

Livestock Health Monitoring Report – January 2021

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 www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/tas-health 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 DPIPW. 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-March.

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 animals can be 'contact traced' quickly if there is an outbreak of an Emergency Animal Disease.

Biosecurity story of the month

Good surveillance and early action on suspicion of a disease outbreak can limit the damage.

A sheep breeder found some rams with flyblown feet. He immediately suspected footrot and his first impulse was to destroy the affected sheep. But he decided to isolate the rams and call in a veterinarian. The veterinarian confirmed that the clinical signs were consistent with virulent footrot. Samples were taken, but virulence testing results take some weeks, and mating commenced on 1 April, so action was required immediately.

All other mobs on the property were checked. One other mob of ewes was found to be infected but the majority appeared to be footrot-free. All footrot affected sheep were kept on one side of

the road and a vigorous treatment, monthly foot inspection and culling program embarked on, and is likely to be effective because hundreds rather than thousands of sheep have to be re-inspected every month.

Some producers who had purchased sheep from this flock the previous year were informed so that they could check the introduced animals.

The most likely source of this breakdown was a ram from a clean stud on the mainland that was transported to Tasmania by commercial livestock transport. If future all introductions will be footbathed on arrival, isolated for as long as possible, and inspected thoroughly before mixing with other resident sheep.

This outbreak should have limited impact on the sheep breeder due to early decisive action.



SHEEP				
Disease/condition	Number of reports/cases	Region	Details	Prevention, treatment, and other biosecurity advice or measures
Anaemia and jaundice	Two lambs in two small flocks.	Southern Tasmania	Pale, yellowish gums and conjunctiva.	Copper poisoning suspected, <i>Mycoplasma ovis</i> , brassica poisoning and Leptospirosis also need to be ruled out. Sheep accumulate copper easily and then when stressed copper is released to blood stream and ruptures the red blood cells. Sheep must not be fed mixed feed formulated for other species (eg cattle, pigs, horses) as most other species need more copper in their feed.
Barbers pole worm	Suspected in one flock	Southern Tasmania	Sudden death, no scouring, pale gums.	See WORMBOSS website for details on diagnosis, control and prevention programs.
Boney growth	One sheep in one flock	Southern Tasmania	A large hard lump on side of hock in this case. Probably caused by an injury to membrane over the bone.	Ewe was not lame so no action required.
Black scour worm	Several flocks	Southern Tasmania	Scouring, high worm egg Tricho-strongylus identified by larval differentiation test at lab.	See WORMBOSS web site for good treatment and prevention strategies.
Brisket ulceration	One sheep ex one medium flock	Northern Tasmania	Shows that sheep has spent a lot of time lying down, usually due to a foot condition.	May be seen with chronic footrot, foot abscess and other foot conditions. Treat the foot condition. Treat brisket ulcers with antiseptic spray.

Brown stomach worm	One flock – 200 deaths 4 weeks after effective treatment	Southern Tasmania	Scouring, high worm egg count. Brown stomach worm identified by larval differentiation test at lab.	See WORMBOSS web site for good treatment and prevention strategies. Brown stomach worm more common in summer and are poor egg producers so egg counts not always really high. May be resistant to different drenches compared to Black Scour Worm, our main winter parasite, so drench resistance tests may give very different results in summer vs autumn in the same flock.
Dags	Wide-spread	Southern 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 and ensure fly prevention program is effective.
Ear cancer	Several sheep in several flocks	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Crusty swelling or ulceration starting anywhere on ear.	Vet can remove the cancer 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.
Eye cancer	Many cases	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Crusty or ulcerated lesion anywhere around eye.	Cull. Make sure fit to load if sent to abattoir.
Fly strike	Many cases including body strike in 50 XB ewes in one flock	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. See FLYBOSS on http://www.flyboss.com.au/sheep-goats/ for details on treating, preventing and breeding aspects.
Foot abscess	Many flocks. 3% of sheep actively affected in one large flock.	Wide-spread in Northern and Southern Tasmania	Swelling of one toe, hot, painful and discharge puss in acute stage, Most in healing phase now but some active cases seen.	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. Two flocks newly diagnosed.	Southern and Northern Tasmania	Most are now chronic cases persisting after spring spread period but in some areas there is spread even on non-	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

			irrigated pasture due to the good season.	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 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.
Goitre	One flock last spring	Southern Tasmania	Swelling (from just detectable to orange size) of upper front of neck	May be caused by iodine deficient soil or some plants such as brassicas. Give ewes 300 mg potassium iodide per ewe dissolved in water as a drench in last month of pregnancy to prevent.
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 spay 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.
Lumpy wool (dermo)	Wide-spread	Southern and Northern 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 (acute or chronic)	Several cases in two small flocks.	Southern 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.
Ovine interdigital dermatitis (OID)	One flock	Southern Tasmania	Reddening and some exudate between toes. Looks identical to scald (benign footrot).	Take smears on glass slides so lab can stain and examine for footrot bacteria. If no footrot bacteria, OID is diagnosed. Treated by footbathing or by anti-bacterial sprays.
Ovine Johnes' disease (OJD)	Ten ewes died or destroyed in one small flock, an incidental post mortem finding in another	Southern and Northern Tasmania	Adult sheep over 2 yrs old waste away over several months and die despite drenching.	Quickest diagnosis is by post mortem but can be cultured from manure. Prevent most cases 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

Pink eye	Several flocks	Southern and Northern Tasmania	Discharge down cheeks, white areas on surface of eye. Usually spread by flies, long grass and close contact (eg yarding)	If low prevalence and on good feed and water leave alone to self-heal as mustering can increase spread within mob. Treat with antibiotic injections if have to be yarded. Eye ointments/sprays less effective.
Rickets	25% of one small mob	Southern Tasmania	Ram lambs on cereal crop last winter.	Cereal crops produce a toxic factor that interferes with absorption of vitamin D. Prevented by giving ADE injection before placing growing sheep on cereal crops.
Ruptured udder	Small % of ewes in one large flock	Northern Tasmania	Seen as raw tissue after dead tissues fall off after very acute toxic mastitis earlier.	Some of these will heal if raw area is small and clean and raw tissue does not stick out. Otherwise should be culled.
Scabby Mouth	25% of one mob	Southern Tasmania	Crusts and raw areas on lips, sometimes on feet as well.	Caused by a tough virus that persists on a property once introduced, but skin injury needed to allow virus to establish. Best left to heal on their own. Can prevent with vaccine at marking.
Sebaceous cyst on back of ear	Two aged ewes ex one medium sized flock	Northern Tasmania	Raised pea-sized lesions on back of ear. Gentle pressure pops out cheesy mass leaving shallow raw crater in skin.	Importance only in differentiating from early ear cancer.
Shelley toe	25% of one mob	Southern Tasmania	Curved separation of hoof wall from sole up hoof wall near front of hoof.	Conformational defect rather than a disease condition. Is heritable and can be selected against. Best to pare off under-run hoof wall as dirt and manure can pack into the cleft and cause a form of toe abscess.
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 loose lick and good quality hay ad lib.
Sudden deaths in adult ewes	Several ewes in one medium flock	Northern Tasmania	Possible causes include Clostridial disease (eg PK, blackleg), salmonella, toxic plants, Anthrax (rare in Tas)	A post mortem may determine cause. 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.
Sudden deaths in weaners on brassica crop	Twenty lambs in one large XB flock	Northern Tasmania	Unlikely to be brassica anaemia as only one week on crop (brassica toxicity usually after 3 weeks)	Worm counts only moderate. Cause undetermined.
Tape worm	One large flock	Southern Tasmania	Tape worm segments (large rice grain size) seen	Most scientific studies show that sheep tapeworms do not affect growth rates so drenching for tapeworms may not be justified. Heavy infestations of tapeworms are thought to slow passage of food

			on outside of dung	through intestines and pre-dispose to pulpy kidney, so ensure that vaccination is up to date.
Toe abscess	One large flock	Southern Tasmania	Very lame but no swelling, heat or under-running. Small amount of grey pus in toe area when pared back.	Carefully pare back the toe, following any black track up front of toe until pus released. Usually no further treatment needed apart from antiseptic spray.
Under-run sole	One medium flock	Northern Tasmania	Footrot-free flock. Lab tests failed to detect footrot bacteria.	Importance is only to be aware that under-run sole may occur in absence of footrot. If seen during eradication inspections in an infected flock such sheep would be culled.
Wool break	One large flock	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.
Ventral hernia	Three cases in one medium XB flock last spring	Northern Tasmania	Multiple-bearing ewes in late pregnancy Stomach sags nearly to ground just in front of udder.	Abdominal muscles tear off attachment to base of pelvis due to combined weight of lambs, placenta and fluids. May not be preventable but handle ewes gently in late pregnancy.
Worms	Weaners in two flock	Northern Tasmania	Scouring plus or minus deaths.	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				
Blindness	Several growing cattle on one property.	Northern Tasmania	These had been grain fed. Not Pink eye. Most likely PEM caused by bacteria in paunch that destroy vitamin B1.	Cattle show nervous signs and blindness early in course of PEM and sight may be saved if treated really early with B1 (thiamine) injections or drench. PEM is usually seen on grain or rich feed eg brassica crop, treat/prevent by feeding good quality hay. Can add thiamine to diet. Lead poisoning can also cause similar clinical signs. Best to get a vet involved. If the vet does a post mortem and takes the brain you may be eligible for a \$300 subsidy (see https://animalhealthaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Bucks-for-Brains_Jun16_WEB.pdf)
Foot abscess	Wide-spread	Southern and Northern Tasmania	Swollen foot, may discharge, very lame. Wet conditions.	May respond to antibiotics and move to dry area. Sometimes need surgical drainage and curette.
Head/neck swelling	Three cattle in one herd	Southern Tasmania	Swollen glands and tissues, cough	May be due to Actino. May respond to antibiotics. Sometimes abscesses form that can respond to surgical drainage and curette.

IBR (Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis)	2 of 80 imported cattle	Northern Tasmania	Reddened muzzle and respiratory signs.	Antibiotic and anti-inflammatory treatments may assist recovery.
Mating injuries to hind legs.	Several bulls in several herds	Northern Tasmania	Bull becomes lame during mating period. Hips and feet mainly.	Remove from cow mob, rest in small paddock or yard, give anti-inflammatories, check for foot injuries.
Pink Eye	Wide-spread	Northern and Southern Tasmania	Some very severe and vaccination implemented early.	Start treatment early. Separate affected cattle, use spray, 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.
Respiratory disease	Several herds.	Southern Tasmania	Difficulty breathing, cough.	Many respond to antibiotic treatment.
Salmonella dublin	One herd	Northern Tasmania	Dairy calves coughing and doing poorly	<i>Salmonella dublin</i> can cause pneumonia as well as diarrhoea. Can also cause abortion in pregnant cows. Is specific to cattle so do not accept cattle from known infected herds.
Scour with blood	One calf in one herd	Southern Tasmania	Scours with blood often due to coccidia, Salmonella or bracken fern.	This one responded to antibiotic treatment.
Sheath and penis damage in bulls during mating	Wide-spread	Southern and Northern Tasmania	Internal lining of sheath may hang out and become damaged and swollen. Penis may be 'broken' with large lump forming around it.	A vet may be able to help salvage some of these bulls. Make sure bull is 'fit to load' if sent to abattoir.
Transport injuries		Northern Tasmania	Young cattle injured during transport.	Treat with rest, antibiotic cover, anti-inflammatories. Some may not recover sufficiently to grow out.
Vibrio (Campylobacter)	Two related herds	Southern Tasmania	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				
Cystitis	One goat in one small herd.	Southern Tasmania	Had blood in urine	Responded to antibiotic treatment.
Mastitis	One goat in one small herd.	Southern Tasmania	Hot swollen udder, abnormal milk	Most respond to antibiotic treatment.
Phytobezoar	One goat	Northern Tasmania	Ball of coarse vegetation in rumen	Usually seen as incidental post mortem finding but blockages of gut can occur.

Scabby skin – generalised.	One goat	Northern Tasmania	Looked like dermo.	May respond to dermo treatment as for sheep. Goats can also get generalised Chorioptes bovis mite infestations and may respond to appropriate treatment.
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