



Managing sheep in times of drought

Dr Catherine Harper BSc BVMS

Barossa Veterinary Service

Outline



- Supplementary Feeding Challenges
- Diseases to watch for
- Benefits of FEC
- Saving you money with Pregnancy Testing
- PIRSA Disease Investigation
- How we can help.

Conditions to watch for:

- Grain Poisoning or Acidosis
- Pinkeye, Scabby Mouth and Pneumonia
- Vaccine Preventable - Pulpy Kidney
- Nutritional Deficiencies
- Internal parasites
- Skinny Sheep

Grain Poisoning or Acidosis

- Overgrowth on inappropriate bacteria in the rumen secondary to grain digestion



- Often not whole herd and not only at the beginning
- Signs to look for:
 - Sheep not eating
 - Dull
 - Sometimes scouring
 - Sudden death
- Diagnosis
 - On Post Mortem – grain in rumen and sour smell
 - pH strip for swimming pool on rumen fluid

Prevention

- Feed daily first 14-21 days then can reduce frequency
- Use buffer/premix if feeding >50% of ration as cereal grain
- Access to roughage
- Feed daily
- Wheat > Barley > Oats > Lupins
- To transition to wheat or barley from oats, increase the wheat or barley portion by 25% of the oat ration every five days over 16 days. For example, if the current oat ration is 500g, start by adding 125g of wheat or barley to every 375g of oats.

Table 2. A typical introductory regimen for increasing grain content in a complete ration for sheep or cattle

Day	% in ration	
	Cereal grain	Hay
1-5	20	80
6-10	40	60
11-15	60	40
16-20	70	30
Final ration	80	20

Treatment:

- Remove stock from access to grain
- Provide good quality roughage
- Maintain access to water
- Bicarb likely limited use (15g/250ml)
- Call the Vet!
 - Antibiotics
 - Vitamin B1
 - Virginiamycin
 - Euthanasia may be appropriate

Animals will take a long time to recover (~ 6 weeks) and are often poor doers – prevention is better!



Top Disease Risks

Pinkeye

- Irritation to surface of eye
 - Bacteria spread by flies
-
- Prevention
 - Minimise dust and flies
 - Remove affected animals and treat
 - Ensure appropriate feeder space
 - Treatment is antibiotics – either single injection or cream to be repeated in 48 hour
 - Valuable animals or severe, anti inflammatory will also help
- **Please don't use powder or aerosol****



- Scabby Mouth

- Less of an issue in SA
- Very contagious and severely production limiting
- Close contact makes worse

Prevention via vaccination or expedient removal of affected animals

Limit access to paddocks with thistles or sharp fodder.



- Pneumonia

- Significant issue in dry dusty conditions
- “Summer Pneumonia” cause by *M. haemolytica*

Prevention includes vaccination with a cattle product that is proving very effective.

Pulpy Kidney and other vaccine disease

- Higher risk in animals being fed high density rations and in close contact
- Will appear as sudden death, often in best animals
- Need 6 monthly vaccine if in challenging environment
- Use 6 in 1 not 3 in 1
 - STORAGE



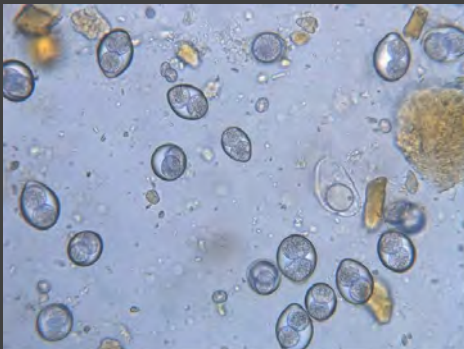


Nutritional deficiencies

- Lambs in confinement feeding in dry times may have depleted reserves of Vitamin ADE in liver stores.
 - Can present as blindness or rickets
 - 1ml Vitamin ADE IM
- Sheep being fed high levels of grain need extra calcium – this can be provided by a 50/50 mix of stock lime and stock salt in cut down drums.

Parasitism

- Internal Parasites
 - Summer rains (haha!)
 - Barbers Pole and Black Scour Worms
 - Coccidiocis
 - Stress
 - Muddy pool around troughs
 - Young animals



15L Cydectin Drench will treat ~ 1000 sheep
\$450 per bottle = \$0.45c/sheep

Faecal Egg Count \$25/ mob
1000 sheep divided into 4 mobs =\$100 for testing
Will also identify coccidia

NO drench required save you \$350

Drench required

- Increased cost BUT allows to check drench accuracy
- Appropriate use of drench products
- Information aids decisions and planning
- Appropriate choice of product

Pregnancy Testing

- Removal of dry animals will save you feed and water
- Economics makes sense
- If you have paddock space consider twin/single

\$0.60c/ ewe x 1000 ewes = \$600

10% dry = 100 ewes

Dry matter intake per day for 60kg ewe = 1.8kg DM/ day

100 ewes x 1.8kg DM/day = 180kg of DM per day that you are NOT paying for (pasture/grain/hay)





PRIMARY
INDUSTRIES
& REGIONS SA
PIRSA

PIRSA

- Investigate ANYTHING unusual
 - Sickness
 - Deaths
 - Lameness
- Exotic or emergency disease often look like common things to start with
- TSE Scheme - \$110 per sheep

How they can help:

- Subsidise laboratory cost
- Post mortem investigations
- On farm assistance



- Support you through sharing of advancements in animal health
 - Information nights
 - Actively stop for a chat
 - Make property visits worthwhile
- Brucellosis Testing and Ram examinations
- FEC in house
- Disease Investigation and assist if things go wrong

COME AND TALK TO US 😊



Resources

- Catherine Harper –85621162
catherine@barossavetservice.com.au
- Sheep Connect SA PIRSA
- NSW and WA governments DPI Factsheets
- Lifetime Wool/Ewe