Tasmanian Livestock Health Report – August 2023

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 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

Abortions and stillbirths in sheep: Abortions/stillbirths are being seen now. Talk to your vet about having up to 5 aborted lambs (with afterbirth if possible) tested at the laboratory. Blood tests on dry ewes at lamb marking can also detect Campylobacter and Toxoplasmosis.
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.
Black scour worms: high egg counts are still being seen. Monthly worm egg counts on weaner sheep should be worth doing.
Chorioptic mange: is still common in cattle at the moment but most should self-cure as spring progresses. Usually responds to a mectin pour-on or injection.
Footrot and scald: are spreading in many areas.
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 in cold weather for handling are particularly at risk.
Hypocalcaemia (milk fever) in ewes: can occur in lactating ewes, especially older age groups. Also beware of ewes on cereal crops/lush feed with no dry roughage – feed some hay and/or a calcium/magnesium/salt dry lick. Have calcium injection on hand.
Liver fluke: Eggs should be showing up in Fluketests now, but blood tests may be more sensitive. August and September are good months to treat for adult liver fluke.
Milk fever: can be seen in lactating dairy cows, especially older Channel Island breeds.
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.
White muscle disease: If lambs get stiff and stop walking when mustered for marking, suspect white muscle disease.
Phalaris poisoning: the acute form can occur on freshly shot Phalaris.
Ovine Johne's disease (OJD): is showing up in rising 3 years and older ewes and wethers under stress.
Johne's Disease (JD) in cattle: will also show up now in stressed cows.

Biosecurity story of the month – good fences make good neighbours

A farm manager rang me this week to discuss options to deal with trichomoniasis and vibriosis recently diagnosed in his cattle. He was getting over 90% pregnancy rates until a few years ago when a neighbour's cattle mixed with his herd and lately up to 25% of females have been empty. Very costly!

Even though stock prices have dropped recently, and many Southern producers will have to use the fencing budget to buy feed, it is a good principle to maintain stockproof boundary fences. Fencing along boundaries that are also watercourses is a challenge, as are crossbred lambs, deer, and forester kangaroos, but the investment can pay off bigtime when you keep out diseases like sheep lice, drench resistant worms, Mycoplasma, footrot, vibrio, trichomoniasis, Johne's disease, ovine brucellosis …. and the list goes on.

It is also good to have a stray policy such as an agreement with neighbours to yard and notify rather than just place livestock back into the closest paddock. This allows you to quarantine, observe, test and treat returned strays as required. Likewise, if you yard your neighbour's strays you can have a good look at them and ask a few questions before they go home. You may decide to take some action on your animals that the strays have been in contact with.

If you practice "hotel quarantine" with bought-in stock, it is only logical to do the same with strays.

Live cattle exports resume

Malaysia and Indonesia have both accepted the Australian testing data showing that our cattle herd is still free from Lumpy Skin Disease and live cattle exports are resuming.

This incident shows how important our disease-free status is to our export markets (over 70% of our red meats, dairy products and wool are exported) and the need for producers to keep reporting anything suspicious to their vets or the EAD hotline (1800 675 888).

Every report that turns out to be a false alarm adds to our credibility when we tell our trading partners that we *are* looking and have not found any of the diseases we claim freedom for. Early detection of an outbreak, if one should occur, will also limit the amount of time we are out of the market, and greatly limit the costs to our livestock industries.

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Diseases and conditions seen in August 2023

SHEEP				
Disease/condition	**Number of reports/ cases**	**Region**	**Details**	**Prevention, treatment, and other biosecurity advice or measures**
Abomasum (4th stomach) inflammation	Two sheep on one large property	Northern Tasmania	Lining of 4th stomach reddened and with "morrocco leather" appearance.	Usually due to brown stomach worm larvae resting in the stomach glands, ready to mature when conditions are right for them. Most modern broad-spectrum drenches kill these inhibited worms as long as the worms are not resistant.
Achilles tendon damage	One sheep in one small flock	Northern Tasmania	Hock sags as sheep tries to take weight on the hind limb.	Shearing cut a common cause of achilles damage. Rarely heal well even with vet attention.

Acidosis	60 sheep in two flocks	Southern Tasmania	Sudden access to unlimited grain	"Porridge" scour, depressed, die. Early treatment with oral penicillin or virginiamycin under veterinary supervision can help. Move affected sheep from source of grain, feed roughage. Oral bicarb not recommended.
Barbers pole worm	A small number of detections at the laboratory, some with significant egg counts.	Flocks affected in central coast, Flinders Island, NE, N midlands and Southern Tasmania	Sudden death, no scouring, pale gums, bottle jaw, high egg counts, identified by postmortem or larval culture in lab.	See WORMBOSS website for details on diagnosis, control and prevention programs.
Body Condition Score (BCS) low	A small number of sheep in a small number of flocks	Northern and Southern Tasmania	BCS less than 2	Determine cause and treat or euthanise as appropriate
Black scour worm	A number of sheep affected on two large properties and a number of detections in the laboratory.	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Scouring, sometimes bottle jaw, high worm egg count, black scour worm identified by larval ID test at lab.	See WORMBOSS web site for good treatment and prevention strategies.
Bottle jaw	2T ewes on one large property	Southern Tasmania	Can be due to barber's pole worm (not usually in winter), liver fluke, black scour and brown stomach worm. OJD not likely in this age group.	Faecal test or post mortem to determine cause and treat as appropriate
Broken mouth	A small number of very old sheep on one large property	Southern Tasmania	Incisor teeth worn down to gums, or some incisors missing. Molar teeth can also be missing, loose, food impaction.	Cull.
Campylobacter abortion storm	A number of ewes affected in one large flock	Northern Tasmania	There are two types of Campylobacter that cause abortion, these abortion storms usually caused by the "fetus" strain.	Antibiotic treatment can be used to try to limit the abortions, but results variable. A vaccine is available and covers both strains, but the course should be completed before joining. Aborting ewes can be run with unmated ewe weaners to give them immunity. Humans can also be affected so women of child-bearing age should not be exposed to aborting ewes or afterbirth.
Coccidiosis in weaned lambs.	About 10% of merino and crossbred weaners in one large flock on an	Northern Tasmania	Scouring with both high worm egg count and high coccidia count plus microscopic	Usually respond well to sulpha drugs under veterinary supervision. Prevention by keeping worms under control, good nutrition, reduce localised high concentration grazing eg green gullies, and reducing stresses if you can.

	irrigated paddock.		coccidia damage seen in lining of small intestine..	
Cud stain	One sheep on one large property	Southern Tasmania	Green stain around mouth.	Can be due to grass seeds, infection of tongue, or, very rarely, parasites.
Dags	Wide-spread but mainly in small proportion of sheep	NW, Southern and Northern Tasmania	Due to scouring.	May be due to worms, gut infection (eg Salmonella, Yersinia), nutritional factors. Have a WORTEST egg count done and ask the laboratory to 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 adult sheep	A small number of deaths on a number of farms	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Multiple causes associated with lambing, worms, 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 treatments and prevention can be given. Often these post mortems detect significant problems affecting productivity of the whole mob.
Deaths of newborn lambs	Excess deaths in one small flock	Southern Tasmania	Newborn lambs found dead in lambing paddock	Can be due to diseases such as Toxo or Campylobacter, or can be due to slow birth, mis-mothering, exposure etc. Lamb post mortems can help identify causes and solutions.
Deaths in adult sheep with scour	A number of deaths in one large flock	Southern Tasmania	Worms , low condition due to rank dead pasture and ryegrass staggers earlier in year probable causes in this case	Normally mature sheep are quite resistant to worms but can kill adult sheep if feed is poor quality.
Deaths of weaners	A number of weaners on one medium property	Southern Tasmania	Could have been plant poisoning, off-shears hypothermia, plant poisoning, worms etc.	Best to have post mortems done to determine cause so that appropriate treatment and preventative measures can be used.
Dermo (lumpy wool)	A number of weaners on three large properties and some 2T ewes on another	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Wool in hard blocks along topline, sometimes around face or legs.	Can treat with long-acting tetracycline under veterinary supervision 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
Devils grip	One ewe in one medium flock	Northern Tasmania	Dip in the topline just behind the shoulder blades	Causes moisture to pool and predisposes to fleece rot. Cull from replacement breeding mob.
Diarrhoea	A number of ewes in one large flock	Southern Tasmania	Dags and soft/fluid faeces. Green diarrhoea usually due to worms or feed factors.	Treat for worms, if unsatisfactory response consult with your vet.
Downer ewes	A number of ewes in two large flocks	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Heavily pregnant. Probably due	Give 1/5 pack of calcium injection under skin, if little response use pregnancy toxaemia treatments.

			to low blood calcium. Could be pregnancy toxaemia	
Difficult birth deaths (primary dystocia)	Several lambs on several large properties	Southern and Northern Tasmania	Usually large single lambs but can be twins that get tangled	Ewe can be assisted. Prevention: Ewes bearing single lambs should be kept at BCS 2.75 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. Use low birth weight prime lamb sire with small shoulders over merino ewes.
Dystocia, secondary (slow birth) deaths	A number of large flocks	Southern and Northern Tasmania	Birth process is too slow because ewe is weak or low in blood calcium, so lamb suffers from low oxygen, may get up but dies within a few days.	Lamb ewes down in condition score 3 for single-bearing, 3.3 for twinners. Offer loose lick containing salt, causmag and limestone if on lush pasture or cereal crops over the last 60 days of pregnancy.
Fading away and deaths in mature sheep	A number of ewes in one medium flock	Southern Tasmania	OJD, fluke, drench resistant worms usual causes	A post mortem on a typical case usually gives fastest diagnosis. Treat/prevent as appropriate to diagnosis.
Epididymitis in ram	One ram in one large flocks.	Southern Tasmania.	A lump is felt usually just under the testicle, but can be on side or top.	Can be due to trauma or infection. Ovine Brucellosis should be suspected if a number of rams have epididymitis (see vet). Ram may still be fertile if only one testicle affected and the other testicle is in good order.
Fleece derangement	Several sheep from one medium 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 for lice and grass seeds. Itch mite rare these days as very susceptible to macrocyclic lactone (ML) drenches – skin scrapings required to detect.
Fleece rot	One case in one medium flock	Northern Tasmania	Greenish, brown, blue-ish or pinkish discoloration of wool at skin level.	Caused by constantly wet fleece plus some genetic pre-disposition mainly in Merinos. Pre-disposes to body strike. Use flystrike preventative measures/chemicals during fly season and select against this trait.
Foot abscess	Two ewes in one medium flock plus several cases of healing or healed lesions in 3 other large flocks	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Swelling of one toe, hot, painful and discharge pus in acute stage. Enlarged deformed toe in old healing cases.	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 veterinary 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	Widespread	NW, Southern, Northern Tasmania	Low % on properties that have not had significant rainfall or have vaccinated but very active spread on others.	Don't try to try to eradicate at this time of year in most areas, try to keep prevalence down. Footbathing and vaccination, paring, culling "chronics" that don't respond to treatment will help. Long acting oxytetracycline antibiotics under veterinary supervision not usually effective at this time of year due to wet conditions. 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, benign (mild, "scald")	Two large flocks	Southern Tasmania	Inflammation between toes but limited under-running of heel and sole of hoof.	Regular footbathing is usually sufficient to control during spread period and usually disappears with dry weather. Hard to eradicate.
Greasy fleece	One merino sheep in one small mob	Northern Tasmania	Fleece appeared wet but was greasy and had formed tight locks from chin, down dewlap, belly, legs and crutch areas	Probably over-active suint glands. Cull
Growth rates low in lambs	Widespread	Northern and Southern Tasmania	A lot of lambs have not grown out at normal rates.	Possible causes may be worms, fluke, dietary deficiency (energy, protein, micronutrients), liver damage/photosensitisation, recent scabby mouth, Mycoplasma ovis, chronic infections such as pneumonia, pleurisy etc. Conduct WORMTEST and FLUKETEST, review Feed On Offer. Low sunlight intensity due to cloudy days may have reduced soluble carbohydrates in feed and slowed growth rates.
Hooves overgrown	Several sheep in two small flocks	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 growing into head (in-grown horn)	One wether	Northern Tasmania	Horn has grown into and damaged the skin.	May result in animal welfare penalties. Horns must be trimmed on-farm. Ask your vet for some embryotomy wire as it allows horn to be removed safely. Prevention: Dehorn lambs with pain relief under vet supervision so that a margin of haired skin is removed with horn.
Hypocalcaemia ('milk fever")	10-20 heavily pregnant ewes in one large flock and a number of ewes at pre-lamb treatments in another	Southern Tasmania	Older late pregnancy ewes go down, respond to calcium injection under skin.	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 coming out of nostrils give antibiotic cover as well. Prevent by offering limestone, causmag and salt (2:2:1) loose lick if on cereal crops or lush pasture, don't keep off feed for more than 12 hours.
Ill thrift on run country	A number of sheep in one large flock	Southern Tasmania	Could be worms, fluke, poor quality pasture.	Wormtest plus Fluketest, assess pasture and drench move or feed as appropriate.
Interdigital fibroma	Several rams in one large flock, several ewes in another large flock	Southern Tasmania	Lump of skin between the toes, may be red and raw and associated with scald/ ovine interdigital dermatitis (OID), or healed up.	Vet can cut it out and bandage foot until it heals, or treat the scald/OID by footbathing and/or anti-bacterial sprays and get skin over the fibroma to heal so it is less painful.

Knee injury	One ram in one large flock	Southern Tasmania	Laceration of knee	Antiseptic spray usually enough, antibiotics and anti-inflammatories under vet supervision if infected or slow to heal.
Lamb, newborn, with large swelling on back of head	One lamb in one large flock	Northern Tasmania	Probably a congenital abnormality.	May be best to cull the ewe if she can be identified.
Lameness	Widespread	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Reluctant to bear full weight on at least one foot.	Could be footrot, scald, foot abscess, scabby mouth of feet, injuries, toe abscess, laminitis, standing on concrete surfaces too long. Identify cause and treat accordingly.
Large bowel worm (Oesophagostomum)	A number of flocks	NW, Northern and Southern Tasmania	A number of detections in lab. Heavy burdens associated with scour, loss of condition.	See WORMBOSS for treating and preventing large bowel worm
Liver fluke	Fluke eggs detected in the laboratory on samples from a small number of properties.	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Fluke eggs found in FLUKETEST on manure samples sent to laboratory. Bottle jaw, anaemia, weight loss and deaths from heavy infestation.	Liver fluke are adult stage in bile ducts in liver at this time of year. Triclabendazole best treatment from November to July as it kills immature fluke as well as mature fluke. This is the time of year to kill adult fluke with a different drench family. See fact sheet on https://sheepconnecttas.com.au/disease-factsheets/
Lungworm (large)	Two aged ewes in one large flock	Northern Tasmania	Lungworm rare in general and more so in older sheep	Large lungworm in sheep take a long time to develop (7 weeks) and larvae rather than eggs are found in the sheep's faeces so a special test must be requested. The series of wet years has probably been a factor here.
Mismothering	Several lambs in several large flocks	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Post mortem shows lamb has walked but not drunk milk, has burnt up all fat reserves and no sign of difficult birth.	Behaviour of ewe, especially ewe lamb/maiden/Merino, disturbance in lambing paddock, low Feed On Offer (ewe has to move too far from lambs in first 6 hours to graze) can all be factors.
Molar teeth loose, lost	One aged sheep in one large flock	Northern Tasmania	Can be felt through cheeks	Cull.
Navel ill (infected belly button) in 1 week old lambs	A number of cases on one property	Southern Tasmania	Wet and mushy around the belly button (umbilicus)	Try to lamb in clean paddocks without too much mud. Disinfect navel with iodine if you have poddy lambs. Try to ensure good colostrum intake in first 12 hrs of life. Can treat with broad-spectrum antibiotics.
Photosensitisation	Three weaners in one medium flock.	Northern Tasmania	Skin peeling off ears in this case.	These are mild but if more extensive blood sample for liver damage check, spore count pasture for Pithomyces (Facial Eczema) spores, check water for blue-green algae, poisonous plants and pigment plants (eg storksbill, medics). Treat with anti-inflammatories, antibiotics if necessary (and under vet supervision), offer deep shade, move to new paddock.
Pink eye	A number of weaners and adults in three large flocks	Southern Tasmania	Discharge down cheeks, white areas on cornea of eye. Usually spread	If low prevalence and on good feed and water leave alone to self-heal as yarding can increase spread within mob. Treat with antibiotic injections under veterinary supervision if more than 25% of mob affected. Eye ointments/sprays less effective.

			by flies, long grass and close contact (eg yarding)	
Pizzle rot in wethers	One case in one medium flock	Northern Tasmania	Scab on end of pizzle or whole sheath swollen	Bacterial infection usually associated with grazing wethers on legume-rich pastures. Prevented by testosterone injections (see your vet), or reducing protein in diet.
Pleurisy	Detected in 2 adult ewes at post mortem on one large property.	Northern Tasmania	Lungs stuck to chest wall. Usually results in major trimming.	These caused by localised pneumonia caused by lungworm. Most modern drenches will kill lungworm. Treat sick sheep with cough or respiratory distress with antibiotics and anti-inflammatory under vet supervision.
Pneumonia	One case in aged ewe in late pregnancy associated with milk fever and another localised in association with lungworm.	Southern and Northern Tasmania	Deaths, difficulty breathing	Diagnosis at post mortem. Antibiotic and anti-inflammatory treatment of cases under vet supervision (treat early). Prevent or treat underlying cause (milk fever, lungworm)
Premature lamb and dystocia (difficult birth)	One lamb in one medium flock	Southern Tasmania	Lambs born 10 days before due date.	Probably late abortion, possibly Campy or Toxo. Send up to 5 lambs to lab or bleed 10 'lambed and lost' ewes at lamb marking to test for Toxo and Campy. Sometimes ewe does not dilate cervix fully and needs assistance. Use gloves, disinfectant and good personal hygiene as some causes of premature birth can infect humans.
Primary predation of newborn lamb	One lamb in one large flock	Northern Tasmania	Blood under punctured skin and bleeding into chest and abdominal cavities	Very rare in Tasmania. Make sure all dogs are controlled.
Rump crust	One lamb in one large flock	Northern Tasmania	Crusty skin over rump	May have been an injury. Allow time to heal, use antiseptic cream and fly protection if necessary.
Ruptured eyeball	One weaner on one large property	Northern Tasmania	Eyeball shrunken in socket. Usually due to severe pink eye	Antibiotics and pain relief/anti-inflammatories if recent or infected. Best not to surgically remove eye.
Sarcosporidia ("Sarco" cat form)	Detected at postmortem in one aged ewe	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/
Sarco (dog form)	One ewe in one large flock.	Southern Tasmania	Detected in sections of heart muscle as an incidental finding	A species of Sarco that cycles through dog and sheep. Can cause nervous symptoms in sheep (rare). Usually does no harm.

Scald	Half of one small flock of merino wethers on long pasture, some rams in one large flock	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Score 1 and 2 lesions (less than 2mm under-running of hoof horn at heel)	Also called benign footrot but can be due to Ovine Interdigital Dermatitis (OID) as well. Re-check in 14 days to ensure not progressing to virulent footrot. Usually responds to footbathing and dry conditions underfoot.
Scalded back	One prime lamb in one small flock	Northern Tasmania	Wool loss right along topline from shoulders to rump	May have been due to severe sunburn or photosensitisation (perhaps on a rape crop) when bare shorn.
Scour in weaners	One weaner in one small mob	Northern Tasmania	Can be due to worms, coccidia, Cryptosporidia, Giardia, E coli bacterial gut infection, nutritional factors.	Worms most common cause. WORMTEST or drench and see if they respond. Check for sudden diet change to lush feed, plants such as capeweed. May need veterinary involvement if growth rates are low.
Scrotal mange	A number of rams in a large mob	Southern Tasmania	Usually seen in Merino rams but these were other breeds. Unlikely to affect fertility unless more than 10 square centimetres of thickened skin/scabs on scrotum. Pasterns affected as well in severe cases.	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.
Selenium deficiency (marginal)	One large flock	Southern Tasmania	Detected by blood testing here, livers also good.	Deficiency is widespread in Northern and Southern and parts of NW Tasmania and the Bass strait Islands. Deficiency can cause white muscle disease (usually in lambs), newborn lamb deaths, 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	Widespread. Variable prevalence from 100% to low.	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Curved separation of hoof wall from sole up hoof wall near outside 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.
Small soft testes in ram	One ram in one large 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.
Stillborn lambs	Two lambs in one large flock	Southern Tasmania	Possible causes include Toxoplasmosis, Campylobacter, Listeria, over-size lamb, hypocalcaemia or weak ewe	See SheepConnect Tasmania for Toxo control. Intensively grazed and drought-lotted ewes should be vaccinated against Campylobacter. Scanning for multiples and feeding ewes appropriately should minimise deaths from slow birth/oversized lambs.

			resulting in slow birth	
Stunted weaners	Several weaners in two large flocks	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Lambs very small and undergrown for age.	Triplets, lambs deprived of milk (eg due to mastitis in ewe, orphaned but survive), some congenital conditions, chronic worms, fluke, pneumonia, arthritis, pleurisy, pink eye, malnutrition etc can all or in combination prevent lamb from growing out.
Swollen knee	One ram in one large flock	Southern Tasmania	Swelling of knee and down cannon bone	Probably due to injury and infection. Antibiotics and anti-inflammatory treatment under veterinary supervision.
Twin lamb disease (or hypocalcaemia)	Several flocks	Southern Tasmania	Pregnancy toxaemia caused by insufficient energy in diet in last 6 weeks of pregnancy, or low blood calcium	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".
Toxoplasmosis	4 sets of twins from maiden merino ewes in one large flock, 50% of XB ewe lambs in another large flock	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Significant pregnancy and neonatal lamb losses are common.	Significant proportion of ewes were positive to blood test. Toxo causes foetal and neonatal lamb losses if ewes are infected during pregnancy. Ewes may become barren if infected in first 60 days of pregnancy. For control strategies see: https://sheepconnecttasmania.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/sc-factsheet-no10-toxoplasmosis_lr.pdf There is some hope that an mRNA vaccine may be developed in Australia.
Udder dropped	A number of ewes in several flocks	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Ligaments holding udder up become stretched and udder hangs low even after lambs weaned	Cull. See https://www.mla.com.au/fittojoin for guidelines on assessing ewes after weaning to estimate their potential to potential to rear another lamb.
Uterine prolapse	Widespread	Southern Tasmania	Long pink organ hanging from vulva after lambing. May be damaged.	Acute fresh cases can be cleaned, gently pushed back in (lift ewe's hindquarters) give pessaries/antibiotics under veterinary supervision. Chronic cases can be tied off and surgically removed by vet. Otherwise euthanase. Not fit to load.
Vaccination lesions on top of upper neck	Vaccination lesions in 20% of weaners vaccinated with Gudair.	Northern Tasmania	Caused by vaccinating into the top of neck etc. This can result in "Gudair staggers" where to vaccine migrates down into the spinal cord.	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 or on top of the neck/back of head. For details see: https://www.zoetis.com.au/livestock-solutions/pdfs/zoetis_gudair-product-information-2018.pdf

Vaginal prolapse	Widespread	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 few weeks 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.
Vulval cancer	One aged ewe in one large flock	Southern Tasmania	Usually older mulesed ewes docked short as lambs.	Best to cull such animals immediately. Destroy on farm if not fit to load. Docking tails long enough to cover tip of vulva and leaving a 'v' of wooled skin on top of tail when mulesing will help prevent.
Wool break	One ram in one large flock, one lamb in one medium flock	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Wool staples easily pulled apart. Whole fleece may fall out.	Any stress can weaken the wool fibre as it grows. Individual sheep may lose fleece after acute infection eg mastitis, whole mobs can have 'tender wool' after nutritional restriction or disease outbreak (eg heavy worm infestation) events.
Wool blind	One weaner in one large flock	Northern Tasmania	Muffly face, wool grows over eyes.	Wigging will solve for now. Breeding more open faces in long term.
Worms	Widespread	NW, Northern, Southern Tasmania	Worms can be diagnosed by scouring, anaemia, poor weight gain which respond to drenching, or by WORMTEST with or without larval identification, or total worm count at post mortem.	Worm egg counts generally moderate except for some high counts associated with barbers' pole (yes, still present in some flocks even in mid winter) and black scour worm. Some ewes given short-acting pre-lamb drench have broken down with high counts in some tail-end single ewes under restricted nutrition. Large bowel worm and black scour worm also showing up in larval ID tests. Few brown stomach worm. Many producers have used long-acting products pre-lambing. Significant deaths due to worms in bush wethers and young sheep still recovering from ryegrass staggers and on old rank growth pastures. See WORMBOSS at: http://www.wormboss.com.au/sheep-goats/programs/sheep.php
CATTLE				
Calf losses	22-25% calf losses between preg. testing and weaning in several large herds	Northern Tasmania	Significant losses over late pregnancy, calving and up to weaning.	Probably multi-factorial and veterinarian is investigating.
Calving for only first 3 weeks	One mob in one large herd	Northern Tasmania	New bulls from mainland.	History typical of non-immune bulls picking up an infection such as Infectious Bovine Rhino-tracheitis (IBR) from heifers, suffering penis/sheath inflammation and stopping serving while they heal.
Chorioptic mange	Widespread	NW, Northern & Southern Tasmania	Hair loss around tail head and flanks. Rough scaley skin. Diagnosis by skin scraping.	More common as winter progresses and start to heal up in September. Can become severe if cattle are stressed and short on feed. A number of registered treatments are available including ML drenches and pour-ons but injectables MLs probably best. See: http://www.liceboss.com.au/cattle/lice-mites/species-of-mites.php
Diaphragm adhesions	Detected at slaughter in	Southern Tasmania	Scar tissue on the diaphragm.	Probably due to a sharp object swallowed by cow when grazing, penetrating the front of the first stomach.

	one cow from a large herd.			Prevention: don't leave staples, bits of wire etc lying around paddocks.
Downers and deaths of cows	Four cows down and one dead on one large property.	Northern Tasmania	Cows went down shortly after moved to paddock with rough dog's tail weed present, so acute bovine liver disease (ABLD) suspected.	Move rest of mob off paddock. Nurse downers, dose with paraffin oil to move weed material through and out of gut, give multivitamins to support liver. Prevention: don't place cattle on paddocks with much rough dog's tail weed. Can graze off with sheep.
Downer cows	One cow in one large herd.	Southern Tasmania	Beef cow recently calved. Had a large calf and then unable to stand unaided.	Good nursing: See: https://www.dairyaustralia.com.au/animal-management-and-milk-quality/animal-health/down-cows#.Yom42KhBw2w
Dystocia (difficult birth)	A number of heifers and cows in two large herds	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Calf not delivered within 3 hours of start of birth process.	Heifers especially but ideally also cows need to be observed daily or twice daily over calving period. Assist if no progress after 3 hours.
Gut abscess	One cow in one large herd observed at abattoir.	Southern Tasmania	An abscess somewhere in the gut	Rarely seen in Tasmanian cattle.
Kidney abscess	Four cows culled from one large herd	Southern Tasmania	Feedback from abattoir	May have been due to blockage of a section of the kidney or generalised infection filtered out in kidney. Cows were in good BCS.
Liver abscess	Several cull beef cows from one large herd	Southern Tasmania	Recorded at abattoir. May reflect low grade acidosis, rumen wall damage and bacteria leaking into blood stream.	These cows in good condition. Cattle can wall off abscesses, recover and continue to thrive. Prevention: care with feeding rich diets such as grain. Some very rich pastures can also cause low grade acidosis, - offer roughage when on lush pastures.
Liver fluke in cattle	A small number of detections at laboratory	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Live fluke eggs detected in cattle manure at lab.	Now is a good time to kill off adult fluke with a flukicide from a different family from Triclabendazole which is best used in summer and autumn to kill immature liver fluke. Strategic treatments in autumn and late winter with effective flukicides depending on challenge are the best overall strategy. 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. Deer are often infected and should be controlled if possible. See: https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/114691/liver-fluke-disease-in-sheep-and-cattle.pdf
Ocular (eye) discharge (clear, watery) both eyes	One weaner from a 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	Several runt calves in one beef 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. PI animals can be detected by blood, hair follicle 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 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	A number of weaner cattle in a herd of 50	Southern Tasmania	Eyes inflamed, cloudy, some ulcerated, a few yellow eye contents.	Start treatment early. Separate affected cattle, use eye creams, antibiotic injection into eyelids, eye patches or vet can stitch eyelids. There is a vaccine available that covers most of the strains of pink eye bacteria that occur in Tasmania. See: https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/103904/pinkeye-in-cattle.pdf
Refusal to take calf	One heifer in one large herd	Northern Tasmania	Heifer calves but does not mother calf.	Locking heifer and calf up together in small yard can work. Bail and leg rope heifer and ensure calf gets a good drink of colostrum in the first 12-24 hours.
Retained afterbirth (foetal membranes)	One cow in each of two large and one medium herds	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Afterbirth still hanging out more than three days after giving birth	If afterbirth cannot be easily removed manually, antibiotic treatment should be started and maintained until membranes come out naturally. Attach a weight such as a plastic bottle of water to the afterbirth to help it come out.
Scours in calves	Eight out of 10 died in one small herd and another poddy calf in one other herd.	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Rotavirus, E Coli, cryptosporidia Salmonella, dietary factors etc can all play a role.	Make sure every calf gets 2-4 litres of colostrum within 24 hours of birth. Clean, dry, sheltered rearing area. Use electrolytes to treat scours, keep feeding milk. Consult with vet if calf continues to deteriorate. Prevention: See https://www.dairyaustralia.com.au/animals/calf-rearing/managing-calf-health
Stillborn calves	15 out of 35 newborn calves died in one heifer mob	NW Tasmania	Heifers from Pestivirus vaccinated herd introduced to non-vaccinated herd.	It appears that unborn calves may have been infected with pestivirus after 140 days of pregnancy.
Tongue abscess	One cow in a consignment of 6 from one large herd	Southern Tasmania	Usually a case of "Actino" or "woody tongue".	Caused by a common bacteria entering an injury to the tongue. Prevent by avoiding feeding feedstuffs with sharp projections.
ALPACAS and CAMELS				
No cases reported				
GOATS				
No cases reported				
PIGS				
No cases reported				

POULTRY				
No cases reported				
DEER				
Deaths	A number of deer on one property	Southern Tasmania	Worm infestation and age likely factors.	These responded to a drench and paddock move.

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/

Livestock Data Link (LDL) 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: https://www.integritysystems.com.au/globalassets/isc/pdf-files/ldl-pdf-files/about-livestock-data-link.pdf 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/