

FLYSTRIKE TREATMENTS DURING DROUGHT



Monitoring for flystrike should identify strikes before sheep suffer. This relies on both thoroughness and frequency of inspection.

Experienced producers know that flystrike doesn't go away in a drought; isolated rainfall events can still provide the conditions that suit body strike and breech strike particularly when breech wrinkle combines with urine stain and/or dags.

Fewer rainfall events, shorter drier grass and lower humidity do decrease the incidence of body strike, and breech strike, prompting the question: "Should I apply a preventative treatment?"

Such treatments are rarely needed if:

- the sheep have a low susceptibility to strike during periods of high fly activity
- there are few periods of high fly activity and they are generally very short
- the mob number is small enough for strikes to be identified early and treated individually.

However, as droughts invariably break, sometimes with flooding rains that can quickly isolate mobs of sheep or make access difficult, be prepared to check and treat ahead of a likely high risk weather event.

BODY STRIKE

Jetting or spray-on body strike preventative treatments involve chemical and labour costs that may be better diverted to supplementary feed during a drought. But before foregoing such a treatment consider the susceptibility of the sheep and the later labour requirements.

Will labour resources be available to:

- a) monitor sheep more frequently, particularly after each decent rainfall event, and

b) treat individual struck sheep?

Will few or many of your sheep be affected with fleece rot or dermo (dermatophilus or lumpy wool) from the following causes, after sporadic rain?

- Creamier/yellower wool contains a higher proportion of suint (sweat) that holds moisture.
- Poor back and shoulder conformation that allows water to stay on the skin longer.
- A closed fleece structure that traps moisture, preventing the fleece from drying rapidly.
- Handling wet sheep.

Shearing time should also be considered, as longer wool during fly periods increases susceptibility to body strike.

BREECH STRIKE

Drought has a lesser effect on the incidence of breech strike, therefore, if a routine treatment is normally necessary, it will likely be needed during drought.

If your sheep have wrinkly breeches – an average Breech Wrinkle Score of 2 or above – strongly consider choosing future sheep or sires with much plainer breeches.

Dag is the other main offender causing breech strike. Potentially, dag may be reduced in a drought, however when green

feed/weeds grow (there can be several false breaks before the drought truly breaks) it can cause digestive upsets leading to dags.

Less wool on the breech (breech cover) also reduces susceptibility to strike.

Breech wrinkle, dag and breech cover are all heritable and can be included in a breeding program to reduce susceptibility to breech strike.

Aside from a preventative chemical treatment, consider crutching as an alternative to decrease susceptibility to breech strike when there is higher fly activity.

MONITORING

Monitoring should identify strikes before systemic signs appear. This relies on both closeness and frequency of inspection. A paddock drive-through rarely identifies early strikes.

Monitor the amount of stain or dag on breeches and crutch and/or treat before strike becomes a problem.

During high flystrike risk periods, check sheep closely every two to three days.

Close inspection in the paddock can be done in a number of ways:

- Hold the mob along a fence line and walk

FREE TESTS!

ARE YOUR SHEEP BLOWFLIES RESISTANT TO CHEMICALS?

Tests that would cost more than \$3,500 are currently being offered free this flystrike season (2018/2019) by the NSW Department of Primary Industries and jointly funded by AWI.

The tests assess the current level of pesticide resistance in fly populations. The fly test is only for the *Lucilia cuprina* sheep blowfly. Samples are accepted from all over Australia.

WHAT IS BEING TESTED AND WHY?

The following chemicals, which represent all of the major chemical groups, for blowflies are being tested: Spinosad, Imidacloprid, Ivermectin, Cyromazine, Dicyclanil, Diazinon and Diflubenzuron.

This project aims to determine the resistance profiles of blowflies and lice across all wool producing states. It is also gathering baseline data on newer chemicals for future reference.

among the sheep.

- Drift the sheep slowly between you and a fence in both directions.
- Hold the sheep quietly and observe for signs of irritation (biting, scratching, feet stamping) or for a concentration of flies around a sheep.

All of these methods are time consuming (and therefore costly) and as the mob size increases, the chance of missing affected sheep also increases. Effective monitoring may be difficult or impossible in rough terrain and/or timbered paddocks.

While it is ideal to minimise chemical use, consider your ability to monitor effectively; animal welfare takes precedence. If sheep with advanced flystrike are found, increase your frequency of monitoring, and if appropriate, apply a chemical preventative to all susceptible sheep.

Application of a preventative treatment does not remove the need to regularly monitor sheep for flystrike.

TREATING STRUCK SHEEP

1. Shear struck wool and a 5cm barrier ring of clean wool around the strike close to the skin to remove maggots and check for 'maggot runs'.
2. Collect the maggot-infested wool into

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you are interested in supplying NSW DPI researchers with maggots from fly struck sheep or fleeces from lousy sheep, please contact:

Narelle Sales, NSW DPI
Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute
Email: narelle.sales@dpi.nsw.gov.au
Phone: (02) 4640 6446

For flies, the testing process takes approximately 6–9 weeks. After testing you will receive the results for your flock via phone or email. At the end of the project you will also receive the project results showing how products are performing in your region or state. The project will be completed in mid-2020.

Producer confidentiality will be maintained and all property information will be de-identified. **B**

a maggot-proof (plastic) bag and leave the sealed bag in the sun for a couple of days to kill all maggots.

3. Apply a registered flystrike dressing to the struck area as well as the clean wool ring area to prevent re-strike.
4. Remove severely struck sheep from the mob so they can be closely monitored.
5. Cull all struck sheep because they are very likely to be struck again or next year.

To kill remaining maggots on struck sheep, use the fast-acting chemicals that are registered as flystrike dressings (spinosad, ivermectin, OPs), rather than the long-term preventative products containing dicyclanil or cyromazine, which take up to four days to kill maggots.

You can search for commercial flystrike prevention and treatment products with the FlyBoss 'Lice and Flystrike and Products' tool, including chemical groups, resistance status and withholding periods. Access the tool at www.flyboss.com.au/tools/products **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.flyboss.com.au

flyboss

PARABOSS: BEST PRACTICE ADVICE FOR MANAGING SHEEP PARASITES

ParaBoss is a suite of three products – LiceBoss, WormBoss and FlyBoss – developed to help sheep producers in the management of lice, worms and blowflies.

The LiceBoss, WormBoss and FlyBoss websites are sources of detailed management information and regional programs that will assist in managing the major parasite risks for sheep. The websites have been developed by expert panels of parasitologists and veterinarians from across Australia.

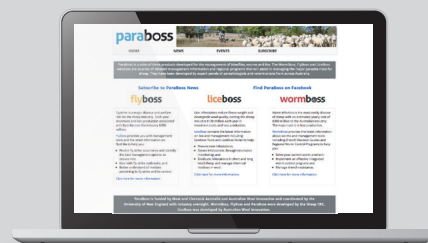
ParaBoss provides access to the three websites at www.paraboss.com.au.

Subscribe to ParaBoss News, the twice monthly free email newsletter with state outlooks on the current state of sheep parasites as well as feature articles and the quick quiz to test your knowledge of sheep parasites. You can subscribe on the ParaBoss website.

Join us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/paraboss.com.au to see weekly posts on flystrike, lice and worm control.

ParaBoss is funded by AWI and MLA and coordinated by the University of New England with industry oversight. **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.paraboss.com.au



paraboss

AWI Australian Wool Innovation Limited

mla MEAT & LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA