

Increasing numbers of lamb carcasses are being condemned due to the presence of *C. Ovis* cysts. This is a management disease that is controlled very well with husbandry recommendations. The critical control point is with the primary producer; worm your dogs with Drontal Plus or Droncit tablets.

Feedlots and buyers are discounting prices by 20% or more for EVERY PRODUCER due to their losses on condemned carcasses. They may go so far as to stop buying and that will eliminate a vital part of the value chain. ASWC has been providing information on this subject for over 2 years. In the last 3 months, this education program has been stepped up with provision of factsheets to all buyers, auctions, feedlots, meat inspectors, processors and with tag purchases.

If not addressed, this problem will devastate the sheep industry.

C. OVIS INFESTATION IN YOUR SHEEP WILL CAUSE CONDEMNED LAMBS

C. Ovis (also referred to as sheep measles) is the intermediate stage of a tapeworm that infects any member of the dog family, wild or domestic. It is important to understand that **this is NOT a sheep tapeworm, IT IS a dog tapeworm that MUST infect sheep to complete its life cycle.**

The dog is the final host where the adult tapeworm lives - all 6.5 feet of it.

While inhabiting the intestine the adult sheds eggs in the dogs stool, up to 250,000 per day! Eggs have the ability to survive on pastures for up to **6 months** depending on the conditions.

Sheep wormers will not protect your lambs, worming your dogs will.

The sheep then eat the eggs, not deliberately of course because what sheep would?

The eggs contaminate anything that the dog can poop in or on: the pasture, feed bunk chop house, silage pit, or round bale feeder. It is best to assume that if a dog can get into it he will poop on it or in it.

The tapeworm eggs then hatch, **IN** the sheep, **NOT** on the ground, and develop either into cysts in the muscle or into cysts that hang off of the liver, lungs, or diaphragm.

Dogs become re-infected by eating infected sheep carcasses.

This IS NOT a human health hazard but it is unacceptable and carcass condemnations are common.

4-5 weeks after consuming the eggs, sheep develop the infective cysts. Each cyst contains a tapeworm head which if eaten by a dog grows into an adult dog tapeworm, *Taenia Ovis*. Assuming that lambs really start to eat forage at about 21 days of age, they can have cystic lesions as early as 56 days of age!

At about 3-6 months after ingestion (by 116 -176 days of age) most of the cysts die and they become hard and gritty, the white spot is known as sheep measles and is detected at meat inspection. This stage is known as Cysticercus Ovis or C. Ovis and this is the lesion that causes condemnations.

What can you do and what you need to know.....

Your sheep will not get sick from C. Ovis but your lamb carcasses will be condemned

- Understand the lifecycle **COMPLETELY**. The first step in control is knowing the enemy.
- Recognize that it takes a minimum of **4 MONTHS** for the “measle” to develop
- Recognize that this is a management disease that is controlled very well with husbandry recommendations.
- Understand that **YOUR** lambs are at risk when they are the **MOST** valuable to you.
- Once sheep are infected by the larval stage of this tapeworm **THERE IS NO TREATMENT**. Sheep dewormers have no effect on this tapeworm.
- **DO NOT** feed dead lambs **OF ANY AGE** to your dogs or allow coyotes to eat them. If you do not do this, it will be very difficult to control the disease, if not impossible. If you do not let dogs eat any dead sheep then you **DO NOT** have a problem with this parasite.
- **DO NOT** feed **ANY PART** of a slaughtered goat or sheep to your dogs. Bury it or burn it. If you compost **MAKE SURE** that no animals dig up what you buried up. Make the compost pile dog proof.
- Worm your dogs, **ALL** dogs (including pets) at least every 2 months with a **Praziquantal** based wormer. Either use **Drontal Plus** or **Droncit** tablets. Guardian dogs can be **VERY** difficult to get pills into so I grind the pills up and mix it into canned dog food. **MAKE SURE** that you see the dog swallow the wormer and that he does **NOT** spit the pill out. Guardian dogs can be **VERY** suspicious and difficult to worm.
- It takes 7 weeks for this tapeworm to develop in the dog, so worming the guard dog **MONTHLY** is necessary.
- **DO NOT** let any dog on your farm that has not been properly de-wormed. Make sure that you know what product they used and when it was last given.