

Protocol: Faecal Egg Counts (FEC)

Background

The worm problems are different for every farm. FEC's can be used to build up a picture of the parasite problem on each farm.

The need for drenching adult sheep should be based on FEC results in conjunction with the other factors that may affect the target animals' ability to deal with the worms.

Ewes

The significance of worms in adult sheep tends to be greater with:

- Age (two toothed more susceptible than MA ewes)
- Loss of body condition
- High performance (multiple bearing ewes more susceptible than single bearing ewes)
- Grazing pastures too short (most of the worm larvae are in the lower 3cm)
- Pastures with a history over the previous 6 months that would suggest high levels of contamination (eg. a worm control breakdown)

Drench Check Lambs

The Drench check is a simple way to check how effective your drenching has been. No worm eggs in any of the faecal samples means the drenching technique is working well. The presence of any eggs at all suggests that your drenching technique should be reviewed to check:

- All sheep have been treated
- Gun is delivering the correct dose to every sheep treated
- Gun has been set to the correct dose based on the heaviest sheep in the mob treated
- The presence of resistance to the drench you used

Ten (10) days after the lambs have had their second drench collect 10 individual faecal samples for FEC.

Discuss the results with your veterinarian.

The Drench Check is NOT a test for resistance – it is an indication that resistance may be present. A FAECAL EGG COUNT REDUCTION (FECR) test is required to assess the resistance status of the property. This is a very important test and must be performed correctly under veterinary direction.

Sample Collection

The number of mobs of the target animals may vary during the year. Each mob should be sampled especially during the winter period.

Faecal samples can be collected in the paddock a few days before the target animals are brought to the yards in case some need treatment.

Protocol: Faecal Egg Counts (FEC) contd.

Each of the 10 faecal samples from adult ewes and hoggets should be examined on an individual basis. Often bulk or average results do not give a clear indication of what is happening to individual animals within the mob.

- Allow the sheep to stand as a mob in a corner for 5-10 minutes, let them walk away quietly. Collect 10 fresh, individual samples (about 1 teaspoonful per sample). Collect on a random basis.
- Identify the mob that you are taking the samples from.
e.g. MA ewes singles – No 1
MA ewes multiples – thin etc.
- Keep the samples cool (in fridge), until delivered or examined.
- Please ensure a copy of the laboratory results, including the details of the animals tested is sent to AgriNetworks. Or details can be sent on the **Farm Data Record: Faecal Egg Count Results**.
- Your veterinarian should be contacted for further management advice.

NB. The veterinarian will charge the farmer for all veterinary services and laboratory fees