



# Leading Sheep Sheep Management Alert



## Timely Tips for Spring/Summer 2011

Nutrition	Worms
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Current sheep prices more than justify the additional effort into the nutritional management of sheep.</li> <li>2. It's so critical to get enough nutrients into lactating ewes – particularly prior to lambing and in the first few weeks after lambing, to minimise lamb mortality and ensure lambs remain robust.</li> <li>3. Feed whole cottonseed (WCS) to ewes– they tend not to gorge themselves as much as other energy supplements i.e. lupins or pellets. Ensure that there is plenty of dry grass when feeding WCS. Also need to watch WCS with young lambs as they can get Gossypol poisoning. For more information visit <a href="http://www.deedi.qld.gov.au">www.deedi.qld.gov.au</a></li> <li>4. Put the ewes into a small paddock over the lambing period, so that they are never too far away from their lambs if they come in for supplements.</li> <li>5. To help prevent mis-mothering when feeding, put supplements out while they are camped or in 'wagon wheel' formations rather than a straight lines as it will stop them following along and walking away from their lambs.</li> <li>6. In paddocks where there is a large body of feed, producers should continue supplementing urea-based licks when they start putting out energy supplements. The urea will stimulate appetite and increase feed intake of pasture as well as provide additional protein. It also may help to prevent gorging when energy supplements are put out as it provides nutrients in between twice-weekly feeding periods.</li> <li>7. Energy supplements are also consumed to a lesser extent by lambs. Supplements, such as lupins, pellets or sheep nuts, may help to increase lambs' growth rate. Lupins can be sometimes hard to source and are expensive in Queensland.</li> <li>8. Ram preparation before joining is critical. Remember it can be very beneficial to start feeding 2 months out from joining.</li> <li>9. Lupins is a good feed for rams as it helps increase testicle size and semen production.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Start checking for worms now. If worms are not controlled this spring and follow-up rain is received in early summer, paddock contamination will reach maximum levels very quickly, resulting in high death rates of valuable stock.</li> <li>2. A pre-lambing drench now will clear out any worms carried over from Autumn. Once lambing starts you will not be able to treat if worm counts are high.</li> <li>3. Make sure the pre-lambing drench is very effective. This is the one of the most important things you can do for your sheep this season.</li> <li>4. There may still be time to do a check of the drench you want to use. You will need 2 weeks. Take 10 (20 ideally) wormy sheep, ear-tag (or keep them in a separate house paddock), faecal sample and then drench them. Collect faecal samples again 10-14 days after drenching. These samples need to be collected from the rectum, not the ground. So that's a WormTEST at drenching and another 10-14 days after drenching on the same group of sheep.</li> <li>5. Continue monitoring for worms throughout the summer period. The idea is to control worms before they adversely affect sheep through loss of blood (Barber's pole). You can't visually determine if worms are present until it's too late. Remember the 'tip of the iceberg' scenario – that's Barber's pole.</li> <li>6. Prepare paddocks for weaners. Two months ahead of time remove any wormy sheep that will drop worm eggs onto pasture. If pastures need to be grazed, use cattle at high stocking rates.</li> <li>7. The weaner drench will also need to be very effective this summer, especially if the season is wet.</li> <li>8. Maybe consider a system of paddock rotation for weaners over the summer months. Stock weaners at a higher rate and move them through paddocks every two weeks. You will need 4 paddocks with each paddock grazed for 2 weeks and spelled for 6 weeks. Don't forget to WormTEST.</li> </ol>



## ...Nutrition

10. Early-weaned lambs should also be fed lucerne hay in the yards, with 'ad lib' access to good quality native pasture hay. They must not be solely fed native pasture hay, because they cannot properly digest it. Lamb nutritional requirements are extremely high, so they need a high-quality hay as well as an energy-protein concentrate.
11. Do a Near-infrared Reflectance Spectroscopy (NIRS) diet quality test to see what really is in the pasture! Contact DEEDI on 13 25 23 to get the test.



Sheep feeders



Sheep grazing Julia Creek

## ...Worms

9. Typically, mobs have a tail group of sheep that carry more worms than the rest of the sheep in the mob. Consider grazing the 'tail' group separately so that the main group will be stronger and require fewer drenches.
10. Monitor weaners every 4 weeks during a normal or wet summer. Burdens quickly build in these susceptible age groups.
11. If your property is extensive and sheep are not often handled, collect fresh dung from a sheep camp for testing and note if there is a 'tail' to the mob.
12. Be aware of drench resistance. There are things you can do to help slow this down. Change active ingredient, not just company brand name when you purchase a drench! Read the active-ingredient list on the label. Use a multi-active product - each active ingredient kills worms through a different mode of action and each active will therefore help to protect the others while at the same time ensuring a better kill. Rotate drench active ingredients at each drench. If you have a special paddock, ensure that mobs of sheep rotated through this paddock have been drenched with different drench actives.
13. Drench resistance has not been identified in the pastoral zones, but don't be complacent. Most sheep would have been drenched for at least the 3 last summer seasons making it time to WormTEST on day 10 after drenching.
14. Worm kits are available through the WormBuster laboratory or DEEDI sheep extension officers. Kits cost \$33, including GST. Each kit contains 10 collection bottles and is reply-paid. The cost of the kit includes the cost of testing. This test is very cheap compared to a late detection of a disastrous worm outbreak.
15. Visit [www.wormboss.org.au](http://www.wormboss.org.au) for more information on worm management.

## Leading the Way

Leading Sheep is an education framework for leading the adoption of new technologies and practices to increase the productivity of the Queensland sheep industry. Leading Sheep is an active, regionally-based project initiated by Australian Wool Innovation and operates in partnership with the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) and AgForce. For more information, visit [www.leadingssheep.com.au](http://www.leadingssheep.com.au) or call DEEDI on 13 25 23.

## Sheep Extension Contacts

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