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Managing internal parasites in sheep flocks

Lexie Leonard

A Leonard Veterinary Consulting

Back to basics

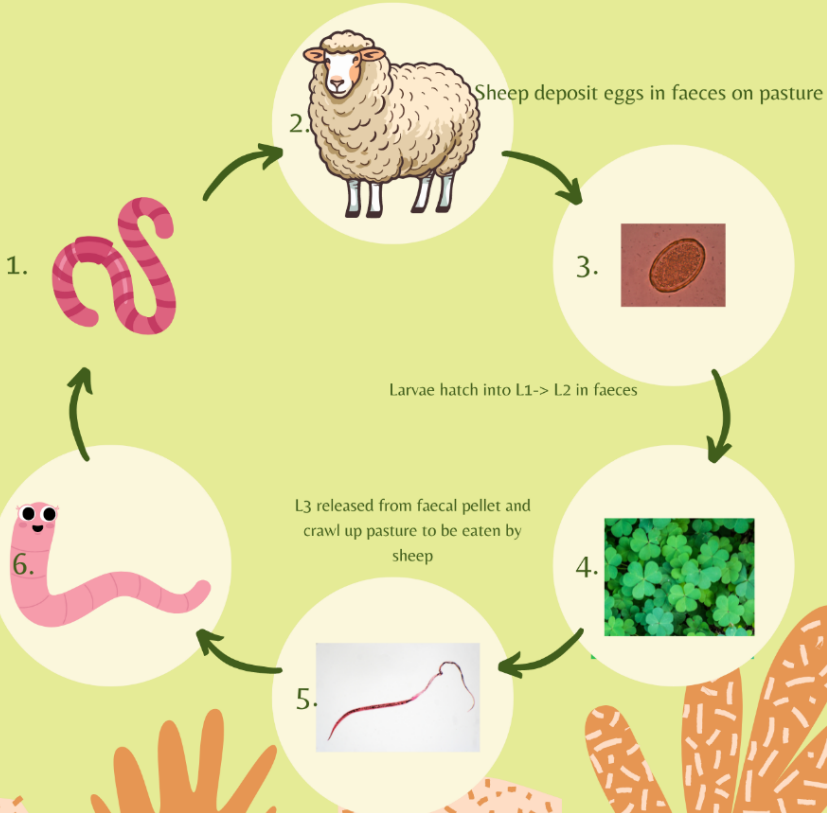
- Understanding the relationship between sheep and worms
 - worm life cycle
 - immunity (resilience vs resistance)
 - pasture
 - sheep health status
 - energy

Nematode Life Cycle

Adult worms infection stomach/small intestine and lay eggs

Pre-patent Period ~21 days

L3 moult to L4 -> Adults inside the sheep

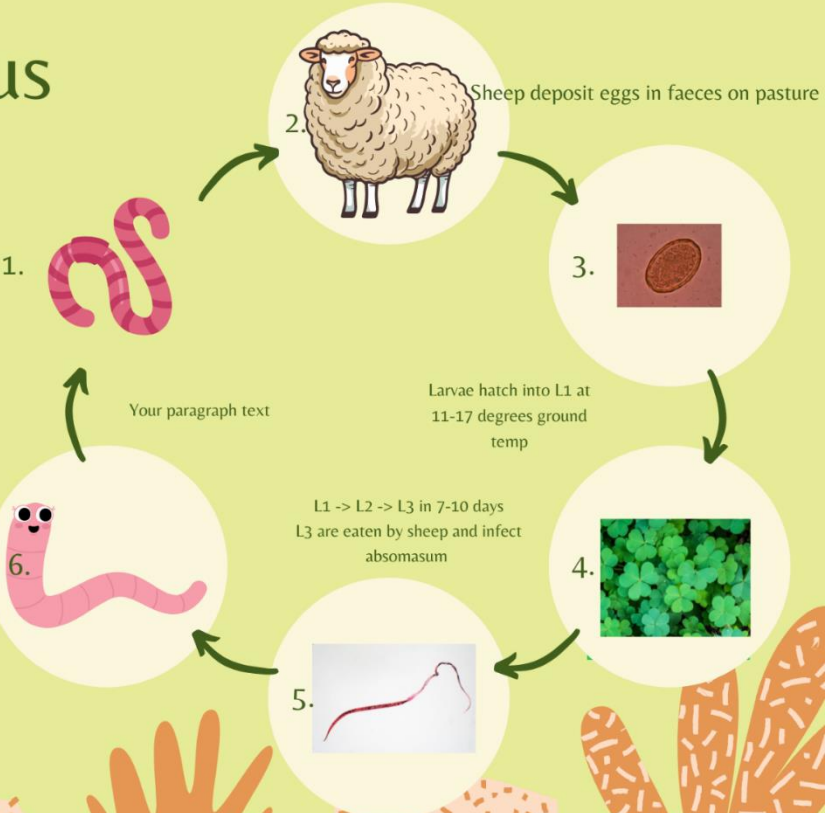


Haemonchus Life Cycle

Adult Haemonchus lay up to 10,000 eggs per day (7-10 days)

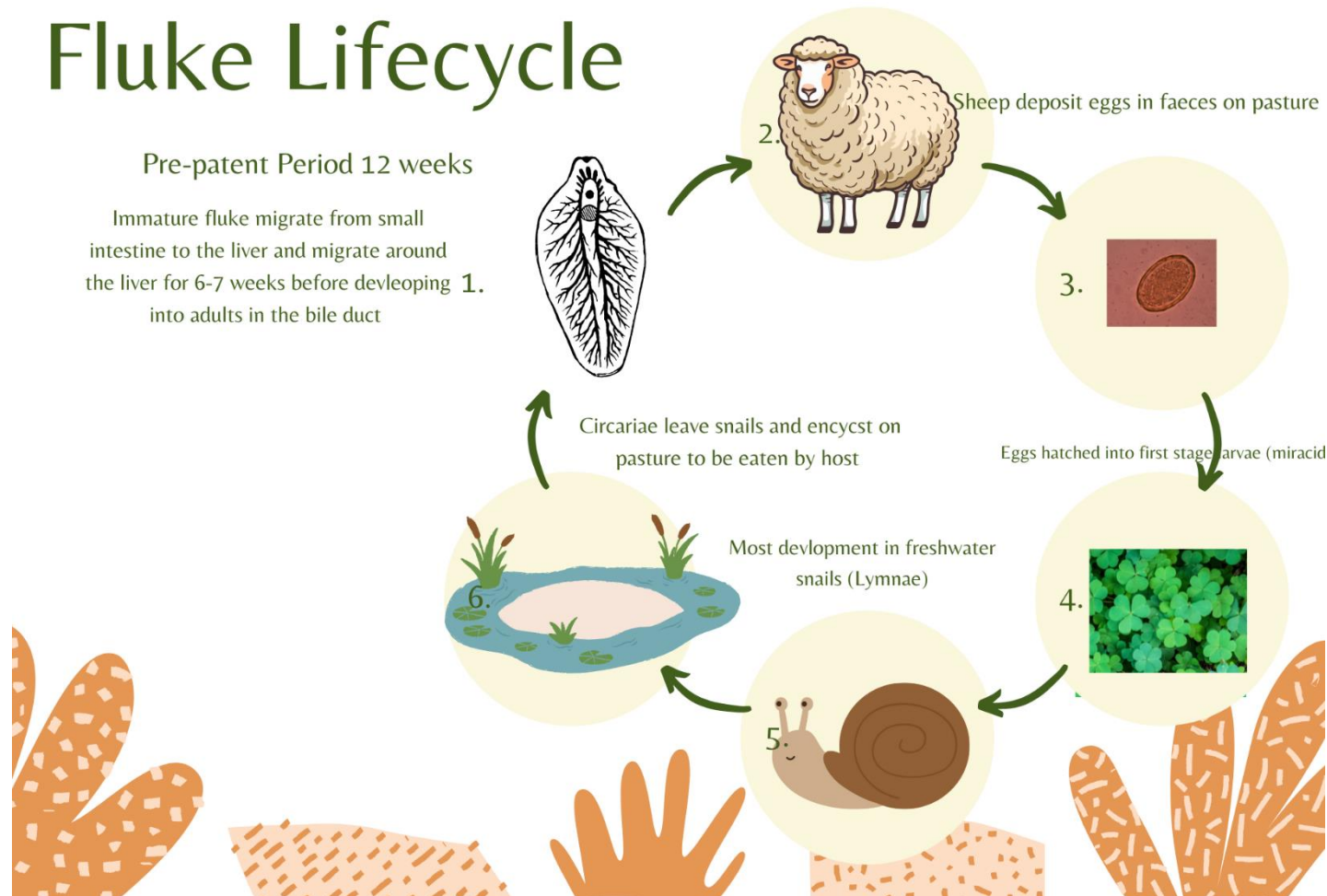
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L3 moult to L4 in the abomasum and feed off blood but do not lay eggs



Liver fluke

Fluke Lifecycle



Practical management

- What options do we have to manage worms?
 - drenches
 - faecal egg counts
 - sheep nutrition
 - pasture management
 - rotational/interspecies grazing

Drenches

- 6 drench active groups
 - resistance widespread and common
 - don't assume it won't happen on your farm.

Drench resistance testing every 3-5 years.

Ensure drenching is timed appropriately and required:

- faecal egg counts
- cut off levels will change with stock class/season
- assess stock to decide if they need drenching.



Faecal egg counts

- Test to see how many eggs per gram are in sheep's faeces
- Indication of adult worm burden
- Can be affected by
 - immune status of host
 - individual resistance.



Can be done under a microscope or egg counting machines.

Integral in any internal parasite manage plan. Allows for:

- correct timing of drenching
- serial monitoring of worm burdens
- cheap and easy to do.

Sheep factors

Individual sheep factors will have a big impact on how each animal handles their worm burden.

- age
- sex
- pregnant/lactating
- condition score
- genetics (resistance/resilience)
- length of infection

These are what we have under our control and are most able to influence.



Pasture management and grazing

Huge opportunity to manage worm burdens.

Keep your highest risk stock off your highest risk pastures.

How to know?

- do a WEC after stock leave paddocks
- short green feed – L3 climbs 1-3cm up pasture
- pastures that provide microclimates for larvae to survive
- time of year/season.



Top three take home messages

1. Set a parasite management plan in place which can respond to seasonality – be proactive in your management.
2. Know your farm drench resistance profile and worm species profile.
3. Don't leave it up to the calendar to tell you what to do.

Tools, resources & training

- www.paraboss.com.au
- Lifetime Ewe Management courses
- Zoetis Livestock Solutions website



Thank you

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vet@leonardpastoral.com