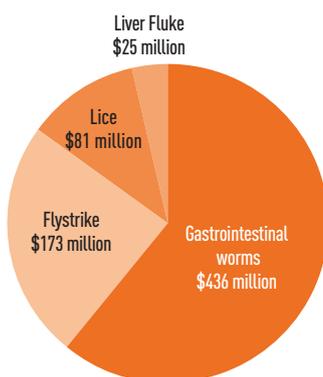


WHAT'S BUGGING YOU?

Help us to help you. Australian sheep producers will soon be surveyed regarding how they manage sheep worms, liver fluke, flies and lice on their properties. This AWI-funded research will ensure that research, advice and information can be tailored to producers at a regional, state or national level, addressing the issues that are currently of greatest importance.

Sheep parasites top the list of economic costs to producers – with sheep worms, liver fluke, flies and lice collectively costing the Australian sheep industry \$715 million annually in lost productivity, treatment and prevention costs.



Annual costs of parasites to the Australian sheep industry. Source MLA, 2015

AWI is funding a survey of Australian sheep parasite control practices undertaken by producers in 2018. The survey, which is being managed by researchers at the University of New England (UNE), will be available for producers to complete in February 2019.

This new survey follows on from similar previous surveys carried out by researchers for the 2003 and 2011 years.

The results of these previous parasite control surveys have proved very useful. For instance, they identified and confirmed the need for regional worm control programs and drench decision guides, which have been popular tools on the WormBoss website. The results also informed content for the FlyBoss and LiceBoss websites which contain valuable tools for managing flystrike and lice infestations.

WHY THE NEED FOR A NEW SURVEY?

Control measures have changed in the seven years since the last survey. The sheep industry was in the early years of a new drench active (monepantel) and two more drenches were approved for use in sheep (derquantal

and praziquantel). There are now new lice chemicals and a long-awaited vaccine against Barber's Pole worm is available.

There has also been an increased market requirement for knowledge of the provenance of wool and meat products, which has applied pressure to the industry to change practices. This has resulted in a decrease in the use of mulesing and better tools for genetic selection to reduce sheep parasite burdens.

As a result of all these changes, some of the areas that AWI and researchers are interested in learning about include:

- what sheep parasite control options have been adopted by producers
- how chemical resistance has changed; and
- how producers monitor and manage their sheep parasite challenges.

Queensland sheep producer and veterinarian Noel O'Dempsey, who runs fine wool sheep and prime lambs at 'Linallie' in the Traprock country between Texas and Inglewood, is on the Steering Committee for the project. He encourages all sheep producers to complete the survey.

"This is an important survey for producers and they should take the time to complete it as accurately as possible," he said.

"The results of the survey will not only allow industry to benchmark current parasite control strategies and get a feel for what changes have occurred since the previous survey, but it will ultimately enable producers to fine tune their on-farm parasite control, be it for worms, flies or lice."

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

All Australian sheep producers are encouraged to complete the new survey. It will be conducted online; there is therefore no limit to the number of participants completing it, which will hopefully result in a broader selection of Australian sheep producers represented.

WHAT DID THE PREVIOUS TWO SURVEYS REVEAL?

The two previous AWI parasite control surveys (2003 and 2011) showed major changes to producers' parasite management practices.

The average number of treatments for worms increased from 2.1 treatments/year in 2003 to 2.7 treatments/year in 2011. The highest average number of treatments per year was in New England (5.6 treatments) which is a region endemic to Barber's Pole worm. There was a greater use of combination drenches used in 2011 (43%), however there were still a large number of single active drenches given (57%).

In 2011, drench resistance testing was conducted by 29% of producers. Of those, 55% had resistance to benzimidazole drenches and levamisole, 28% to abamectin, 21% to moxidectin and 12% had resistance to ivermectin. 48% of farmers said they didn't know their drench resistance status.

There was a low use of genetic selection for resistance to worm infection (13%) in 2011 with paddock spelling, cropping and cattle/sheep rotations being the most utilised methods of worm control.

Regarding lice, 23% of producers reported lice infestations in 2011, with 27% reporting rubbing. More than 50% of producers reported no evidence of lice. Lice prevention rated highly with sheep producers but 22% reported no treatment for lice. Backliner treatments were the most frequently used for both short wool and long wool treatments. **B**

MORE INFORMATION
The **Benchmarking Australian Sheep Parasite Report** from the survey of 2011 practices is available on the AWI website wool.com

The survey will be available online in February 2019. Its availability will be publicised through various channels including email invitation, AWI e-newsletter, and on the AWI website Wool.com and ParaBoss websites at Paraboss.com.

The questionnaire will survey producers' control practices undertaken in the 2018 year. Sheep producers will be invited to indicate how they prefer to receive information on parasites and in which areas they would like more information and research.

Although the survey will be available online, producers who prefer to complete a paper copy can still do so by requesting a copy from the researchers: Dr Alison Colvin (alison.colvin@une.edu.au) or Prof Stephen Walkden-Brown (swalkden@une.edu.au) of UNE. Phone (02) 6773 5152. **B**