

- Keep purchased tups in a separate group to other tups. Do not house purchased tups with female sheep from your main flock.
- Maintain strict biosecurity at clipping time and clip purchased sheep from terminal sire breeds last.
- Be vigilant for signs of CLA in your flock and report any suspect sheep to your veterinary surgeon for further investigation.
- For disinfection use a suitable SEERAD approved disinfectant e.g. Sorgene, Virkon, FAM at the recommended dilution.

What action can I take if I suspect CLA in my flock?

CLA is a very difficult disease to clear from groups of sheep once it is established. In some cases on the mainland disease has been cleared using test and cull programmes. In Shetland disease has been cleared by removing groups of infected tups and their contacts and restocking.

Consult with your veterinary surgeon for details on eradication programmes.

Shetland Animal Health Scheme

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Shetland Animal Health Scheme

**CASEOUS
LYMPHADENITIS
(CLA)**



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Caseous Lymphadenitis

Signs of CLA

CLA (Caseous Lymphadenitis) is a bacterial disease of sheep. CLA infected sheep most commonly show abscesses or scars on the head and neck. Sheep may also have internal abscesses affecting the lungs or liver and no external signs. In Shetland sheep infected with CLA often show a marked loss of condition, which may be confused with other chronic disease e.g. Johne's. It has been noted that in imported tups signs of disease have sometimes not become visible until a year post importation.

Incidence of CLA in Shetland

CLA is still a new disease in Shetland. The majority of cases have been in imported tups and tups with which they have had direct contact. The disease is however spreading rapidly on the mainland with the last survey demonstrating 18% of terminal sire flocks to be infected.

How is CLA spread?

CLA spreads both through contact with pus or by aerosol. Close contact between animals such as feeding at a box or housing greatly increases the chance of spread. Clipping can spread CLA both within and between flocks.

In Shetland CLA has been observed to spread very readily within groups of tups.

Spread of infection of up to 80% in a group of tups, by the time disease is diagnosed on clinical signs in an imported animal, has not been uncommon. Risk of spread to ewes at tupping time in Shetland is low.

Can CLA be prevented or treated?

There is currently no established treatment or licensed vaccine available in the UK. Vaccine can be obtained under special license if disease is established in a flock. Vaccine will reduce the incidence of disease in a flock but vaccinated animals can still transmit infection to clean flocks.

The Shetland CLA Scheme

All imported animals are blood tested for CLA on importation and 6 months post importation. Vets examine these animals on each occasion for signs of CLA abscesses or scars. SAHS recommend an additional private test 4-8 weeks post importation.

A positive blood test or cultured swabs from an abscess gives a positive result for CLA in an imported animal. Animals with clinical signs of CLA (abscesses or scars) must be considered very high risk even if a blood result is negative and should be isolated and further testing arranged.

The Blood Test for CLA

Producers should consider the testing provided by the health scheme as a means to reduce the chances of introducing CLA to their flock, but because of the limitations of the blood test, an animal which tests negative at the pier should not be considered as free from CLA.

The blood test for CLA has a 99% test specificity but only an 87% test sensitivity. This means that the test produces very few false positive results. There will however be some animals which are

with CLA which will not be picked up on a blood test. Some of these animals may have clinical signs of disease (abscesses and scars) and yet not test positive on the blood test. Unfortunately at the present time this is the only commercially available test and the main tool which we have to help prevent flocks becoming infected with CLA.

Now can I reduce the risk of introducing CLA to my flock?

Consider all purchased sheep from terminal sire breeds as potentially infected with CLA.

- Purchase the minimal number of replacement sheep required for breeding in your flock. The more animals you are importing the greater the chances of meeting CLA infection. Try to purchase from as few sources as possible.
- Buy sheep tested for CLA under a pre-sale screening programme.
- Ask the vendor the CLA status of locally purchased or imported sheep. Arrange CLA testing as necessary pre-purchase.
- **Arrange for a second private CLA test 6-8 weeks post importation to remove infected animals as quickly as possible.**
- Monitor imported tups every 2 weeks for at least 6 months post importation for any signs of CLA.
- Keep purchased tups isolated from other sheep until second clear test is obtained. Avoid unnecessary mixing with other sheep out with tupping time. Avoid box feeding or housing with other sheep.