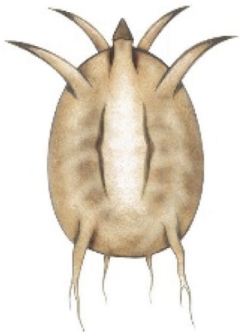


Sheep Scab



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WHAT CAUSES IT?



Psoroptes ovis: its small adults are pale and very difficult to see against the fleece at only 1mm in size. It spends its whole life cycle on the sheep and can reproduce every 14 days so 1 mite can quickly cause significant health problems. It can also survive off the sheep for 15-17 days so biosecurity needs to be good if re-infection after treatment is to be prevented.

HOW DO SHEEP GET IT?

Sheep can get the mite through close contact at markets, in trailers, from shared rubbing posts or from picking up wool tags from brambles. It can also be passed on via sheep shearing contractors moving from farm to farm from their shearing equipment and clothing.

WHEN DO THEY GET IT?

Mainly during the cool and wet months of October to March but also some cases in the summer on full fleeced sheep such as lambs and hogs.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS?



The mite's faeces cause severe irritation resulting in lesions on the sheep's skin. Left untreated the lesions spread and wool often starts to fall out with bleeding skin apparent. The sheep get increasingly restless, kicking at their flanks, rubbing posts and tossing their heads to relieve the irritation. As a result they lose body condition and production is affected.

IF I THINK MY SHEEP HAVE SCAB WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Consult your vet for an accurate diagnosis and advice on an appropriate treatment plan -

- Always treat and quarantine all bought-in sheep
- Clean housing and lorries/trailers after bought in sheep or sheep with scab
- Work with your neighbours to control scab in your area
- Improve fencing to prevent sheep mixing
- Work with your vet to include sheep scab control in your animal health plan – prevention is far better than cure.



Further information: Farming Connect, HCC, SCOPS, NADIS

