

Health and Disease Issues

Coccidiosis

Caused by a microscopic protozoan parasite found in the intestinal wall of affected sheep.

Predisposing Factors:

- Stress, poor nutrition and worm infestations
- Faecal contamination of feed
- Overstocking of lambs and weaners under moist conditions.

In intensive feeding systems lambs are most susceptible to coccidiosis soon after their introduction into the feedlot or containment area.

Signs and Symptoms:

Between 20 to 60% of the mob are usually affected. Sheep almost invariably have a concurrent problem such as a heavy worm burden, nutritional or physical stress.

Acute scouring persists for a few days. Recovery period may be several weeks, during which time there is no scouring, but the appetite is poor and weight gains and wool production are reduced.

- Lack of appetite, and poor growth rates
- Abdominal pain
- Diarrhoea or dysentery.
- Dehydration
- Weakness
- Soft, grey faeces which may contain blood
- Recumbency and death.

Control and Prevention:

Minimise stress, control concurrent disease problems and ensure lambs are well fed.

Avoid faecal contamination of feed

Treatment:

Seek veterinary advice, separate infected lambs from the mob and treat with prescribed drugs or drenches. Sulphonamide drugs or drenches are commonly used.



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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (July 2013). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the user's independent adviser.

