A number lactating ewes in two flocks	Southern Tasmania	Twitching muscles and go down.	Hypocalcaemia can look similar. Treatment is the same – inject 1/5 pack of calcium/magnesium injection under the skin and rub in well. Prevention – offer 40:30:30 limestone/Causmag/salt loose lick.
Hooves overgrown	A number of ewes in one small flock.	Northern Tasmania	Toe of hoof very long, can curl up. Soft ground, scald and footrot can be underlying cause.	Regular trimming. Control scald /footrot if present.
Horn broken	One sheep in one medium flock	Northern Tasmania	Hard outer case of a short horn gets knocked off usually in yards.	Bleeds but usually heals quickly, Spray with antiseptic. Prevent fly strike and allow time to recover.
<i>H. somni</i>	One detection in ram semen from one medium flock	Northern Tasmania	Can cause epididymitis in rams, and also ovine septicaemia, mastitis, synovitis, polyarthritis.	Rams can be treated, but variable success rate.
Hypocalcaemia (“milk fever”)	A number of late pregnant multiple-bearing ewes in several large flocks	Northern Tasmania	Late pregnancy ewes go down, usually after period off feed, on cereal crops, short rotation ryegrass or lush grass dominant pasture.	Treat with injection containing calcium (eg 4-in-1) 1/5 of a pack under skin. Warm pack in hot water before injection if possible and massage in well. Should get up within 30 minutes. If green rumen contents are coming out of nostrils give antibiotic cover under veterinary supervision. Prevent with 40:30:30 Limestone/Causmag/salt loose lick in latter half of pregnancy, especially if on cereal crops or lush pasture, older ewes, multiple-bearing ewes, don’t keep off feed long eg if shearing or crutching.
Intestinal blockage	One wether in one small flock	Southern Tasmania	Wether found dead. Necropsy revealed rope halter causing blockage	Feed enough roughage and provide environmental enrichment so that sheep do not eat objects such as rope halters.
Kangaroo gait	Suspected in 5 ewes in one medium flock	Southern Tasmania	Seen in usually twin-bearing ewes up to 6 weeks after lambing, due to damage to nerves in front legs	Ewes move by hind leg action alone so look like a kangaroo hopping. Cause not known, will often recover if looked after.
Lambing paralysis	One young ewe in one large flock	Northern Tasmania	Nerves in pelvis get bruised if lamb is stuck for too long.	Good nursing on soft bedding with some physio (turn frequently and pump back legs) can allow ewe to recover. Antibiotics and anti-inflammatories under veterinary supervision.
Lamb deaths - newborn	A high number of lambs on a	NW, Northern and Southern Tasmania	Lambs born during rough weather (rain,	Wind chill factor when wet is main killer. Providing shelter, plenty of feed for ewes and keeping ewes in good body condition reduces losses.

	large number of properties		wind) found dead.	
Lameness with overgrown hooves	A number of sheep in a number of flocks.	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Reluctant to bear full weight on one leg.	Can be due to footrot, foot abscess, toe abscess, arthritis, injury and a number of other conditions. Examine foot and leg thoroughly, treat appropriately.
Laceration to lip	One sheep in one mob	Northern Tasmania	Suggests dog bite	Muzzle dogs that bite when handling sheep.
Lice (body lice)	Widespread.	Northern and Southern Tasmania.	Sheep body lice cause 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.	Tend to show up when sheep are stressed. See LICEBOSS: http://www.liceboss.com.au/sheep-goats/ for a full practical guide to managing and preventing sheep body lice. Use Sheep Health Declaration when buying sheep.
Low lambing % in grain-fed ewes	Low lamb marking %	Southern Tasmania	Could be due to a number of factors, but most likely is Campylobacter if ewes had not been vaccinated.	Dry ewes can be bled to measure antibodies for Campylobacter and Toxo. Best to Campylobacter vaccinate ewes that are being grain fed as grain feeding is a known risk factor. Keep cats out of grain stores to prevent Toxo.
Moxidectin long-acting breakdown	Ewes are wormy well under 100 days after treatment	Southern Tasmania	Label claims only up to 49 days protection from black scour worm, our most common winter worm.	Many breakdowns can be due to black scour worms if 7-plus weeks after treatment. Brown stomach worms often develop resistance to moxidectin as well. Well worth an egg count with larval ID so that you know whether you have a moxidectin resistant brown stomach worm problem.
Nasal discharge, purulent, both nostrils	Several weaners in a number of flocks	NW, Northern and Southern Tasmania	Can be due to viral or bacterial infections	If sheep are bright and alert no action required. If depressed, laboured breathing, deaths, veterinary advice should be sought.
Ocular (eye) discharge both eyes	One lamb from one medium flock.	Northern Tasmania	Could be first stage of Pinkeye	Best to leave alone and keep checking, if possible, only yard if you have to.
Ovine Johnes' disease (OJD)	One wether from one large flock.	Northern Tasmania	Wethers may not have been vaccinated.	Death rate can usually be reduced to low levels by vaccinating lambs at marking with Gudair vaccine. If OJD is confirmed present in the flock, cull any sheep over 18 months of age that waste away and don't respond to drenching. See: https://animalhealthaustralia.com.au/johnes-disease-in-sheep/
Phalaris staggers	Ten rising 2-tooth ewes in one large flock.	Southern Tasmania	Staggering, down, bright, alert. These were exposed to fresh Phalaris shoot in July.	Get the mob off the Phalaris paddock. Affected sheep can recover with good nursing but may take several months, some never recover fully. New cases can occur for many weeks after coming off the Phalaris paddock. Cobalt can be preventative, but is not a treatment.

Photosensitisation	A number of lambs and adult sheep in a number of flocks	NW, Northern and Southern Tasmania	Skin peels off face and ears. Most of these mild and only effecting backs of ears.	Check paddock for poisonous plants and pigment plants (eg storksbill, medics). If severe, treat with anti-inflammatories, antibiotics if necessary (and under vet supervision), offer deep shade, move to new paddock.
Pleurisy	Detected at postmortem in one ewe in one large flock.	Northern Tasmania	Lungs stuck to chest wall. Usually results in major trimming during processing.	Treat sick sheep with cough or respiratory distress with antibiotics (under vet supervision). Try to avoid stress events, drench sheep carefully, avoid dusty feedstuffs.
Pneumonia	A number of cases in late pregnant ewes in a number of large flocks	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Deaths, difficulty breathing, downer ewes that do not respond to hypocalcaemia or preg tox treatment.	Early cases in front part of lungs. Antibiotic and anti-inflammatory treatment under vet supervision (best caught early). Reduce any stress factors. See https://animalhealthaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/NSHMP-Pneumonia-Pleurisy.pdf
Pregnancy Toxaemia (twin lamb disease)	A number of ewes in a number of large flocks	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Caused by illness eg Footrot/foot abscess or insufficient energy in diet in last 7 weeks of pregnancy. Usually in ewes carrying multiples or very a large single lamb.	If heavily pregnant ewes go down in last 6 weeks, inject 1/5 milk fever pack under skin and massage in well (to differentiate from milk fever). If ewe does not get up within an hour, twin lamb disease is most likely cause. Oral treatments rarely work unless you catch them while still able to walk but dropping out of back of mob when driven, and 'star-gazing'.
Premature lamb deaths	A number of lambs in one medium flock	Southern Tasmania	Most lambs born are well developed, but 7-10 days before due date.	Probably late abortion, possibly Campy or Toxo. Send 5 lambs to lab or bleed 'lambled and lost' ewes to test for Toxo and Campy. May also be stress factors.
Runts	One lamb in one small flock	Northern Tasmania	This one had a hairy coat and may have been infected with Pestivirus.	Best euthanased but can try high protein/high energy feed (introduce slowly).
Scabby Mouth	Small numbers of lambs from two large properties	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Crusts and raw areas on lips, sometimes on feet as well.	Caused by a tough virus that persists on a property once introduced, but skin injury needed to allow virus to establish. Best left to heal on their own but emollients or Trisolfen can be applied. Can prevent with vaccine at marking. See: https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/179835/sheep-health-scabby-mouth.pdf
Scrotal mange	Several rams in two medium flocks	Northern Tasmania	Usually seen in Merino rams but can affect other breeds. Reduced fertility if more than 10 square centimetres of thickened skin/scabs on scrotum. Pasterns	The Chorioptes bovis mite lives on cattle and other species and survives for a number of days off the host so is hard to eradicate. Individually effected rams can be treated – see your vet.

			affected as well in severe cases.	
Selenium deficiency	Two large flocks	Southern Tasmania	Detected by blood or liver testing.	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, reduced fertility. See factsheet: https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/111355/Selenium-deficiency-in-sheep.pdf
Shelly toe	One ram in one large flock	Southern Tasmania	Curved separation of hoof wall from sole up hoof wall near front of hoof.	Conformational defect rather than a disease condition. Is heritable and can be selected against. Best to pare off under-run hoof wall as dirt and manure can pack into the cleft and cause a form of toe abscess.
Soft testes in ram	One ram in one medium flock	Southern Tasmania	Testicles both soft. Rams should have full, springy testicles.	If because the ram is old, broken mouth, poor feet etc then cull the ram. Ram may have been ill and could recover full fertility. Offer rams high protein and energy feed for 8 weeks prior to joining aiming for BCS 3 to 3.5 at joining.
Stillbirths	A large number of lambs in a number of flocks	Southern Tasmania	First lamb born dead, second one rotten	Sounds typical of Toxoplasmosis. Submit 5 dead but fresh (not rotten) lambs from 5 separate ewes to the lab.
Toe abscess	One ram in one large flock	Southern Tasmania	Very lame but no swelling, heat or under-running. Small amount of grey pus in toe area.	Carefully pare back the toe, following any black track up front of toe until pus released. Usually, no further treatment needed apart from antiseptic spray.
Twin lamb disease (pregnancy toxemia)	A significant number of flocks	Southern Tasmania	Caused by insufficient energy in diet in last 6 weeks of pregnancy or an illness reducing feed consumption. Usually in twin-bearing ewes or ewe bearing a large single lamb.	If heavily pregnant ewes go down in last 6 weeks, inject 1/5 milk fever pack under skin and massage in well (to differentiate from milk fever). If ewe does not get up within an hour, twin lamb disease is most likely cause. Oral treatments rarely work unless you catch them while still able to walk but dropping out of back of mob and 'star-gazing'.
Ulcer on dental pad	One ram in one large flock	Raw area on dental pad	May be caused by a virus or injury.	If a number of animals affected and lesions also seen around coronary band then foot and mouth disease is a possibility so ring your vet or 1800 888675. If just one animal, and mouth only affected, then monitor – these lesions usually heal quite quickly without treatment.
Dystocia (uterine torsion)	One ewe in one large flock – seen on postmortem.	Southern Tasmania	Lamb not delivered within 3 hours of start of birth process, twist felt on internal examination.	Sometimes rolling the ewe on her back in the right direction while holding the lamb still will 'undo' the twist.
Vaccination abscess	One ram in one medium flock	Northern Tasmania	Caused by vaccinating into the muscle in the top of neck in this case.	This can result in "Gudair staggers" if Gudair vaccine is injected in this site. Fortunately this one broke out through the skin. 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
Vaginal prolapse	A small number of ewes in two large flocks	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Pink mass protrudes from vulva in late pregnant ewe. Ewes bearing multiples more commonly affected.	Treat: There are plastic devices that can be inserted and also straps or harness that can be used once the prolapse has been replaced. Prevention: Remove tails at third joint (tip of vulva) when marking ewe lambs, keep pregnant ewes (especially twin-bearing ewes) on flatter ground in last half of pregnancy, keep BCS 3 to 3.3. Don't feed swedes in last 1/3 of pregnancy. Offer hay if on low dry matter feed. Shear in last third of pregnancy. Maintain steady body weight from start of mating to scanning. See https://www.fwi.co.uk/livestock/husbandry/livestock-lambing/step-step-guide-dealing-vaginal-prolapse-sheep for a guide on replacing vaginal prolapse in ewes.
Worms	Widespread	NW, Northern and Southern Tasmania.	Brown stomach worms and black scour worms common.	Differentiate from nutritional scour, Yersinia 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 at: http://www.wormboss.com.au/sheep-goats/programs/sheep.php
Yersinia/coccidia enteritis	Weaners in one large flock.	Northern Tasmania	Scouring and deaths.	Differentiate from worms or coccidia etc by worm egg count and coccidia examination at lab. Ask lab to culture for Yersinia as well. Lab can advise which antibiotics should work. Treat scouring animals. Some stress factor is usually present (eg poor access to water, worms etc) and should be corrected.
CATTLE				
Abortion	Several cows in several large herds	Northern Tasmania	Possible causes Neospora, leptospirosis, trichomoniasis, vibrio (Campylobacter), pestivirus, congenital/hereditary factors, toxins, mouldy hay, Salmonella Dublin. The cause of many abortions not determined despite lab investigation.	Send aborted calf and blood sample from cow to lab for diagnosis. Vaccines against Vibrio and pestivirus can be used. Pestivirus: https://www.mla.com.au/research-and-development/animal-health-welfare-and-biosecurity/diseases/reproductive/pestivirus/ Vibrio: https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/110043/vibriosis-of-cattle.pdf
Abscess	One bull in one large herd	Southern Tasmania	Swelling on jaw.	Surgical drainage by vet and antibiotics usually effective. If lymph nodes are involved Actino could be cause and may respond better to intravenous sodium iodide injection (vet job!).
Bare areas on one hip	Two cows in one medium herd	Northern Tasmania	Probably a projection in the yards injuring one hip.	Projections in yard that cause skin damage will also be causing bruising, these yards need repair.
Body condition low	One cow in one small herd.	Northern Tasmania	BCS less than 2 (1 to 5 scale)	Veterinary investigation, check feed quantity and quality, micronutrient levels, worms, liver fluke status.

Calving paralysis	One heifer in one large herd.	Southern Tasmania	This one had only partial control of one hind leg after difficult calving.	Anti-inflammatory treatment under veterinary supervision. Some heifers are downers and can be nursed on a thick bed of straw, and still regain feet up to a month later.
Chorioptic mange	Widespread	NW, Northern and Southern Tasmania	Hair loss around tail head, neck and flanks. Rough scaly skin. Diagnosis by skin scraping.	More common as winter progresses. Self-cure over spring. Can become severe if cattle are stressed and short on feed. A number of registered treatments are available including ML drenches and pour-ons. See: http://www.liceboss.com.au/cattle/lice-mites/species-of-mites.php
Contracted tendons in calves	One calf each on two properties	Southern Tasmania.	Flexor tendons are too tight and calf stands on tips of toes or knuckles over. Can be caused by the pregnant cow eating certain weeds, deficiencies of selenium, manganese, Vitamin D or E.	Keep cow and calf in small yard and feed cow, many of these self-correct. Bandage calf to protect front of fetlock if knuckling right over.
Downer calf	One calf in one large beef herd	Southern Tasmania	Young calf unable to stand	Maybe an infection, white muscle disease, an injury, Pestivirus, etc. Specific diagnosis by vet ideal otherwise antibiotics and anti-inflammatories under veterinary supervision.
Dystocia (difficult birth)	2 heifers in one large 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 if no progress after 3 hours.
Fade & die	Two adult cows in one large beef herd	Southern Tasmania	Can be due to Bovine Johnes Disease (BJD), liver or kidney damage, internal cancer.	Vet investigation best.
Foot abscess	1 cow in one herd	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.
Grass tetany (low blood magnesium)	Several cows in two medium herds	Southern Tasmania	Week before to 4 weeks after calving. Found dead or down, hyper-excitable.	Treat with 4-in-1 packs under skin. Prevent with Causmag on hay or magnesium boluses. Magnesium blocks may not ensure all cows get protective dose every day. See: https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/livestock-biosecurity/grass-tetany-beef-cattle-prevention-and-treatment#:~:text=Grass%20tetany%20is%20a%20highly,Angus%20cattle%20and%20their%20crosses.
Lice, sucking 	One anaemic 'poor doer' yearling in one herd. General problem in one large herd.	Southern Tasmania	Biting lice cause irritation and rubbing against objects, sucking lice can cause an anaemia in young cattle	This one was anaemic and sucking lice were identified. Treat: a number of pour-on products are registered for use for both sucking and biting lice. Injectable and oral products can be effective if sucking lice predominate.

Liver fluke in cattle	One herd	Southern Tasmania	Live fluke detected in cattle at abattoir, blood test or faecal tests used to detect.	Strategic treatments in autumn and late winter with effective flukicides depending on challenge. Keep stock off areas where fluke snail survives (dam edges, lagoons, areas that flood in spring) if possible. Sheep run on same areas will also need treatment. See; https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0004/114691/liver-fluke-disease-in-sheep-and-cattle.pdf
Malignant Catarrhal Fever (MCF)	One 9-month-old steer in one herd	Southern Tasmania	Nasal discharge, discoloured eyes. Grazing turnips with lambs.	Virus that cattle catch from sheep. Usually sporadic cases. No effective treatment, always die. Euthanase.
Metritis	One cow in one large beef herd.	Southern Tasmania	Yellowish discharge from vagina.	Antibiotics and anti-inflammatories under veterinary supervision. Use good hygiene if assisting calvings.
Nasal discharge, purulent (snotty)	One steer in one small herd	Northern Tasmania	Could be caused by a number of respiratory viruses and bacterial infections or allergy.	If animal is otherwise bright and alert, just keep under observation. If any other signs of ill-health use antibiotics under veterinary supervision.
Ocular (eye) discharge (clear, watery)	One cow from one medium herd	Northern Tasmania	Usually caused by an irritant such as pollen, dust etc but can be first stage of Pink Eye.	May not be possible to remove from irritants. Observe again later to make sure Pink Eye is not developing.
Pestivirus	21 of 24 herds tested had antibodies to pestivirus	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-https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0015/226041/Bovine-pestivirus-infection.pdf Use a Cattle Health Declaration to ensure you know the status of cattle (including bulls) that you buy: https://www.farmbiosecurity.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/National-Cattle-Health-Declaration-Fillable-2022.pdf
Photosensitisation	1 cow in one small herd	Northern Tasmania	Skin peels off areas with little hair or white hair.	May be caused by Acute Bovine Liver Disease (ABLD), blue-green algae on dams, Facial Eczema, poisonous plants. Remove from paddock, provide deep shade to protect from sunlight. Multivitamin injections, antibiotic cover if necessary.
Ringworm	One weaner in one large herd	Northern Tasmania	Scaly circular areas of hair loss with thick whitish crust usually around head and neck.	Usually heal up eventually if left alone. Antifungal ointments or iodine can be rubbed into lesions. Can spread to people so precautions must be taken.
Salivation, excessive	One calf in one medium herd	Southern Tasmania	This one had sharp piece of plastic stuck in its gum.	Plastic removed. Keep cattle away from plastic, metal and lead waste.
Sperm count low	One bull in one large herd	Southern Tasmania	Bull had a jaw abscess.	Treat abscess and allow at least 2 months for recovery. Pre-mating bull assessment is worthwhile especially if single sire mating.

Stillbirths	A number of cows and heifers in two medium herds	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Dead calf	Can be due to Neospora, Pestivirus, Lepto, congenital/hereditary factors, toxins, mouldy hay, Salmonella Dublin. The cause of many abortions and stillbirths are not determined despite lab investigation.
Worms	One herd	Southern Tasmania	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 calves. See WORMBOSS at: https://wormboss.com.au/wormboss-resources/?species=Cattle&soia=cattle&region=TAS&season=Autumn%2C+Spring%2C+Summer%2C+Winter
ALPACAS and CAMELS				
No cases reported				
GOATS				
Anaemia, weak	One 10-month-old buck in one small herd	Southern Tasmania	Zero worm egg count, Dietary deficiency suspected	Responding to improved diet.
Hypocalcaemia, loss of condition	Aged goats in one small herd	Southern Tasmania	Dietary deficiency suspected	Responding to extra calcium in rations.
PIGS				
No cases reported				
POULTRY				
No cases reported				
DEER				
No cases reported				

Resources

Farm biosecurity plans

Everything you need to know about farm biosecurity, for example how to make a biosecurity plan for LPA accreditation, can be found on: <https://www.farmbiosecurity.com.au/>

Animal health declarations

Provide an animal health declaration when selling sheep, cattle, goats and camelids, and ask to see declarations when purchasing or moving these animals onto your property. See: <https://www.farmbiosecurity.com.au/toolkit/declarations-and-statements/>

myFeedback allows you to access information on carcase data, diseases and conditions detected in your sheep at slaughter through the National Sheep Health Monitoring Project. See: MLA's [myFeedback](#) for more details.

Report any suspicion of an Emergency Animal Disease

Report any suspicion of an Emergency Animal Disease, especially slobbering/lameness in ruminants and pigs, sudden death, abortion or nervous signs in multiple pigs, to your vet or the Hotline on 1800 675 888. Early detection is critical if eradication is to be successful.

Comply with the Ruminant Feed Ban

Protect access to our export markets by never feeding animal protein such as meat meal to any ruminant including sheep, cattle, goats, deer and alpacas. See:

<https://animalhealthaustralia.com.au/australian-ruminant-feed-ban/>

Maintain market access through strong tracing systems

Use NVDs and NLIS tags properly so that animals can be 'contact traced' quickly if there is an outbreak of an Emergency Animal Disease or a chemical residue problem. Especially important to list all PICs on NLIS tags in sale mobs of sheep on the NVD. See:

<https://nre.tas.gov.au/agriculture/animal-industries/identifying-selling-moving-livestock>

If you have pigs, don't feed them swill

Any material containing material of placental mammal origin (other than milk and milk by-products, properly rendered meat meal, or tallow) is swill. Swill which contains food from overseas can introduce devastating diseases such as foot and mouth disease or African swine fever into Tasmania. For more detail see:

<https://nre.tas.gov.au/biosecurity-tasmania/animal-biosecurity/animal-health/pigs/swill-feeding>

Never feed raw untreated offal or sheep meat to dogs or cats.

Untreated offal from sheep, goats, cattle and pigs may spread hydatids if fed to dogs. Untreated sheep offal or sheep meat may spread other diseases such as sheep measles and bladder worm in sheep if fed to dogs, or Toxoplasma and Sarco if fed to cats. See:

<https://sheepconnecttasmania.files.wordpress.com/2023/07/sct-disease-factsheets-all.pdf>

Bucks for Brains

If you have a sheep or cow showing neurological (nervous) signs you may be able to claim a subsidy for a post mortem investigation (https://animalhealthaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Bucks-for-Brains_Jun16_WEB.pdf)

Maintaining Tasmania's export markets:

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. For example, Tasmania exported approximately \$264 million worth of sheep meats and wool in 2020-21. See:

<https://nre.tas.gov.au/agriculture/facts-figures/tasmanian-agri-food-scorecards>

The National Sheep Industry Biosecurity Strategy

The National Sheep Industry Biosecurity Strategy lies at the core of this program, see:

www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/nsibs

Phone A Vet

A telemedicine app that caters for production animals. Download the app from your usual provider. Can use video, photos, texting, you can select your vet. Experienced sheep, cattle, goat, camelid and pig vets are available. See: <https://www.phoneavet.com.au/>

Farm Biosecurity Apps

If you want to know who is coming and going, warn visitors of risks and areas to avoid without spending your whole day on your mobile, you may like to consider an app that combines with a QR code on your farm entrances. See: <https://www.farmbiosecurity.com.au/biosecurity-at-your-fingertips/>

Paraboss

The previous WormBoss, LiceBoss, and FlyBoss websites are now all in one place and have a wealth of information on, and tools to manage sheep, goat and cattle parasites.

<https://paraboss.com.au/>

Includes an online learning resource: <https://wormboss.com.au/learn-about-sheep-worm-control-in-australia/online-learning-tasmania-introduction/>