

AWI OJD Information Forum

15.11.12

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OJD

- Has affected many properties
 - Mortality – up to 75% infection rate in young merino wethers
 - Management – a challenge when mortality rates are high in young sheep
 - Biosecurity – apart from maintaining good fences and quarantining introductions is often very difficult at farm level





OJD Diagnosis

- AGID blood test
 - Rapid results but false negatives a problem
 - Not used now as reacts with vaccinates
- Faecal culture and PCR
 - Increased sensitivity but long time frame
 - Direct PCR will be huge advantage
- Autopsy
 - The gold standard

OJD Diagnosis

Abattoir surveillance

- Provides historical survey information
- Alerts many producers to unnoticed infection
- A positive must be confirmed “on farm”
- Individual negative reports on consignments of sheep must not be taken as “flock status”





Vaccination

- **The most important on farm control measure of all**
- In 4-5 years mortality rates fall to pre infection levels
- Alleviates the animal welfare problem of sheep wasting away until they die
- Is economically advantageous when losses due to OJD exceed 1.4% But....
- Vaccination started before infection eliminates the economic losses associated with the 4-5 years of high mortality



Vaccination

- A few vaccinates remain bacterial shedders
 - These may infect unvaccinated introduced sheep
 - NZ experience in the 90's showed that ceasing vaccination after - 8-9 years can lead to a recrudescence of disease
- Concerns with nodules and abscesses
 - Largely due to incorrect vaccination technique
 - Subcutaneous injection means lift skin and inject into space formed
 - Injection into muscle can cause illthrift and quadriplegics
- When to start vaccinating?
 - "Two years before you think you need to!"