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Carcass monitoring in processing plants and what this means for lamb suppliers

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Surveillance and biosecurity extension in Tasmania project

- Funded by Animal Health Australia and DPIPWE
- Monthly livestock health monitoring report on diseases and conditions seen in livestock in Tasmania over the last month
- Includes brief treatment and prevention tips
- You can subscribe to receive the report every month by email:
www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/tas-health



The silent meat thieves

- The national sheep health monitoring project records selected conditions in sheep and lambs at some abattoirs.
- Losses:
 - condemnation (offals/carcase) and downgrading.
 - production loss on-farm.
- Today I will cover the most common conditions and how to prevent them on-farm.
- None infect humans.



Who are the top thieves?

- 137,000 lambs and 67,000 mutton inspected
- Tasmanian and mainland abattoirs
- November 2020 to April 2021 (6 months)

Condition	Losses
Liver Fluke	\$148,000
Pneu/pleurisy	\$40,000
Sheep measles	\$32,000
Sarco	\$28,000
Bladder worm	\$27,000
Vacc lesions	\$21,000
CLA	\$9,000



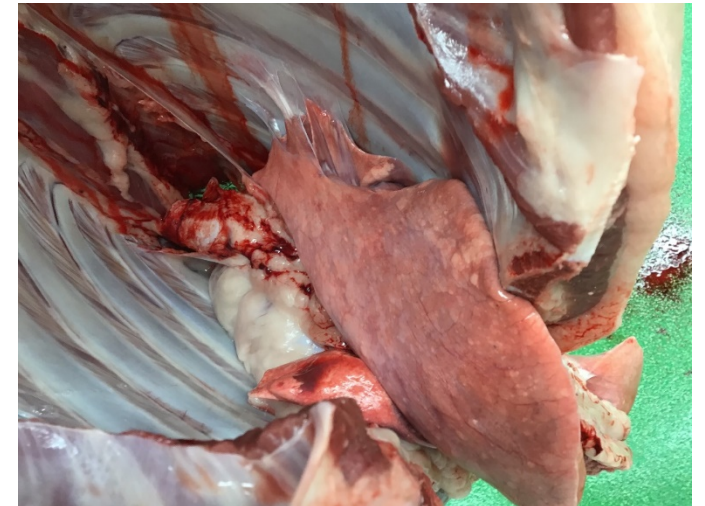
Liver fluke

- Condemned livers
- 15% wool and growth reduction with light infestation
- Control and prevention
 - Monitor – ask for Fluketest as well as Wormtest
 - Fluke eggs don't show up until 8+ weeks after infestation
 - Triclabendazole best for immature fluke but ESI is 63 days
 - Trough water for slaughter stock
 - Have a property fluke control program



Pneumonia and pleurisy

- Higher rates of pneumonia in lambs killed on mainland
- Lungs condemned, rib cage trimmed out
- Production loss, slow growth, deaths on-farm
- *Mycoplasma ovipneumonia* confirmed in Tasmania
- Cough, nasal discharge, respiratory disease
- Lowered milk production in ewes
- Prevention
 - Reduce stress
 - Avoid mixing groups if possible.



Sheep measles

- Condemnation of hearts, trimming/condemnation of carcass.
- Spread by tapeworm-infested dogs
- Worm dogs on the first day of each month – praziquantel
- Carcase, offal, dead pit and stray dog management
- Shooters, contactors to treat dogs with praziquantel prior
- Freeze sheep meat for a week before feeding to dogs



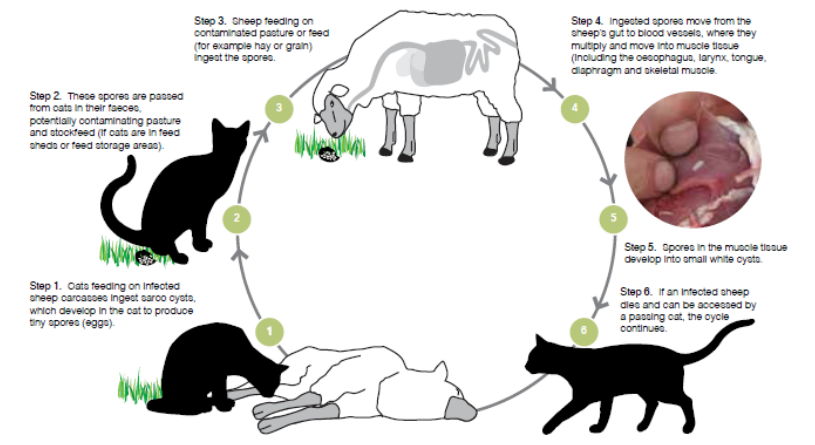
Bladder worm

- Small sack of fluid attached to liver, intestines or caul fat
- Causes condemn/trim of liver, condemn runners
- Spread by tapeworm infested dogs
- Prevention as for sheep measles



Sarco

- White rice-grain-like lesions in carcass and oesophagus
- Trimming, condemnation of carcasses
- Spread by cats
- Stop cats eating raw sheepmeat through offal, carcass and dead pit management
- Sustained cat control programs over large areas reduce sarco and toxo



Vaccination lesions

- Oily vaccines (e.g. Gudair) produce a large tissue reaction
- Vaccination into top of neck can cause staggers months later
- Vaccination into armpit or muscle can result in heavy trim
- Only vaccinate under skin high on side of neck
- Be careful not to self-inject



CLA (Cheesy Gland)

- Causes large abscesses in lymph glands
- Carcasses trimmed
- Spread at shearing, dipping
- Easily prevented with vaccine (eg 6 in 1)



Dead pits

- Recent Utas study has shown many cats live around dead pits
- Source of Toxo, sarco, sheep measles, bladder worm, blowflies and crows
- Can we do better?
 - Narrow trench and use shovel to cover both ends of the sheep?
 - Portable lids for pits?
 - Electrified netting?
 - Composting?



How do I know if I have a problem?

- Most abattoirs give you feedback
- **Livestock Data Link** (LDL) allows you to access information on carcase data, diseases and conditions detected in your sheep at slaughter.
- See: ldl.mla.com.au

Top three take home messages

1. Get on top of liver fluke if present on your property
2. Manage carcasses, offal, feeding of sheep meat to dogs/cats, dead pits and stray dogs and feral cats
3. Make sure you get feedback on each consignment

Tools, resources & training

- Livestock Data Link (MLA)
 - <https://ldl.mla.com.au>
- Sheep Connect Tasmania Disease factsheets
 - <https://sheepconnecttas.com.au/disease-factsheets/>
- Livestock Health Monitoring
 - www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/tas-health



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