

## Health and Disease Issues

### Wool biting/coat chewing

Once sheep start wool biting, some seem to become habitual biters and are difficult to stop

#### **Predisposing Factors:**

The primary predisposing factor for wool biting is believed to be diets low in effective fibre. Other suspected factors include:

- Mineral imbalance (particularly zinc)
- Parasitism
- Boredom
- Habit
- Depraved and/or deprived appetite
- Bullying.

#### **Signs and Symptoms:**

Sheep that have been bitten often show patches of raw skin. Sheep become distressed and lose condition.

#### **Control and Prevention:**

Provision of low quality roughages such as straw will, in many situations, alleviate boredom, improve ration fibre levels and reduce the incidence of wool biting.

#### **Treatment:**

Provision of low quality roughage such as cereal straw.

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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.