Tasmanian Livestock Health Report – January 2025

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-March.

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

Acute bovine liver disease (ABLD): use sheep now to graze off paddocks that grow a lot of rough dog's tail weed, so that cattle can graze safely in autumn.
Arthritis in lambs: If you have a significant number of cases, it may be worth asking your vet about testing for Erysipelas. There is a vaccine for Erysipelas.
Campylobacter and Toxoplasmosis abortion in sheep: If you are unhappy with your lamb marking %, blood tests on dry ewes at or soon after weaning can detect Campylobacter and Toxoplasmosis antibodies as evidence of recent infection. Talk to your vet. The campylobacter vaccine course or booster should be completed before joining. There is no vaccine against Toxoplasmosis available in Australia.
Barber's pole worm: will start to build up from now on, especially on irrigated pastures. Watch for anaemia, exercise intolerance, high worm egg counts.
Bloat: has been seen in lambs on lucerne on misty overcast days.
Blue-green algae: can be seen on dams from now on and can cause photosensitisations and deaths.
Brown stomach worm: resistance to macrocyclic lactone (ML) drench family is common. High total worm counts being seen now.
Drench resistance: resistance to white, clear and macrocyclic lactone (ML) drenches is relatively common and any other drench can also fail.
DrenchTest: Autumn is the best time to do a DrenchTest as all major worm species are more likely to be present. Draft off 150 lambs and do regular worm egg counts, when over 400 epg have a larval identification done to make sure enough of each major worm species are present.
Facial eczema: can be seen on irrigated ryegrass pastures from now on, mainly in dairy cattle but sheep can be affected too.
Flystrike: Body and breech strike common now.
Footrot and scald: eradication inspections should be well under way. Scald being seen on irrigated pastures.
Liver fluke: Eggs can be present in Fluketests now, but blood tests can detect both immature and mature fluke so may be the best way to detect liver fluke in live animals.

Lucerne red gut: seen as sudden death with a very bloated carcase on lucerne or clover. Offering roughage such as hay, straw or alternating between pasture and the lucerne/clover can help prevent cases.
Nematodirus: are active over the next few months in weaners. Scouring, sub-optimal growth rates, and some Nematodirus eggs in the egg count justify a drench.
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 consigned lambs.
Pulpy kidney (PK): Make sure lambs get an extra booster if going onto rich feed such as clover or lucerne.
Ram check: Check your ram's testes, teeth, feet and condition score. Consider some high protein supplement in the 8 weeks lead up to mating.
Ryegrass staggers: Graze weaners on safer paddocks from now on.
Scabby mouth: in lambs on feet and/or mouth being seen now.

Biosecurity story of the month – Barber's pole worm

Barber's pole worm (BPW) is becoming more common in Tasmania. Many years ago there were certain small areas such as Nile, the Tamar valley and certain parts of Flinders Island where outbreaks occurred but now BPW can occur anywhere, especially on irrigated pastures.

BPW likes warm, wet conditions and usually causes problems in late summer and autumn in Tasmania.

BPW is a blood sucker, and sheep can become very anaemic but have clean backsides. They can be in good condition but die from lack of oxygen to vital organs when they try to run. "Bottle jaw", seen as a soft swelling under the lower jaw, is also typical of BPW, as are pale gums and pale inside lining (conjunctiva) of the eye.

The name 'barber's pole worm' comes from the fact that the female worms are quite large and easy to see in the 4th stomach. The uterus of the worm is white but the gut is red and both spiral down the body, so the worm looks like the old-fashioned red and white pole outside a barbers shop. This also means that you can easily check whether a sheep died of BPW. Gut the sheep or lamb and follow the small intestine back towards the paunch, the 4th stomach is the first 'bag' you come to, attached to the side of the paunch (rumen). If BPW killed the sheep, they will be easy to see when you open the 4th stomach.

BPW can also be diagnosed by having a Worm Egg Count (WEC) done. If there are over 1500 strongyle worm eggs, you could suspect BPW. Have a larval culture and identification carried out to determine whether you have a BPW problem. There are some other techniques some producers use to monitor BPW burdens once they know that they have a problem. One technique is known as FAMCHA and involves comparing how pale the inside of the eyelid is to a chart. Another involves a dipstick test for blood in the manure that involves precise dilutions and boiling the sample, but can give false positive results and doesn't detect other worm species.

BPW are champion egg layers and infective larvae can build up very quickly on the pasture under the right conditions. More frequent (every 3 weeks) WECs should be performed over the summer and autumn months so that fatal worm burdens can be treated before deaths occur.

BPW can develop resistance to drenches more rapidly than other worm species and it is important to carry out a DrenchCheck 10-14 days after first using a new drench active to ensure that the drench you are using is effective. A full Drenchtest is ideal.

Some long-acting anthelmintics such as moxidectin and closantel can be used to provide sustained suppression of BPW but it is important to make sure that the active is highly effective and to use primers and tail-cutters (see WORMBOSS for details on primer and tail-cutter drenches). The long Export Slaughter Interval (ESI) on these actives is a problem when finishing prime lambs.

A vaccine (Barbervax Barber's Pole Worm Vaccine) is used in areas where drench resistance has made drenching ineffective. Two vaccinations 3-4 weeks apart, followed by boosters every 6 weeks are required and even then, additional drenching may be required under heavy challenge.

animalhealth AUSTRALIA

Tasmanian Government

Diseases and conditions seen in January 2025

SHEEP				
Disease/condition	**Number of reports/ cases**	**Region**	**Details**	**Prevention, treatment, and other biosecurity advice or measures**
Abscess	Two rams in one medium and one large flock	Southern Tasmania	Chronic discharge from side of neck, shoulder.	Surgical draining and antibiotics usually effective, see your vet.
Body condition score low	A small number of adult sheep in two small flocks	Northern 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.
Black udder scars in ewes	One ewe in one small flock.	Northern Tasmania	If ewe survives acute stage, one half of udder becomes scar tissue or a healing wound, sometimes with dead skin hanging on.	Gently cleaned out raw wounds and trim dead skin. Can heal completely leaving scars.
Blue-green algae toxicity	One sheep in one medium flock.	Southern Tasmania	Sudden deaths, nervous symptoms early, photosensitisation later	This one severely photosensitised and evidence of bile duct damage on blood test. Prevent access to still water bodies such as dams with blue-green scum on surface or wind-blown to one shore. Remove from water source. Give access to deep shade.
Broken mouth	Several rams in one medium flock	Southern Tasmania	Incisor teeth worn down to gums, or some incisors missing. Molar	Cull if condition score is starting to drop.

			teeth can also be missing, loose, food impaction.	
Campylobacter abortion	Suspected in one large flock and confirmed in another with low lamb marking %	Northern and Southern Tasmania	There are two types of Campylobacter that cause abortion.	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.
Campylobacter enteritis	One mob of weaners.	Northern Tasmania	Scouring with foul smell. Diagnosed by laboratory test on faeces.	A veterinarian may prescribe an antibiotic. Reduce stress, provide plenty of clean water and good feed.
Coccidiosis in weaned lambs.	Tail end weaners in one large flock.	Northern Tasmania	Scouring with high worm egg counts plus high coccidia levels in manure sample.	Usually respond well to sulpha drugs. Prevention by good worm control and nutrition. Don't allow lambs to concentrate on damp areas in paddock.
Cough	One ram in one medium flock.	Southern Tasmania	Rams cough, little response to lungworm drench	If little response to lungworm drench then probably an infection. May be virus, or bacteria such as Mycoplasma. Use antibiotics under veterinary supervision if production loss/deaths occur and postmortem indicates bacterial involvement.
Cryptorchids	About 1% of wether lambs in one large flock	Northern Tasmania	Only one testicle in scrotum at marking. Occasionally none.	Usually inherited but can also be caused by hormone-like compounds in feed or pasture. Cull affected animal and sire if in a stud situation and if only progeny from one ram affected. Usually still fertile but cryptorchid lambs hard to mark properly resulting in stags.
Cud stain	A small number of sheep and lambs on a number of properties.	Northern Tasmania	Green stain around mouth.	In older sheep can be due to molar teeth missing and grass impacting in mouth. Sometimes due to a paralysed cheek (probably due to vaccination injuring facial nerve) and grass impacting between cheek and molars. Others have tongue injury (usually grass seeds), many have no obvious cause.
Dags	Widespread, sometimes affecting a large proportion 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 lactating ewes	A small number of deaths in one large flock	Southern Tasmania	Appeared to be mainly due to worms, scouring, dags, flystrike.	If more than the odd sheep dies it may be worth having postmortems 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)	Several Merino lambs in one small flock.	Northern Tasmania	Wool in hard blocks along topline.	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
Ear tag infection	A number of lambs, in one large flock	Northern Tasmania	Swelling, crusts, discharge around area where tag goes through ear	Clean and apply antiseptic spray. If ear is swollen may need antibiotics under vet supervision. Prevent by soaking tags in antiseptic before applying.

Encephalitis (inflammation of brain)	One ewe in one medium flock	Southern Tasmania	Nervous system signs seen.	The sheep also had PEM for some time so may have been related to recovery from that condition, but also had myocarditis so may have had a viral infection affecting both brain and heart.
Eye closed in strong light (blepharospasm)	One eye of one lamb in one medium flock.	Northern Tasmania	Usually due to inflammation of the eye eg first stage of Pink Eye.	Keep lamb in deep shade. Examine and treat any inflammation of eye.
Epididymitis in ram	One case in one medium flock	Southern Tasmania.	A lump is felt usually just under the testicle but can be on inner 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 the other testicle is in good order.
Flystrike	Widespread but not a particularly bad year for flystrike.	NW, N and Southern Tasmania	Breech, body, shoulder, poll strike in rams, pizzle strike. Foot strike (secondary to footrot or foot abscess). Sheep with footrot struck over ribs from lying on infected foot.	Observe for wet, grey areas of wool, tail flicking, separation from mob, lying down. The AWI web site has a large number of resources and runs workshops on flystrike. See: https://www.wool.com/simplifly
Foot abscess (heel abscess)	One heavy ewe in one medium flock.	Southern 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 affecting a number of sheep and lambs in a number of flocks.	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Active spread on irrigation, usually chronic lesions on dry land	Summer paring and eradication inspections should be well under way now so that you have time for a re-inspection while conditions are dry. Long-acting oxytetracycline injections under veterinary supervision are useful while conditions are dry. Cull chronic cases or move out of replacement breeding mob. 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	No under - running of hoof horn in this case in composite ewes. Hard to eradicate but causes less production loss than virulent footrot.	Footbathing, culling chronic cases. Use of vaccine and antibiotics may not be economical. Eradication by meticulous foot preparation, rigorous foot inspections, culling all sheep with mis-shaped or cracked hooves or infection and footbathing in 20% zinc sulphate/1-2% 'lauryl" for at least 15 minutes repeated every day for 5 treatments can work in summer. Ensure culls fit to load if transported. Prevention: Ask for a Sheep Health 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 seed abscesses under skin.	One sheep in one small flock	Southern Tasmania	Grass seeds (usually barley grass) burrow into skin and cause abscesses.	Shear sheep to reduce seed pickup. Barley grass can be controlled with strategic grazing, herbicides or slashing.
Hernia (abdominal)	One ewe in one medium flock	Northern Tasmania	Large bulge in abdomen wall	Can be caused by compressed air sheep handler set too tight. Or older ewes carrying large twins or triplets. Best just left alone, very hard to repair surgically.
Hooves overgrown	A number of sheep in one large flock	Northern Tasmania	Hooves long and toes may curl up ("slipper feet") or wall of hoof can roll under (differentiate from footrot)	Pare hooves back into shape. Hooves neglected for a long time may grow a lot of excess toe horn and require careful paring back to avoid bleeding.
Inflamed skin of inner thigh	One sheep in one medium flock	Northern Tasmania	Reddened skin inside upper leg	Probably due to injury.
Jaundiced lamb carcases at abattoir	A number of carcases from one large flock	Southern Tasmania	Carcase fat appears slightly yellow.	Some carcases will resume normal fat colour after a night in the chiller. Possible causes include: too many high-carotine flat weeds in diet, Mycoplasma bacteria destroying red blood cells, feeding too long solely on brassica crop, or liver damage. Vet investigation may be able to determine cause.
Lameness	A small number of sheep in two large flocks.	Northern Tasmania	Reluctant to bear full weight on one leg.	Can be due to footrot, foot abscess, toe abscess, arthritis, injury and several other conditions. Examine foot and leg thoroughly, treat appropriately.
Lice (body lice)	A number of flocks	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.	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 lamb marking %	40% less lambs in one large flock.	Southern Tasmania	Normally expect about 90% lambs marked in singles and 140% plus for twins in Merino ewes	Abortion (early to mid-term abortion often not observed by managers), neonatal losses (slow birth or large lamb, exposure, mis-mothering etc) are usual causes. Blood test 8 wet and 8 dry ewes at lamb marking and test for Campylobacter and Toxo, review feeding levels, shelter at lambing, and calcium supplementation of ewes in third trimester. Low ram % is rarely the problem but best to mate at 1.5% (1 ram to 70 ewes) or more.
Lymph chain red swellings	One 2T from one large flock	Northern Tasmania	May have been a type of blood cancer.	Rare. Appeared as a chain of red pea-sized nodules against the back of the abdominal cavity when the carcase was hanging up.
Mastitis (acute or chronic)	Several cases in one small flock.	Northern Tasmania	Hot swollen and inflamed (acute) or hard (chronic) with abnormal milk (from watery to mayonnaise consistency)	Acute: strip out as much milk as you can and administer antibiotic treatment by injection. If only one half of udder is affected ewe can produce nearly as much milk from the other half if she recovers. Chronic cases with hard udder should be culled.

Myocarditis (inflamed heart muscle)	One ewe in one medium flock	Southern Tasmania	Heart looked flabby and chronic inflammation was seen under the microscope.	Possibly due to a viral infection.
Nasal discharge, bloody, one side only	One sheep or lamb in two small flocks	Northern Tasmania	Blood seen running from one nostril.	Could be injury or foreign body (eg a stick or grass stalk) caught in the nostril. Examine closely. Check that dogs are not biting noses. Rest and re-examine.
Nasal discharge, purulent, both nostrils	A number of young sheep in a number of flocks	NW, Northern and Southern Tasmania	Can be due to viral or bacterial infections. Rarely due to nasal bots.	If sheep are bright and alert no action required. If depressed, laboured breathing, deaths, veterinary advice should be sought.
Nematodirus	Lambs in one large flock	Northern Tasmania	Weaners scour with poor growth rates. Nematodirus egg counts may or may not be high.	Nematodirus egg counts often do not reflect adult worm burden inside the weaners. Autopsy and total worm count or treat and look for response. See WORMBOSS web site for details on control. Note that worm egg counts may be artificially elevated if an animal has been off feed for a period of over 12 hours.
Ocular (eye) discharge both eyes	A number of lambs from one large flock.	Northern Tasmania	Could be first stage of Pinkeye	Best to leave alone and keep checking, if possible, only yard if you have to.
Ocular (eye) discharge, purulent, one eye	A number of weaners from two large flocks	Southern Tasmania	Most likely barley grass seed.	Control barley grass with intensive rotational grazing, herbicide or topping. Grass seeds should be removed from eyes as soon as possible.
Ovine Johnes' disease (OJD)	A number of sheep died or destroyed in one medium sized flock	Northern Tasmania	Adult sheep over 2 yrs old waste away over several months and die despite drenching.	Quickest diagnosis is by postmortem. Prevent by vaccinating lambs at marking with Gudair vaccine. If confirmed present in the flock, cull any sheep over 18 months of age that waste away and don't respond to drenching. See factsheet on: http://www.ojd.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/OJD_factsheet.pdf
PEM (polioencephalomalacia)	Confirmed in one medium flock. A number of sheep and lambs affected over a 3-month period.	Southern Tasmania	'Star gazing', blindness, other neurological signs, deaths	Usually associated with rich diet, or diet too high in sulphur. Treat early with Vitamin B1 injections. Animal Health Australia subsidies may be available for postmortems on neurological cases in sheep between 18 months and 5 years of age.
Photosensitisation	A number of lambs and some adult sheep in a large number of flocks	NW, Northern and Southern Tasmania	Skin reddened and peels off, mainly from back of both ears and some noses, mulesed tails, backs, faces, backsides and lower shanks as well. Most of these are mild, only effecting backs of ears.	Check paddock for poisonous plants and pigment plants (eg storksbill, medics, wireweed). If severe, treat with antihistamines, antibiotics, if necessary (under vet supervision), offer deep shade, move to new paddock. Small numbers can have zinc cream smeared over affected skin.

Pneumonia	One lamb from one large flock	Northern Tasmania	Sudden death. Mannheimia multocida bacteria isolated.	Early cases in front part of lungs. Antibiotic treatment of cases under veterinary supervision (best caught early). Reduce dust any stress factors if possible. See https://animalhealthaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/NSHMP-Pneumonia-Pleurisy.pdf
Redgut	Several lambs in two large flocks	Northern Tasmania	Redgut seen on pure lucerne/clover. Seen as sudden death and rapid bloating. Dark red intestines seen on postmortem.	Provide access to roughage.
Sarco (dog form)	One ewe in one medium 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. Prevent by not feeding uncooked sheep meat to dogs.
Scabby Mouth	25% of lambs in one medium flock	Southern Tasmania	Crusts and raw areas on lips, sometimes on feet as well. Shearers refused to shear these lambs as transmissible to man.	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. Can prevent with vaccine at marking. See: https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/179835/sheep-health-scabby-mouth.pdf
Scald	A number of sheep in one large flock on irrigated pasture.	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.
Scour in weaned lambs	10% of lambs in one large mob	Southern Tasmania	Can be due to worms, coccidia, Cryptosporidia, Giardia, bacterial gut infections, 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 and cause not obvious.
Sheep measles	Detected in the diaphragm of one aged ewe at postmortem.	Southern Tasmania	Small whitish mass about half the size of a 5-cent piece protruding from the muscle of the heart, diaphragm or skeletal muscle. Carcase is trimmed or condemned if too many to trim. This is the	This is the intermediate stage of a dog tapeworm. Prevented by stopping dogs from eating raw sheep meat. Freeze sheep carcase meat for 2 weeks before feeding to dogs, burn/bury sheep carcases promptly and treat all dogs including pets with a wormer containing praziquantel every 30 days. Visiting dogs (contractors, shooters) must be treated 2 days before arrival on property. Keep stray dogs off the property. See fact sheet on https://sheepconnecttas.com.au/disease-factsheets/

Shelly toe	A large proportion of sheep in two medium flocks	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 separated hoof wall as dirt and manure can pack into the space and cause a form of toe abscess.
Shelly toe abscess	One ewe in one medium flock	Southern Tasmania	Wet dirt and faeces pack up into the shelly toe cavity and an abscess forms next to the top of the defect.	Pare off separated hoof wall and allow abscess to drain. Spray with antiseptic spray. Vet may prescribe antibiotics.
Small soft testes in ram	One ram in one medium flock	Southern Tasmania	Testicles both small and 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.
Solar abscess	One ewe in one medium flock	Southern Tasmania	Pus under section of sole of one hoof.	Pare hoof to expose and drain all under-run areas. Anti-biotics and anti-inflammatories under vet supervision if necessary.
Sudden deaths of weaners	A number of weaners in one large flock	Northern Tasmania	Worms and coccidia were found on postmortem.	Lambs can die after a short illness when exposed to high numbers of worm larvae and coccidia at the same time. See sections on worms and coccidia for treatments and prevention.
Swollen testicles	One ram in one large flock	Southern Tasmania	Both testicles larger than normal.	Differentiate from scrotal hernia. Treat with antibiotics and anti-inflammatories under veterinary supervision.
Tapeworm	One lamb in one large flock	Northern Tasmania	Tape worm segments (large rice grain size) seen in dung	Most scientific studies show that sheep tapeworms do not affect growth rates so drenching for tapeworms may not be justified. Are thought to slow passage of food through intestines and pre-dispose to pulpy kidney, so ensure that vaccination is up to date or treat with drench that covers tapeworms if losing lambs with pulpy kidney.
Toe abscess (chronic) with proud flesh	A number of ewes in one medium flock	Southern Tasmania	Lame but no swelling, heat or under-running. Red proud flesh protruding from tip of toe.	Carefully pare back the toe and sole until all proud flesh has been exposed. The proud flesh does not have nerve tissue and can be cut off by a veterinarian and pressure applied to reduce bleeding. Hard horn can then grow back over the defect. Usually, no further treatment needed apart from antiseptic spray but antibiotics and anti-inflammatories can be administered by a veterinarian.
Torn hind leg muscles	One ram from one medium flock	Southern Tasmania	Severe lameness	Probably caused by fighting among rams. Not able to be repaired, cull. Not fit to load.
Toxoplasma abortions	A number of ewes bled at weaning in one large flock showed evidence of previous exposure	Northern Tasmania	Late abortions or lamb deaths soon after birth.	No vaccine is available in Australia. Toxo is spread by cats. For control strategies see: https://sheepconnecttasmania.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/sc-factsheet-no10-toxoplasmosis_lr.pdf
Udder dropped	One ewe in one small flock	Northern Tasmania	Ligaments holding udder up become stretched and udder hangs low even after lambs weaned	Consider culling. See https://www.mla.com.au/fittojoin for guidelines on assessing ewes after weaning to estimate their potential to potential to rear another lamb.

Wool break	A small number of sheep in a number of flocks	NW, 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.
Worms	A number of flocks. One large flock lost a number of lambs on irrigated forages with heavy brown stomach worm, stomach hair worm, black scour worm and Nematodirus about a month after drenching.	NW, Northern and Southern Tasmania	Mainly moderate egg counts. Black scour worm still dominating, but some stomach hair worm, brown stomach worms and barber's pole worm starting to show up.	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 lambs and pre-lamb drenched ewes. See WORMBOSS at: http://www.wormboss.com.au/sheep-goats/programs/sheep.php
Yersinia enteritis	Weaners in one large flock	Northern Tasmania	Scouring and deaths.	Differentiate from worms or coccidia etc by WORMTEST and ask lab to culture for Yersinia as well. Lab can advise which antibiotics should work. Treat scouring animals under veterinary supervision. Some stress factor is usually present (eg poor access to water, worms etc) and should be corrected.
CATTLE				
Abscess under jaw	One weaner in one large herd	Northern Tasmania	Swelling under jaw.	Possibly due to Actino. Abscesses can be drained and treated by a vet.
Bleeding problem	A number of deaths in a large beef herd	Northern Tasmania	Cattle may have eaten sweet vernal grass (Anthoxanthu modoratum) or bracken fern.	Bleeding into lungs and elsewhere. Bought-in mob, may have eaten bracken up to 6 weeks previously or sweet vernal grass hay or maybe another anticoagulant such as pindone.
Corneal scarring	One steer in one small herd	Northern Tasmania	White irregular marks on cornea (front of eye) but no inflammation or discharge.	Healed corneal ulcer usually caused by pink eye or injury. No action needed at this stage.
Cough in young cattle	Most young cattle in one large herd	Northern Tasmania	Can be due to lungworms, bacterial or viral diseases that infect the respiratory tract.	These had high body temperatures so probably an infection. Treat with drench that covers lungworm. Antibiotic cover under vet supervision if show signs of pneumonia.
Dags/scour	A number of young and adult cattle in a number of herds	NW, Northern and Southern Tasmania	Dried faeces stuck on tail hair, many with evidence of fresh scour.	Scouring is the problem. Worms, nutrition (low dry matter diet, toxic plants eg capeweed), viral and bacterial diseases can all be involved.

Eye cancer	Three cases in one large herd, one early case in another small herd.	Northern Tasmania	Growth or ulceration of eye or eyelid. More common in breeds with white pigmentation around eye.	Very early growths can be frozen, burnt (electrocautery) or scraped off. More advanced require surgery. Severe require euthanasia. Don't transport cattle if they can't close the eyelid over the growth.
Face Injury	One cow	Northern Tasmania	Poor temperament, probably injured during yarding or transport	Prevention: ensure cattle handling facilities do not have any sharp protruding objects.
Hair loss back of tail head	Several steers in several herds	Northern Tasmania	Maybe due to rubbing back of tail head against the walls of the transport vehicle.	Don't pack cattle into transport vehicles too tight.
Hock injury and infection	One steer in one large herd	Southern Tasmania	Hock hot and swollen, discharge.	Antibiotics, anti-inflammatories, wound drainage if safe, under veterinary supervision.
Inter-digital fibroma	One bull in one medium herd	Northern Tasmania	Crusty hairless mass protruded from top/front of interdigital cleft	Caused by long-term wet conditions underfoot. More common in bulls. A vet can surgically remove the mass.
Leg injury	One steer in one medium herd	Northern Tasmania	Leg caught while jumping out of yard	Handle cattle calmly. Increase height of top rail.
Ocular (eye) discharge (clear, watery, both eyes)	A number of cattle from a number of herds.	NW, Northern and Southern 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.
Ocular (eye) discharge, purulent, one eye	One cow from one large herd	Northern Tasmania	Most likely barley grass seed.	Control barley grass with intensive rotational grazing, herbicide or topping. Grass seeds should be removed from eye as soon as possible.
Pink Eye	15% of unvaccinated dairy heifers in one large herd	Northern Tasmania	Discharge from both eyes, damage to cornea (front of eye)	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
Rain scald	One cow in one small herd	NW Tasmania	Hair on both sides of rump matted	Caused by same bacterium that causes 'dermo' in sheep. Can treat with antibiotic injections under veterinary supervision.
Toe deformity	One bull in one small herd	Northern Tasmania	Outer toe in one front foot deformed	Could be due to injury or healed infection. Sometimes hoof trimming can reveal an abscess or defect that can be corrected. Otherwise cull if lame.

Torn muscles in hind leg	One bull in one large herd	Southern Tasmania	Hock was low, bull very lame.	Probably a fighting injury. Cull.
Upper respiratory tract infection	Two cows in one large 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.
Warts on penis	A number of young bulls in one large herd	Northern Tasmania	Cauliflower-like growth on penis.	Seen in young bulls at bull fertility testing. Will normally self-cure if left alone. A vaccine can be made up if warts persist or are very extensive.
Warts on body	One steer in two small herds	Northern Tasmania	Cauliflower-like growth anywhere on body but often around head.	Normally only seen in young cattle. Will normally self-cure if left alone. A vaccine can be made up if warts persist or are very extensive.
ALPACAS and CAMELS				
No cases reported				
GOATS				
PEM (polioencephalomalacia)	One goat in one small herd	Southern Tasmania	'Star gazing', blindness, other neurological signs, deaths	Usually associated with rich diet. Treat early with Vitamin B1 injections. Add more roughage to diet.
PIGS				
No cases reported				
POULTRY				
No cases reported				
DEER				
Deaths after sedation	Four stags in one large herd	Southern Tasmania	Gained access to more medicated feed than planned.	Prevention: ensure all animals in group have equal access to medicated feed.

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 feed 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/dlm_uploads/2024/09/Bucks-for-Brains-Brochure.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 $272 million worth of sheep meats and wool in 2021-22. 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/