

Health and Disease Issues

Scabby Mouth

Also known as Orf, a highly infectious viral disease.

Predisposing Factors:

The virus is capable of remaining within the soil for many years. Minimising stress and injury to the soft tissues of the mouth will reduce risk of infection. Use of coarse, hard fibre in a ration should be minimised to reduce damage to the lips of confined animals.



Signs and Symptoms:

The disease takes three weeks to run its course. It is characterised by pustules and/or ulcers located on the lips and inside the mouth.

Eating appears painful and therefore intake is reduced significantly during this time, although affected lambs can usually consume smooth grains such as lupins.

Lesions on the pasterns causing acute lameness may also occur.

All lesions are susceptible to fly strike or secondary infection.

Control and Prevention:

Vaccination at marking or several weeks prior to lambs entering a feedlot are effective in preventing outbreaks of the disease.

Treatment:

Spread in a flock through direct contact with infected sheep or infective material is rapid and can lead to a large proportion of the flock becoming infected.

In the advent of an outbreak all affected sheep should be isolated to prevent transmission to other stock. If required and practical the remaining stock should be vaccinated if susceptible. There is no specific treatment available and generally the disease will clear up in about three to four weeks. Infected animals should be provided with palatable feed and treated to prevent blowfly strike.

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