

MN 2000
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Your Sheep Business

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Letter No. 5
May 15 1939

PARASITES OR PROFITS? All sheep raisers face this issue. Internal parasites are present in all flocks to a greater or less degree. If not controlled, sooner or later heavy losses will occur in some flocks and all flocks will suffer some loss from lack of thrift.

PACKING HOUSE EXPERIENCE. A packing house reports as follows on our native lambs killed: 1. Yielding or dressing percentages are too low.

2. Heavy condemnation by Federal inspectors of livers and intestines.

The low yield or dressing percentage is largely caused by parasites which prevent lambs from putting on enough flesh. The lambs are dressing about 43 per cent whereas they should yield 48 to 50 per cent of carcass to live weight. There are a lot of livers condemned as unfit for food and also intestines condemned because of being too full of holes or too rotten to use for casings. This is because of damage from parasites.

These are the losses that show up at slaughtering time, but parasites probably cause even greater losses on the farm before the lambs go to market. The lambs become stunted, are unthrifty, scour badly, make no growth, and do not fatten. Thus parasites are taking a toll that will increase as time goes on unless control measures are adopted. What are the control measures? First, follow a pasture rotation as discussed in Letter No. 4. Second, drench the flock before the pasture season starts or as soon as possible thereafter. This will help to hold down the infestation on the pasture. Third, drench the entire flock again in June. This will clean up the infestation in the lambs and give them a better start. Then drench each month during the pasture season. Drenching instructions are given in Extension Folder 42, "Stomach Worms in Sheep", which can be obtained from your county or by writing to the Bulletin Room, University Farm. This treatment will control both stomach worms and tapeworms. Stomach worms attach to the walls of the fourth stomach and suck the blood. They also secrete a poisonous substance which destroys the red corpuscles in the blood, resulting in a weak, anemic sheep with pale mouth, eye membranes and skin. A control program as outlined will mean a more thrifty flock and more profit to you.

GRUB IN THE HEAD. During fly time, - June, July and August, you will observe sheep attempting to fight a fly away from their nostrils. They will strike with their feet and run along with their noses close to the ground. The fly deposits a tiny grub in the nostrils of the sheep; in time this works up to the upper nostrils and adjacent spaces in the head. There the grubs grow to adult size, leave the nostrils in spring or early summer, burrow into the ground and emerge as mature flies four to eight weeks later. In late winter and spring the irritation from grubs causes a discharge from the nose. Last spring I saw one flock so badly infested that about 40 head or half the flock died.

Treatment is practically useless, but prevention is possible by smearing the noses of the sheep with a fly repellent (pine tar) during fly time. The nose of each sheep should be smeared with this material once by hand. After that do the job automatically by smearing the tar on and around the salt receptacle. Some put salt in $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch holes bored into logs about the pasture and smear tar around the holes. Others put salt in covered boxes, bore $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch holes in the top and smear tar around the opening. Sheep must be accustomed to getting their salt from whatever equipment is used, before the tar is applied.