

APPENDIX 3 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

PARASITISM AND DRENCHES

NOTE: Although there are similarities in parasite control between NZ and the UK, each industry has a unique set of factors and challenges that need to be recognised and accounted for when reviewing on farm and industry practices in each country.

KEY ISSUES

- Lamb production in both NZ and the UK remains highly reliant on the use of effective drenches
- Industry productivity could be negatively impacted by 30-40% if drenches were removed as a parasite control tool on sheep farms
- Despite thousands of litres of drench being used in both industries over the past 50 years, their removal would not only impact productivity, but there would be a significant threat to animal welfare (in some cases, could result in widespread deaths)
- The continued use of effective drenches only maintains current levels of productivity, they do not remove the threat of parasitism to the sheep industry. In a pastoral system, ~90% of the parasite population is resident on the ground with only ~10% resident in the animal (drench use primarily impacts the population of parasites resident in the animal)
- Drenches are one of the few prophylactic animal treatments that are widely used by farmers
- The only current restriction on drench use, is a slaughter withholding period



- The continued development of drench resistance to most actives continues to reduce effective drench options for farmers, when resistance goes undetected, lamb revenues could be reduced by ~13%
- Drench resistance is often imported onto a farm due to the lack of effective quarantine procedures
- The majority of farmers in NZ and the UK are unaware which drenches are effective on their properties (few have undertaken a Faecal Egg Count Reduction test, FECRT), some have carried out Drench Checks
- The productivity losses caused by drench resistance are generally sub clinical (not observed) until animals are faced with a high parasite challenge and drenching fails to address the animal performance issue
- Generally, drench efficacy needs to drop to below 60% before a farmer will observe there is an issue with stock performance and suspects a problem with the drench
- Most farmers attribute poor animal performance to other factors as they assume parasites are not the problem because they have been drenching
- A high proportion of farmers continue to follow a calendar based preventative drench approach (it's simple to have in the work plan, appears to work, and is strongly supported by drench suppliers). In the UK, there are signs of a change occurring to this approach due to the increased publicity and industry initiatives highlighting the need for change
- A limited number of novel new drenches have been developed due to the high cost of drug development and registration

These issues impact the sustainability and performance of the entire red meat supply chain.



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