Livestock Health Monitoring Report – December 2020

The Livestock Health Monitoring program collects confidential/anonymous information on livestock diseases and conditions observed by rural service providers in Tasmania and produces a monthly report that is circulated as widely as possible amongst Tasmanian livestock producers and service providers. It is based on a successful pilot project conducted in 2018-19.

See http://www.tasanimalhealth.weebly.com/ for previous reports.

The program is designed to keep Tasmanian livestock producers and rural service providers up to date on what livestock diseases and conditions are currently occurring in Tasmania. This should mean earlier diagnosis, more effective treatment and better prevention of future outbreaks.

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.

This program should also help detect an outbreak of emergency animal disease earlier, allowing effective action to stamp it out or reduce its impact.

The program has a sheep industry emphasis, but all common livestock species are covered. The National Sheep Industry Biosecurity Strategy lies at the core of the program (see www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/nsibs)

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

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

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

For farm biosecurity plans, animal health declarations and information on biosecurity practices see: www.farmbiosecurity.com.au/

Remember:

- Report any suspicion of an Emergency Animal Disease to the Hotline on 1800 675 888
- Never feed animal protein such as meat meal to any ruminant including sheep.
- Use NVDs and NLIS tags properly so that we can 'contact trace' quickly if we have to.

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SHEEP				
Disease/condition	**Number of reports/ cases**	**Region**	**Details**	**Prevention, treatment, and other biosecurity advice or measures**
Abdominal distension	Sporadic over a number of flocks	Southern Tasmania	Older sheep looks like it has 'swallowed a beach ball"	Could be due to chronic bloat, excess fluid in abdominal cavity caused by fluke, cancer, pregnancy problems. Treat for fluke and make sure diet has plenty of protein.

Downer ram	One ram in one small flock	Northern Tasmania	This one anaemic. History of Barber's Pole Worm (BPW) on property.	Effective drench, supplementary feed, good nursing. Closantel can be used for long-term protection from BPW if closantel resistance not present. .
Ear cancer	One sheep in one medium sized flock	Southern Tasmania	Crusty swelling or ulceration starting anywhere on bare parts of the ear.	Vet can remove the affected part of ear if caught early enough. Check no swelling of the gland (lymph node) that drains that area as cancer can spread to the gland. Make sure it is 'fit to load' if transported.
Eyelid cancer	One sheep in one large flock	Southern Tasmania	Crusty swelling or ulceration starting anywhere on the eyelid.	Monitor for early lesions and cull for slaughter.
Fleece rot	Sporadic cases in several flocks	Southern Tasmania	Green 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 and select against this trait.
Fly strike	Many cases	Wide-spread in Northern and Southern Tasmania.	Mostly breech strike but body strike too.	Identify and correct causes of scouring. Chemical preventative treatments or frequent inspection and early treatment of strikes. Select against risky traits.
Foot abscess	Many flocks. 5% to 7% of ewes affected at peak in one large flock.	Wide-spread in Northern and Southern Tasmania.	Swelling of one toe, hot, painful and discharge pus in acute stage, Most in healing phase now.	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, 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)	A number of flocks. Four large flocks newly diagnosed	Southern and Northern Tasmania	Most are now chronic cases persisting after spring spread period.	Paring, footbathing, culling chronic cases, use of 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 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
Footrot (mild, "scald")	A number of flocks	Northern and	Inflammation between toes but limited	Regular footbathing is usually sufficient to control during spread period and usually disappears with dry weather. Hard to eradicate.

		Southern Tasmania	under-running of heel and sole of hoof.	
Grass seeds in eyes, mouth and under skin.	Several properties	Southern Tasmania	Grass seeds (usually barley grass) get under third eyelid and cause irritation of cornea (surface of eye) causing discharge down cheeks	Grass seeds must be removed manually from eye, then use a spray or ointment to control infection. Can also lodge in mouth and can be manually removed. Shear or wig sheep to reduce seed pickup. Barley grass can be controlled with strategic grazing, herbicides or slashing.
High worm egg counts	Several flocks	Southern and Northern Tasmania	Diarrhoea, slow growth rates	Treat with effective drench (check that current drench family is working by doing a DRENCHCHECK). See WORMBOSS web site.
Imperforate anus in lambs	One lamb in one flock	Northern Tasmania	Lambs seen at marking or later with no anal opening and bulging pink skin under tail.	Congenital defect. Euthanase.
Interdigital dermatitis (IDD)	One flock	Southern Tasmania	Reddening and exudate between toes. Looks identical to scald (benign footrot).	Take smears on glass slides or swabs so lab can stain and examine for footrot bacteria. If no footrot bacteria are found, IDD is diagnosed. Treated by footbathing or by anti-bacterial sprays.
Lice (body lice)	One medium sized flock	Northern Tasmania.	Sheep body lice cause fleece damage.	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. Inspect sheep regularly - look for 2mm long insects with broad reddish head moving slowly away from light by parting wool 10 times down each side of 10 sheep.
Lumpy wool (dermo)	At least one property	Southern Tasmania	Wool in hard blocks along topline.	Can treat with long-acting oxytetracycline during dry period, wait for 6 weeks and shear. Wool still valuable. Prevent by not yarding sheep when wet to skin.
Mastitis ("ruptured udder")	Small % of ewes in one large flocks	Northern Tasmania	Seen as raw tissue after dead tissues fall off udder	Severe cases and if pus still present should be euthanased. Milder cases can heal over time.
Pivot wheel deaths	Several lambs in several flocks	Southern Tasmania	Lambs found crushed in pivot wheel ruts.	Often crossbred lambs found next morning. No preventions available at present.
Scabby Mouth of feet	25% of one medium flock	Northern Tasmania	Crusts and raw areas on skin above top of hoof and of pastern.	Same virus as scabby mouth of lips. Skin injury needed to allow virus to establish and sometimes feet are damaged but lips less so. Best left to heal on their own. Can prevent with vaccine at marking.

Stillborn lamb	One small flock	Northern Tasmania	Possible causes include Toxo, Campy, Listeria, over-size lamb or weak ewe resulting in slow birth	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.
Sudden deaths on irrigated lucerne or clover	Several flocks	Southern Tasmania	Lambs found dead and blown up.	May be caused by 'lucerne red gut', Pulpy Kidney (PK) or frothy bloat. Give third PK vaccination or use 8-in-one, don't place hungry lambs on irrigated legumes, offer good quality hay ad lib, use appropriate loose licks.
Sudden deaths in adult ewes	Several ewes in one medium flock and a number in a large number of yarded ewes.	Southern Tasmania	Possible causes include Clostridial disease (eg PK, blackleg), salmonella, toxic plants, Anthrax (rare in Tas)	Boost ewes with 5-in-one pre-lambing. Make sure yarded ewes have access to water if in yards for more than 24 hours in hot weather. Know what toxic plants are on your property and manage appropriately. If blood oozes from mouth/nose and backside as well, get a vet to check for Anthrax or ring Emergency Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888.
Swelled head in rams	3 rams in one large flock	Sothern Tasmania	Usually caused by a Clostridia bacteria, but may also be caused by other bacteria or blood clots from fighting.	Treat: give antibiotic cover. Sometimes an abscess needs to be drained. Prevention: Make sure rams receive annual boosters of 5-in-one.
Weaner deaths	Lambs found dead after weaning.	Northern Tasmania	May be caused by worms, coccidia, dog bite, Yersinia, thirst. etc	Make sure all lambs receive effective weaning drench. Scouring after effective drench may be caused by coccidia or yersinia, have post mortem done on a sick or freshly dead lamb. Make sure lambs can reach water in troughs. Add a few dry adult sheep to mob to show them where water is.
Worms	Weaners in one flock	Northern 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 lambs and pre-lamb drenched ewes. See WORMBOSS at: http://www.wormboss.com.au/sheep-goats/programs/sheep.php
CATTLE				
Abdominal distension	Sporadic over a number of herds	Southern Tasmania	Older cow looks like it has 'swallowed a beach ball"	Could be due to chronic bloat, excess fluid in abdominal cavity caused by fluke, cancer, pregnancy problems. Treat for fluke and make sure diet has plenty of protein. Vet may be able to diagnose and treat.
Actino abscess	One weaner in one herd	Northern Tasmania	Swelling usually around head/upper neck,	This one was a runty weaner and maybe Actino was secondary to Pestivirus infection. Actino abscesses can be treated by a vet. Prevention: Actino bacteria usually enter through damage to mouth so reducing mouth damage risk can help.

Pink Eye	One cow in one herd	Northern Tasmania	Both eyes ruptured.	Start treatment early. Separate affected cattle, use spray, antibiotic injection into eyelids, eye patches or vet can stitch eyelids. In this case cow was not treated early, both eyes ruptured and had to be euthanased. There is a vaccine available that covers most of the strains of pink eye bacteria that occur in Tasmania.
Vibrio (Campylobacter)	One large herd and also three other herds that had bought cows from first property.	Statewide	Bacterial infection spread by bulls. Causes return to service and abortions.	Vaccinate bulls, complete course 4 weeks prior to joining. Cull empty females at preg testing and any female that aborts or not rearing a calf. If exposure to unvaccinated bulls is likely vaccinate females as well.
GOATS				
Yersinia	5 young goats in large herd.	Northern Tasmania	Scour, deaths.	These had severe enteritis (inflamed intestines). Should respond well to antibiotics if caught early enough.