



New South Wales worm update

November 2011

Steve Love, State Coordinator-Internal Parasites NSW DPI, Armidale
(stephen.love@industry.nsw.gov.au):

Predictions of a “La Nina” event are firming, although the experts say it won’t be as strong as last summer.

For NSW at least, this means there probably will be above average rain over summer: good for grass, and worms, not least Barber’s Pole worm and Black Scour worm.

Hopefully those weaning in summer have spent a few months getting paddocks in shape for weaning lambs into: i.e. good feed and low worm risk.

Regular and frequent worm egg count (WEC) monitoring will be required, as well as DrenchChecks (a WEC 10 days post-treatment) to make sure that you are not using ineffective drenches, thus making summer even more favourable for worms.

Rad Nielsen, Veterinary Health Research, Armidale (rnielsen@vhr.com.au):

Worm monitoring results at VHR over the last month have been varied. Some extreme counts have been seen in ewes post lambing (in excess of 3,000epg mean), whilst other producers appear to have good control of worms. I feel the difference largely comes down to management and paddock planning. Paddocks that were “wormy” back in autumn are still likely to be a high larval challenge environment, whilst ewes lambing in prepared “low worm” paddocks have low-moderate infections at lamb marking.

The seasonal conditions are certainly now ideal for larval development on pasture. It is under these extreme conditions that graziers may rudely discover that perceived effective drenches are in fact falling well short of providing good worm control. Finding “wormy” or dead sheep soon after a drench is an expensive way of detecting drench resistance. As I have previously stated, resistance to both Moxidectin and Levamisole is now a major issue in an increasing section of the New England. I urge all graziers who have not established the drench resistance status on their property within the last 2-3 years to do so early in 2012.



LHPA DISTRICT REPORTS

Lachlan LHPA

Eliz Braddon, Young (eliz.braddon@lhpa.org.au):

In the eastern area of the Lachlan LHPA, producers have started to submit their “first summer drench” egg counts to see what burdens are. In general, they are slowly rising (363epg average with a range of 60-840epg) but it is not a consistent across the board picture at the moment and varies greatly with property location, past worm history and classes of sheep.

So my advice at the moment is save yourself that \$\$\$ of a drench and do a simple worm test: Hold the sheep in one corner of the paddock for 5-10 minutes and then let them walk off. All you have to do then is put on the glove included in the test kit and go and pick up 10 fresh samples that the sheep will kindly leave behind!

This all gets packed up in a prepared mail bag and posted to EMAI, Narellan. For about \$50.00 you can get some good honest information on how many eggs are in your sheep and this reflects to how heavy a burden. If you put a DV's name on it, we can then provide advice as well for free - don't guess, worm test!

Belinda Edmonstone, Forbes (belinda.edmonstone@lhpa.org.au); Nic Cronin, Forbes (nik.cronin@lhpa.org.au):

In the central area of the Lachlan LHPA average faecal egg counts for the month of October have ranged from 0-2400epg with individual counts ranging from 0-13400epg. Worm activity is increasing with Barber's Pole worm beginning to present some issues. One producer was losing ewes from Barber's Pole worm. When the diagnosis was made he asked if that could have been the reason his wool clip was down 1.6kg/head on last year's clip. Given that feed had been plentiful I think that it was highly likely the cause of reduced wool production. This case highlights the less obvious, subclinical impact internal parasites have on production.

Katherine Marsh, Condoblin (katharine.marsh@lhpa.org.au):

There have been few worm tests conducted in the past month, but the average counts in those that have been conducted has been 664epg with a range of 388-940epg. Increasing percentages of Barber's Pole worm are also starting to be seen. With warmer weather and reasonable rain, worms will become more problematic. Producers should be vigilant for worm issues, especially if they have sheep that are already in poorer condition. Also at this time of the year I tend to find that producers have more worm issues with sheep that are grazing on Gilgai country, as the Gilgais produce a micro-climate very favourable to worm survival.



New England LHPA

Steve Eastwood, Northern New England (steve.eastwood@lhpa.org):

Keeping Barber's Pole worm numbers low is the main focus at this stage to avoid large numbers building up towards the end of summer.

Producers are advised to monitor mobs every 4-6 weeks by undertaking Worm Egg Counts (WEC) and to use a known effective drench when required. If in doubt of which drench to use – seek professional advice.

Weaner paddocks should be spelled October-December for weaning onto clean paddocks in January.

North West LHPA

Derek Lunau, Moree (derek.lunau@lhpa.org.au):

Worm counts have remained under 1000epg on Strongyl counts for most mobs. Some producers drenched 1-2 months ago with a long acting product (such as Avomec Duel) but some producers have also not drenched. On the flat western areas this has not caused clinical disease. The season has been a lot drier than this time last year and suspect pastures have cleaned up to a large extent. Recommendation is to re-test monthly. Overall calls from producers with worm problems have been less than half of what it was last year.

Tablelands LHPA

Bill Johnson, Goulburn (bill.johnson@lhpa.org.au):

About ninety people shared their sheep worm experiences at a forum organised by the Crookwell vets in late October. Significant losses of both ewes and lambs were reported across a wide area of the southern tablelands in late winter-early spring, despite stories of repetitive strain injury from frequent drench gun usage. Re-infection from contaminated pastures occurred at alarming speed, and cases of drench resistance were all too common. Most of the audience were monitoring worm levels by faecal worm egg counts, and reported marked paddock-to-paddock differences in both the size of the burden and in some cases the proportion of worm species present.

The take-home messages from the evening were pretty clear:



Do a worm egg count now and have the lab culture the eggs to identify what types of worms are present on your farm. Some places have mainly Black Scour worms, some only Barber's Pole worms, while most have a mixture of both. It is essential to know what you are dealing with.

Do a worm egg count 10-14 days after drenching to be sure the drench was effective.

Worm egg counts are high enough in most weaners to allow you to do a drench resistance test this year.

Don't delay weaning. Get the lambs drenched and off the lambing paddock, and monitor their progress with monthly dung tests.

Pastures are haying off quickly, so the first summer drench should be given now.

Look ahead to next autumn. Use adult dry sheep now in the three weeks after drenching to graze paddocks to be used your weaners after the autumn break. Remember it was lack of pasture preparation which landed us in strife this year.

Jim McDonald, Yass, (jim.mcdonald@lhpa.org.au):

The Yass District has seen a drier end to spring than recently which has seen a major reduction in parasite activity.

Worm egg count monitoring has dropped away due to the first summer drench being now due and is a well-accepted practice.

There are still significant Barber's Pole counts coming from the northern and eastern areas adjacent to Crookwell. With this in mind and having experienced a rough time last year, doing an egg count and larval differentiation will give you added knowledge to assist you to manage worm burdens going into, what many predict, to be a wetter than normal summer.

Those that can organise a drench resistance test before weaning – now is the time. If not, a good method to check whether you have some level of resistance to the product you are using is to conduct a worm egg count about 10 days post drenching.

When doing your first summer drench – don't forget fly control.

Central West LHPA

Evelyn Walker, LHPA DV, Dubbo (evelyn.walker@lhpa.org.au):



To avoid a repeat of last year's losses from Barber's Pole worm, many sheep producers have implemented extra management practices this year. Some are performing additional worm tests. Others are drenching twice this summer. A few have drenched three times already. And a handful have even drenched at lamb marking because of previous problems with Barber's Pole in young lambs prior to weaning.

Rather than let fear and paranoia from last year's losses dictate one's management practices, the best way to keep ahead of this worm is to drench strategically based on regular worm egg counts. Drenching too often and unnecessarily without knowing your worm status is potentially ineffective on your worms, costs money and time, and leads to drench resistance.

Drenching lambs at marking is generally unnecessary as lambs are still on their mother's milk and grazing very little pasture. However, if you are weaning later than usual or your lambing paddocks are heavily contaminated, young lambs and ewes can be severely affected by worm burdens. If in doubt, and you are considering a drench prior to weaning, get a worm egg count done of ewes and lambs. This way you can see where your worm egg counts are at.

Bottom line: Always check with a worm test before you drench and get a post worm egg count 10-14 days later to make sure your drench actually worked. Don't assume.

Riverina LHPA

Colin Peake, Hay (colin.peake@lhpa.org.au):

Worm counts and clinical disease have been very quiet in the Riverina over the last 4 weeks.

In the East Riverina, Gabe Morrice reports a low number of worm tests and all except 1 with low counts. The 1 high count was 1400egg. Producers that aren't following drench plan will need to monitor over summer, especially if there is summer rain.

To the West at Hay, it has been very quiet over the last 4 weeks with few tests, which have been low and very little evidence of clinical disease.

If there are summer storms/rain, producers will need to worm test and monitor their flocks. There is good feed about and most sheep will be feeding on herbage etc high off the ground.

Dan Salmon reports that it has been similar around Deniliquin with few worm tests and no evidence of clinical disease. Dan did a worm count last week and found 1500 worms, low numbers.

As above, Dan recommends monitoring over summer, especially after any rain events.



Hume LHPA

Tony Morton, Wagga Wagga (tony.morton@lhpa.org.au):

Reinfection problems and higher than normal counts continued on many properties into October.

As an example, lambs drenched 01.08.2011 at weaning with an Abamectin/Levamisole/BZ triple combination and again 28.08.2011 with Abamectin/Levamisole/BZ triple combination was soon scouring and ill thrifty again.

Egg counts four weeks after the second drench were only 44epg and yet two weeks later the weaners had a huge burden of small Brown Stomach worms in post mortem and a total worm count undertaken. A further drench with Ivomec and move to a clean paddock gave an excellent kill and very good response so the problem was reinfection not resistance. A good example of the need to have "low worm" paddocks for weaners and to interpret egg counts cautiously soon after drenching (immatures may be causing a lot of damage before they lay eggs).

Not every property had these problems. Some egg counts remained low, usually where the worm program was very thorough and monitoring regularly undertaken.

Hopefully a more normal summer rainfall pattern than last year will allow the first summer drench to break the worm cycle much more effectively than last year.

Ian Masters, Gundagai, (ian.masters@lhpa.org.au):

Not a lot to report from the Gundagai portion of the Hume LHPA. Good pasture growth seems to have limited the impact of worms in late spring in most areas. Egg counts have varied from low in the western parts of the area to some moderate counts in higher rainfall areas. Trichs and Ostertagia are the main species involved but some larval differentials from properties in eastern parts of the district indicating 10-15% Haemonchus. Pastures starting to hay off towards the middle of November and seasonal conditions showing signs of a return to a drier summer than last year which will help to break the worm cycle.

South East LHPA

Chris Haylock, Bombala (chris.haylock@lhpa.org.au):

Extra worm drenches were needed for many ewe mobs on the Monaro this year, with high worm pickup over lambing. Counts of 2000+, predominantly Black Scour worm were seen on many properties. Some producers were switching drenches to try and combat the problem, but most were more likely contamination rather than resistance. It seemed like larvae were synchronised in their



movements onto pasture as soon as the weather warmed up a little. Scouring and weight loss were the common reports.

Now, ewes are regaining immunity, feed is diluting worm larvae and pickup has probably eased. Barber's Pole worms are starting to show up, though clinical cases are not reported at this stage. Closantel use over spring will make a difference if resistance is not widespread.

While ewes were showing signs of worms, lambs have not yet been reported with problems. Delays in weaning would be all that is needed to create a worm problem. With grass seed likely to be an issue again this year, paddock selection may be limited and producers may need to consider sustained action products to ensure a low-worm start for their weaners.

Bob Templeton, Braidwood (bob.templeton@lhpa.org.au):

We have a mixed bag in Braidwood. Black Scour worm is everywhere whilst Barber's Pole worm is slowly spreading around the district. Producers are strongly urged to follow the DrenchPlan strategic drench recommendations of a November drench. A WormTest would be advisable in late January 2012.