



## Sheep worms – quarantine drench to combat resistance

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### Background

Resistance of sheep worms to drenches in Western Australia is rapidly reaching a crisis point. There are sheep worms on virtually all farms that are resistant to white (benzimidazole or BZ – e.g. *Valbazen, Panacur, Alben, Fenbendazole, Nemadet, Oxfen, Fencare* etc.) and clear (levamisole or LV – e.g. *Nilverm, Levamisole, Ripercol* etc.) drenches. BZ/LV combination drenches (containing a white and clear drench, e.g. *Combi, Salvo, Scanda* etc.) only remain fully effective\* on about 30 per cent of properties and resistance testing during 1999 showed that up to about 40 per cent of properties had indications of resistance to the macrocyclic lactone group of drenches (the MLs – active ingredients of ivermectin, abamectin and moxidectin) in brown stomach worm (*Ostertagia*).

Unless current drenching practices change, drench resistance will continue to increase. One strategy that farmers can use to help reduce the risk of introducing new strains of resistant worms on their property is effective quarantine drenching of introduced sheep.

If new sheep are being introduced to a property or sheep are returning after agistment, it is critical to follow a quarantine procedure to avoid the introduction of resistant worms. Sheep coming on to a property may carry worms that are more resistant than those already on the property.

### What should I do?

All introduced sheep should be treated immediately before or after they enter the property.

Treatment with products from at least three different drench groups is recommended. If the drench resistance status of the source of the sheep is unknown the current minimum recommendation is:

**Moxidectin (Cydectin) + a BZ/LV combination (white and clear) drench (e.g. *Combi, Salvo, Scanda, etc.*).**

Moxidectin is the ML product of choice due to its superior potency. Ivermectin or abamectin (the other MLs) should not be used because the incoming sheep could be carrying worms against which these products are no longer fully effective.

Sheep should be released into a wormy paddock to help dilute any surviving 'super-resistant' worms amongst the resident population of worms already on the property. If a wormy paddock is not available then other options should be discussed with your local vet or sheep adviser.

For more information talk to your local vet or sheep adviser or contact your local WormWise contact at the WA Department of Agriculture (see over).

#### **Important Disclaimer**

## WormWise contacts

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\* *A fully effective drench is one that has been shown to be more than 95 per cent effective (and preferably 100 per cent) in a drench resistance test within the last couple of years.*

## Other recommended reading

Farmnote 51/2002	Sheep control in Western Australia
Farmnote 53/2002	Sheep worms – breeding worm resistant sheep
Farmnote 54/2002	Sheep worms – worm egg counts
Farmnote 55/2002	Sheep worms – testing drench resistance and effectiveness
Farmnote 57/2002	Barber's pole worm in sheep
Factsheet 4/2002	Sheep worms – 'summer-autumn' worm control