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## SUMMER 2014 SMALL RUMINANT NEWSLETTER

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### Parasites- What's Bothering Your Sheep and Goats?

Parasites are a big deal when it comes to small ruminant production. Economic losses associated with parasites in sheep and goats can be significant and result from decreased production, the cost of prevention, the cost of treatment and death losses.

One of the most significant parasites that producers encounter when raising lambs and kids is coccidia. Coccidiosis is the disease caused by these protozoal parasites that affect the intestinal tract. It causes scouring, slow growth, ill-thrift and sometimes death. Typically young animals are affected between the ages of 4 weeks to 5 months (most commonly at 4-7 weeks of age). Affected lambs take 12-20 days to show clinical signs of infection. The biggest source of infection for young animals is other sick lambs/kids which shed the parasite into the environment. The fecal contamination of feed and water is the primary mode of infection. Older animals gain some immunity to the parasite within 1-2 months of exposure. Immature forms of coccidia can survive temperatures ranging from -30 to +40 degrees Celsius, can survive in barns for months and are very hard to kill.

Early prevention is key when it comes to managing coccidiosis in young animals. By the time symptoms of ill-thrift, scouring and weight loss are detected, significant economic losses have already occurred. Coccidia are spread between animals by fecal-oral transmission. Some tips to consider in order to reduce the level of disease in the herd or flock include:

- Maintain an appropriate stocking density and keep pens well bedded and dry. An ewe-lamb pair requires 20 square feet of pen space and a ewe with multiple lambs requires 25 square feet. Do NOT overcrowd!
- Ensure young lambs and kids are fed up off the ground
- Design creep feeders to prevent animals from standing or lying in them

- Traditionally, many producers have also incorporated a coccidiostat (medication) into creep feed to help prevent coccidiosis. Some examples include Lasalosisid (Bovatec) or Decoquinate (Deccox).

It can be difficult to ensure that all animals are receiving adequate levels of medication as intakes can be variable at that age. A new product has just been licensed for the “prevention of clinical signs and reduction of shedding of coccidia” in sheep called **Baycox**. It is used as an alternative to a coccidiostat in the feed. Baycox works to kill all stages of coccidia. It is given as a single oral dose and it is important that all lambs in a group must be treated at the same time. The target time for treatment is after lambs have been exposed to the organism but before they show clinical signs of disease. On most farms, this will be around 21 days of age. Baycox is not licensed for use in lactating sheep and has a 48 day meat withdrawal. In goats, this product can be used under veterinarian supervision off-label at the same rate as in sheep but with a longer meat withdrawal (70 days). To find out if Baycox is right for use in your herd or flock, ask your veterinarian for details on use and dosage.

### Pasture Deworming Protocols

With summer just around the corner and sheep and goats out on pasture, it is important to evaluate deworming programs for your flock or herd.

One roundworm that is of particular importance in the summer is *Haemonchus contortus*, also known as the **Barberpole worm**. This worm feeds on blood from the abomasum of small ruminants and has a tremendous ability to lay eggs. In affected animals, severe blood loss occurs. Sheep and goats can appear depressed, weak, have very pale mucous membranes, lose body condition and can even die (seemingly) suddenly if the burden of worms is high enough. Severe disease is typically seen in July and August. Other types of worms can contribute to loss of body condition and cause ill-thrift as well, but generally do not kill the affected animals as is seen with the Barberpole worm.

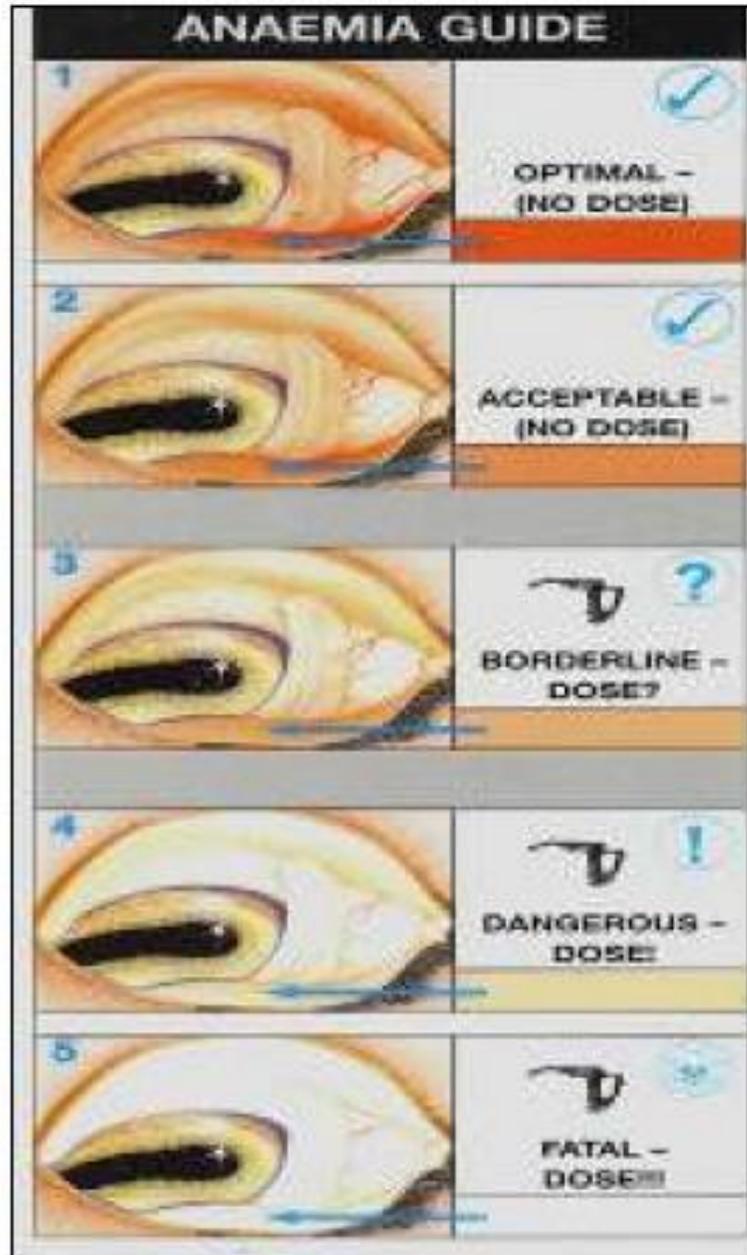
Resistance to de-worming products is becoming a serious concern for sheep and goat producers, especially in regard to the Barberpole worm. Some reasons why we are seeing this resistance develop include:

- Frequent treatments (>3/year) or over treatment
- Treating animals and moving them immediately to clean pasture
- Under-dosing
- Treating too early in the grazing season
- Treating all animals in the herd at the same time

Parasite burdens are not equally distributed among all animals. In any given flock or herd, approximately 20-30% of animals carry 70-80% of the worm burden. Therefore, selective treatment of the heavy shedders is preferable to whole flock treatment. To determine the level of infection in a flock, fecal samples should be taken 2-3 weeks after lambing, at pasture turn-out or when relocating onto contaminated pasture. Unless the size of the flock/herd is small, however, it is not economical to perform individual fecal egg counts on all animals to determine which are heavy shedders. Instead, producers are encouraged to use **FAMACHA**.

FAMACHA- What is it?

FAMACHA is a method of detecting anaemia (blood loss) caused by Haemonchus in sheep and goats based on the colour of their mucous membranes. A colour guide chart allows producers to assess the colour inside the lower eyelid and rate it a 1-5. Animals that are assigned a “4” or “5” rating are those that require treatment immediately and other animals may be monitored. It is important to keep records of treatments for Haemonchus. Those animals that require more frequent treatments should be culled. Be sure to ask your herd veterinarian for information and training on how to use the FAMACHA chart to make treatment decisions for your sheep and goats on pasture.



## Reduce the Risk of Resistance to Deworming Products

- 1) **Dose correctly**- it is very important to estimate weights correctly or preferably use a scale. The weight should be estimated based on the heaviest animals in the group and not the “average.” Regularly calibrate drench guns and use proper drenching technique (tip over back of the tongue)
- 2) **Deworm animals after fasting**- fast animals 12-24 hours prior to deworming to increase retention of dewormers in the gut.
- 3) **Don't rely on dewormers**- only deworm at strategic times.
  - treat ewes at pasture around lambing time and again 4 weeks later
  - it is not usually necessary to treat lambs until weaning if ewes are dewormed as above. If ewes are not dewormed at lambing, all lambs on pasture should be dewormed at 4 weeks and 8 weeks of age
  - deworm all animals in the fall at the time of housing
- 4) **Don't “Dose and Move”**- after deworming, it is ideal to leave animals on a contaminated pasture for 3-5 days. This ensures that the worm population in the clean pasture does not consist of resistant parasites only.
- 5) **Quarantine and treat any new arrivals**- if you are buying replacement animals for your herd or flock, they should all be dewormed and quarantined for 48 hours. Consider using more than one type of deworming product. Put animals onto contaminated pasture following quarantine.
- 6) **Don't use the same deworming product every year**- ask your herd veterinarian for suggestions on effective products for your flock or herd.

## News

In the Messenger emailed to members “*OSMA to Update Premises IDs for Members*”.... an article outlines the benefits of traceability and discusses confidentiality concerns. Note: If you do not wish for your commodity association to obtain a PID for you on your behalf, please inform the office by Thursday July 31, 2014. For more information and inquiries, please contact the OSMA office, at 519-836-0043 and/or visit: [www.ontariopr.com](http://www.ontariopr.com)

## Some upcoming events:

JULY 10<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> *All Canada Sheep Classic* -Trade and Education, Junior Sheep Show, Lamb Banquet, Fleece Competition and Auction, Commercial Sale, Carcass Competition. The Ancaster Fairgrounds, 630 Trinity Rd RR#1, Jerseyville, ON L0R 1R0 Info: Contact Jim Groves 519-752-8552 [vangro@hotmail.com](mailto:vangro@hotmail.com)

JULY 12- 3rd *Annual Eastern Canadian Sheep Shearing Competition*, Holstien ON, [www.hosteinrodeo.com](http://www.hosteinrodeo.com)  
Don Metheral 705-466-2568 or Wayne Orr 519-334-3751

*Ontario Master Shepherd's Course* – registration deadline extended to July 7<sup>th</sup> for complete course of 12 x 2 day modules covering business planning, genetics, nutrition, feeding systems, infrastructure, flock health management, lambing time, predation, marketing and future planning. Scheduled to start in August- email [mastersheperdcouse@outlook.com](mailto:mastersheperdcouse@outlook.com) Limited space.

JULY 24-26 - 4H Sheep and Goat Sen\$e Conference at University of Guelph for young adults 18-25  
[www.4-HOntario.ca/sheep-goat-sense](http://www.4-HOntario.ca/sheep-goat-sense)

AUGUST 9, DRAYTON, ON: *Wilberforce Dairy Goat Show*. For more information contact Paddy Jordens 705-448-2657.

**Tip from Producer: “ When harvesting, remember to do a forage analysis of your feed so you can plan ahead for any supplements you may need.”**