

## DrenchPlan - the basics

### Stephen Love

Veterinarian/State coordinator-internal parasites,  
Armidale

### Dr John Evers

District Veterinarian  
Rural Lands Protection Board, Young NSW

DrenchPlan is the recommended sheep worm management program for central and southern NSW. Following are some of the key points.

### Right drench, right time

#### Right drench

If you haven't tested your drenches, you're are guessing, or you are over-using the 'mectins' (macrocyclic lactone or ML drenches). What are your testing options?

- Regular DrenchChecks (GOOD). This simply involves doing a worm egg count (WormTest) 7-14 days after a drench. (The timing might be different for long-acting drenches. Check with your adviser).
- DrenchTest every 2-3 years + regular DrenchChecks (BEST). A DrenchTest or "faecal egg count reduction test" involves testing different drenches on groups of 10-15 animals in a mob of sheep.

#### Right time

The two most important drench times in DrenchPlan are

- the 'first summer drench' and
- the 'weaning drench'

The first 'summer' drench is given when pastures are haying off (this could be October or November, i.e. late Spring in some areas). The drench to weaners may or may not coincide with this 'summer' drench. The 'first summer drench', and certainly the second summer drench (February) should be preceded by a WormTest, especially in dry years. Other drenches should be given on the basis of WormTest results.

### Don't Import Resistance (Quarantine Drench)

You can get resistant worms by 'breeding your own', or by importing someone else's when you buy in sheep. Only by drenching introductions with a combination of three to four unrelated drench 'actives' will you keep out currently known resistant strains of worms. This can be done by using 'off-the shelf' combination drenches, or by mixing on-farm according to label directions.

### Don't Guess, WormTest (Importance of Monitoring)

If in doubt, WormTest. In any case, WormTesting is recommended before drenching, especially before the second summer drench and additional drenches. This is even more important in dry years. Most drench resistance is believed to have occurred as a result of unnecessary drenching in droughts or long dry spells.

### Feed 'em or don't breed 'em<sup>1</sup> (Nutrition)

Nutrition has a huge impact on the immunity of sheep and their ability to handle worms. Pay particular attention to vulnerable sheep: weaners and lambing ewes. The first 6 weeks after weaning is critical. A prepared weaner paddock and, if necessary, supplementary feeding from the time of weaning is essential.

### Grazing management

Prepare 'low worm-risk' paddocks for the most vulnerable sheep: weaners and lambing ewes. Methods include grazing beforehand with cattle (VERY GOOD) or adult dry sheep in good condition (GOOD), or cropping or hay-making (BEST). Pasture quality and quantity however should not be sacrificed. Good nutrition has priority.

### Drench rotation

Drench rotation may or may not give you more uses out of a drench, but it will certainly give you

<sup>1</sup> Jim McDonald, pers. comm. 2005.

more years. Don't use the same drench family (eg the mectins) all the time. Change to a different drench family. However, you must know which drenches work on your property. (See 'Right drench').

### **Use IPM**

Integrated parasite management is based on drenching as well as non-chemical control options:

- Nutrition
- Grazing management
- Using worm-resistant rams
- Regular monitoring (WormTest)

### **More information**

- Consult your local vet or other qualified adviser
- DrenchPlan 2005 and related PrimeFacts (Agnotes) on sheep worm control. (Available through RLPB and NSW DPI offices or [www.agric.nsw.gov.au/reader/sheep-internal](http://www.agric.nsw.gov.au/reader/sheep-internal))
- WormBoss CD (through rural resellers) or on the web: [www.wormboss.com.au](http://www.wormboss.com.au)

### **Acknowledgement**

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