

Prevention

Shetland is currently free of sheep scab. All sheep imported to Shetland are treated for scab by a veterinary surgeon using decotomax injection on arrival at the pier, as stated in the *SIC Sheep Scab Regulations 2003*.

Treated animals should not have contact with any other sheep for a period of 14 days after treatment. Injectable scab treatments can take up to 7 days to kill all mites and mites can survive in the environment for up to 17 days.

Trailers, handling and housing equipment used for imported animals during their quarantine period should be carefully washed and disinfected before being used for other sheep. Tags of wool are a likely source of infection and should be removed and burnt/buried.

Action to take if you suspect scab in your flock

Contact your veterinary surgeon for immediate advice and to collect samples for diagnosis.

The Shetland Animal Health Schemes have contingency plans in place in the event of a scab outbreak in Shetland.

Psoroptic Mange in Cattle

This was first recorded in the UK in Wales in 2007 and is now established in Wales and South West England. It is widespread in Europe and has been introduced to the UK through cattle imports. It has been found in both beef and dairy herds. The psoroptic mange mite causing cattle scab is related to the sheep scab mite but it is thought that transmission is cattle to cattle only. Animals can show very varied signs. In the early stages of the disease or in the summer months they may show no signs of disease and yet still be infectious. This can progress to hair loss and skin thickening to bleeding and scab formation along the back with severe itching which can lead to weight loss and even death. Cattle scab is very difficult to treat as it is resistant to both ivomec and cydectin treatments. Repeated chemical wash treatments are reported to have been used successfully. There are no legal controls on the importation of infected animals to the UK or their subsequent movements. To reduce the chance of importing this disease avoid purchasing from areas of the UK which are affected, buy only from trusted sources and remain vigilant when importing cattle to Shetland for any signs of cattle scab and contact a vet to investigate.

Shetland Animal Health Scheme

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Shetland Animal Health Scheme

SCAB & WORM CONTROL



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Worm Control and the Shetland Animal Health Schemes

Resistance to worming treatments is a growing problem in the Scottish sheep industry. Resistant worms do not cause any more severe disease than non resistant strains. However farms with worms resistant to one drug group have fewer choices of treatment, which are likely to be more expensive and those with multiple resistance may need to rely on changing grazing management systems for worm control.

The most common form of resistance is to the white drenches (benzimidazoles) only, however an emerging problem on mainland Scotland is sheep worms which are resistant to all 3 groups of drenches; white drenches, levamisole and the ivomec/dectomax group. This is extremely serious for these farms as their ability to control worms in sheep is severely hampered. Resistance to the new product Zolvix has already been in New Zealand less than 4 years after it's introduction.

Once resistance becomes established on a farm it is not reversible.

This leaflet aims to give information about what the Shetland Animal Health Schemes are providing to reduce the risk of the introduction of resistant worms to Shetland.

For information on general worming strategies for your flock please consult your own veterinary surgeon.

Worming Treatments Given at the Pier

All sheep imported at the pier receive an oral drench of Zolvix wormer and an injection of dectomax.

What is this treatment Aimed at?

On the mainland resistance to the white drenches e.g. Panacur, Rycoben, is very wide spread. This resistance has not yet been identified in Shetland. By treating sheep on arrival in Shetland with a quarantine treatment consisting of 2 different products, worms which are resistant to the 3 main groups will be killed, and the chances of them becoming established on Shetland pastures reduced.

What should I do when I get the sheep home?

Imported sheep should be held off pasture for 24-48 hours following quarantine drenching. This allows the treatments to work and any worm eggs that were produced pre-treatment to pass out, minimising the risk of pasture contamination.

These animals should then be put out onto permanent pasture (grass has been grazed by sheep that season) and not clean grazing (silage parks not grazed by sheep that season).

Dung from the housing area used should be stored on a midden for as long as possible pre-spreading.

Sheep Scab

Signs of Disease

Sheep in the early stages of scab infection may look perfectly normal and show no signs of disease.

As the disease progresses sheep begin rubbing and head tossing, areas of the fleece become stained and there is wool loss, which can develop to open bleeding wounds.

Sheep rapidly lose condition and may even start to have fits.

Areas first affected are generally on the back, but disease will spread down the flanks and limbs and onto the head, face and tail.

Disease Transmission

Sheep scab is caused by a mange mite, *psoroptes ovis*. Sheep can contract this disease either through direct contact with infected sheep or from tags of wool or scabs containing live mites. Shearing combs and cutters and contaminated clothing can also spread sheep scab.

Diagnosis

Sheep scab can be differentiated from other sheep skin conditions e.g. lice or keds, by the identification of the mange mite. Unlike lice or keds, mange mites are not visible to the naked eye. A skin scrape taken by a veterinary surgeon is examined under a microscope to identify the mite. Moredun have developed a blood test for sheep scab. This can be used in addition to a skin scrape to diagnose scab.