

# Worms

## Strategic prevention

Consult WormBoss and seek professional advice. Some activities to assist in prevention of worms includes:

- **Genetics:** Breed worm resistant sheep by choosing sires with low Australian Sheep Breeding Values (ASBVs) for worm egg count (WEC). Select for low dag scores where scouring is an issue.
- **Grazing:** Create low worm-risk paddocks using Smart Grazing, alternate sheep and cattle on paddocks, rotational grazing with short graze and longer rest periods and take advantage of cold periods for reducing contamination of paddocks.
- **Plan:** WormTest at WormBoss recommended times. Worm tests help us decide when to drench but importantly when not to drench.
- **Drench:** Use strategic drenches at recommended times. Use multi-active combinations where possible and restrict use of persistent products to specific purposes and high worm-risk times.
- **Rotate:** Manage drench resistance and conduct drench tests every three to five years.
- **Introduced sheep:** Quarantine drench with at least four actives including either monepantel or derquantel.

## Tactical response

Consult WormBoss Drench Decision Guides and/or get professional advice on tactical treatments. Key tactics to think of include:

- use Drench Decision Guides to determine if testing or drenching is required.
- use WEC thresholds to decide when sheep require treatment. Include larval culture in regions with barber's pole worm to determine worm type.
- use drenches that are most effective on your property that are multi-active combinations and rotate. Restrict use of persistent products to specific purposes and high worm-risk times.
- use the WormBoss Drench Decision Guide to decide when to test again.

## Likelihood

Worm infections occur in all sheep production regions. Black scour and brown stomach worms are dominant in southern winter rainfall regions and barber's pole worm is dominant in summer rainfall regions.

Likely triggers for worm infection:

- sheep resistance to worms is lowest in ewes during late pregnancy and lactation, in sheep less than one year old, when body condition score is low and when sires have not been selected for worm resistance.
- development of worm larvae on pasture occurs with wet weather (10–15 mm), daily maximum temperatures exceeding 10–18°C (lowest for brown stomach worm and highest for barber's pole worm) and set stocking of pastures.

### Impact

- Reduced growth, wool and survival.
- Annual cost of \$4/head, 80% from production loss and 20% from treatment costs, varies between regions and highest in summer rainfall with barber's pole worm.
- All sheep, but especially ewes during late pregnancy and lactation and sheep less than one year old, will have a reduced weight gain, wool growth, fibre diameter, staple strength and milk yield. With barber's pole worm there will also be anaemia, bottle jaw and death.



### TIPS AND INFORMATION

- **Breed for resistance, use grazing management, worm test at recommended times, give strategic and quarantine drenches and manage drench resistance.**
- **Monitor with WECs (timed according to your regional Drench Decision Guide) to determine when sheep exceed the WEC threshold level of disease risk. Treat, and then monitor again, as recommended by the Drench Decision Guide.**

### Resource links

WormBoss: Breeding for worm resistance

WormBoss: Drench Decision Guides

WormBoss: Grazing management

WormBoss: Regional worm control programs

WormBoss: Smart grazing for weaner worm control

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