

# Information Notes

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## Sheep Scab Checklist

By Brian Hosie, Veterinary Manager, SAC Veterinary Service Edinburgh

Sheep scab seriously affects the welfare of sheep and has a significant financial impact through its effect on the condition of ewes, the growth rate of lambs, damage to wool and reduced quality of sheepskins. Scab mites feeding on the skin surface cause intense irritation to the sheep that results in them rubbing and scratching. Mites will survive off the sheep for up to 16 days. Although transmission is usually sheep to sheep, transporters, fence posts used for rubbing, bushes, trees and contaminated clothes and equipment can be a source of infection. The disease is more common in the winter and spring when the sheep have full fleeces. In the autumn/early winter, flock owners should assess their flock's scab status and treat accordingly. Whenever possible flock owners should co-ordinate any treatment or control measures with their neighbors to gain maximum benefit from their time and effort. This approach is successful in many parts of Scotland.

When assessing scab status you should consider:

1. Is there evidence of scab?
2. Were ALL introduced sheep treated for scab and held in quarantine for 3 weeks?
3. Are boundaries secure – scab and sheep proof?
4. Are neighbouring flocks infected or at risk of infection?

### Scab Control

- Treat all sheep on your farm in the autumn/winter with a product approved for scab e.g. long lasting dip or injectables. This is best done when all the sheep can be easily gathered.
- Co-operate with your neighbors so that all flocks are treated within a period of 2-3 weeks.
- Maintain effective fencing.
- Do NOT use pour-ons, jettors or showers to control or treat scab.

### Sheep Moved onto the Farm

e.g. bought-in sheep (including rams)

sheep returned from market or summer grazing  
sheep going to away-wintering  
sheep moving on for wintering  
sheep returning from away-wintering  
stragglers

- Assume all sheep arriving on your farm could be infected with sheep scab
- Check fences and gates before sheep are unloaded
- Dip with a scab approved dip or inject with one of the injectables
- Do not mix with the main flock until 2 weeks after full treatment has been completed

### In the Event of an Outbreak

- Confirm the diagnosis through your vet and local SAV/VLA Veterinary Centre since other skin parasites can "mimic" scab
- In Scotland inform the Sheep Scab Initiative Helpline (0131 472 4031)
- Warn neighbours and tell them when you will be treating
- Alert the suspected source of infection
- Treat all sheep that could possibly have come into contact with affected sheep or their fields
- If using short-acting injections, move sheep to a clean area after first treatment
- If it is possible some sheep have been missed, repeat the treatment

### Further Information

- Contact your vet or local farm adviser
- Look on the SAC website:  
<http://www.sac.ac.uk/consultancy/veterinary/initiatives/scottishsheepscabinitiative>

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SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

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**Table 1 Scab treatment and control**

| Group | Chemical | Trade Name | Marketed by:- | Meat withdrawal period (days) |
|-------|----------|------------|---------------|-------------------------------|
|-------|----------|------------|---------------|-------------------------------|

**Dips with long lasting action.** They kill mites and provide approximately four weeks protection from a single dipping. (Allow 14+ days between dipping and dosing with any drench containing levamisole.)

|                  |          |                        |                 |    |
|------------------|----------|------------------------|-----------------|----|
| Organophosphorus | Diazinon | Coopers Ectoforce*     | Schering-Plough | 35 |
|                  | Diazinon | Paracide Plus**        | Animax          | 35 |
|                  | Diazinon | Osmonds Gold Fleece*** | Bimeda          | 35 |
|                  |          |                        | Virbac          |    |

**Injection for prevention & treatment of scab.** Two subcutaneous injections 10 days apart are required for treatment A single subcutaneous injection provides protection against re-infection for 28 days. Treated sheep should not be mixed with untreated sheep for 12 days after the last treatment. .

|            |            |          |            |    |
|------------|------------|----------|------------|----|
| Milbemycin | Moxidectin | Cydectin | Fort Dodge | 70 |
|            | Moxidectin | Zermex   | Fort Dodge | 70 |

**Injections for treatment & control of scab.** These products kill scab mites.

- One intramuscular injection of Doramectin is required. Treated sheep must not be mixed with untreated sheep for 14 days.
- Two subcutaneous injections of Ivermectin seven days apart are required. Then only mix with flock after a further seven days

|            |            |                          |          |   |
|------------|------------|--------------------------|----------|---|
| Avermectin | Doramectin | Dectomax Injectable      | Pfizer   | 70                                      |
| Avermectin | Ivermectin | Noromectin & Paramectin  | Norbrook | 42 days after 2 <sup>nd</sup> injection |
|            | Ivermectin | Depidex Injection        | Novartis | 42 days after 2 <sup>nd</sup> injection |
|            | Ivermectin | Virbamec Injectable      | Virbac   | 42 days after 2 <sup>nd</sup> injection |
|            | Ivermectin | Ivomec Classic Injection | Merial   | 42 days after 2 <sup>nd</sup> injection |

**Notes:**

\* Ectoforce is dispensed in sachets that dissolve in the dip tank.

\*\* Paracide Plus is dispensed through a pump provided by the supplier.

\*\*\*Osmonds Gold Fleece is dispensed using a special dispenser with a hand pump.

Currently the marketing authorizations for the dips containing high-cis-cypermethrin are suspended. The manufacturers of these dips cannot supply them to merchants. The loss of these valuable products is a cause for concern to the sheep industry. Ask your vet for further advice on whether to treat and the appropriate product to use.

**The above list is for guidance only. Always check the datasheet before using any veterinary medical product.**