



Flystrike Management in the Sheep CRC Information Nucleus Flocks

The Sheep CRC made a policy decision in 2008, that its Information Nucleus Flocks (INFs) would not be mulesed or clipped for flystrike control and would therefore rely on alternative measures.

Because the Information Nucleus (IN) flocks were set up to collect important experimental data on genetics and traits (including production characteristics and wrinkle) of economic importance to the industry some of the flystrike management practices available to commercial producers cannot be applied in the IN flocks. The following constraints on management of the IN flocks apply;

- No lamb shearing of Merino or Border Leicester x Merino lambs is allowed
- Ewe and wether progeny need to be shorn annually with about 12 months wool
- Because genetic diversity is a requirement there will be some sheep particularly susceptible to flystrike eg. with heavy breech cover and wrinkle
- Culling susceptible sheep or selecting for flystrike resistance is not possible
- Preferential management or preventive chemical treatment of flystrike susceptible sheep within a mob (management group) is not accepted.

Therefore special flystrike management procedures across the whole flock are needed for INFs so they are seen as well managed flocks in their local region. Also the INF program is comprehensive and represents a large investment, meaning all progeny are valuable and their unimpeded performance for complete phenotypic data capture is important.

Prevention of flystrike in INF flocks

Main points:

- Dock tails to 3 joints in length (tip of vulva)
- Where possible time crutching so that the breech wool is short during high risk periods
- Control internal parasites and nutritional scouring
- Use low risk paddocks for the most susceptible mobs
- Treat with a registered insecticide when necessary
- Strategically use fly traps to monitor fly activity

Tail length is important to avoid sun damage and excessive dag formation. Better too long than too short. The recommendation is to dock tails at the third joint.

Crutching should be timed so breech wool is short and devoid of dags or urine stain during periods of high flystrike risk.

Internal parasite control is crucial to avoid scouring and/or dags which will attract flies. Refer to Wormboss for internal parasite control (www.wormboss.com.au).

Paddocks that are barer, open and more exposed will harbour fewer flies than paddocks with trees, waterholes and shelter from wind. Use these low risk paddocks for mobs most susceptible to flystrike eg lambs after marking.

Treat with a registered insecticide using a preventive treatment plan. Ideally treat just prior to risk periods. The range of chemicals available with their respective label claims for protection periods are:

- Organophosphates 3-6 wks (some chemical resistance)
- Spinosad (Extinosad®) 4-6 wks
- Ivermectin 12 wks
- Cyromazine 10-14 wks
- Dicyclanil (CliK®) up to 6 mths

Magik and CLiK-Plus contain both dicyclanil and diflubenzuron and are effective against both flystrike and lice.

The Flyboss tools section provides a complete listing of products containing these chemicals.

For medium to long term protection *Clik®* is recommended. It has the following features:

- Insect growth regulator with low mammalian toxicity
- Up to 24 weeks protection possible against body strike and probably nearly as long against breech strike
- Can be used offshears or with long woolled sheep (to 3 months pre-shearing)
- No chemical resistance
- Easy application

Trials with *Clik®* have shown that strategically timed crutching or shearing and delaying treatment until the protection provided by crutching/ shearing has waned (approximately 6 weeks after crutching) it can protect sheep through most danger periods providing other measures eg prevention of scouring, freedom from footrot,

dags etc, are properly carried out.

Repeated reliance on one chemical is more likely to lead to resistant strains of flies developing. Where management considerations permit, rotate chemical groups to avoid resistance selection.

Wool harvesting intervals, meat withholding periods and export slaughter intervals for the above chemicals are listed on flyboss tools section.

Use of low risk paddocks is recommended for the most susceptible mobs eg. young sheep, those known to have fleece rot or lumpy wool and sheep not under current chemical coverage.

Fly traps can indicate current fly populations and high risk periods, when preventative treatment will be required. Traps and chemical can be obtained from Bioglobal Pty Ltd (ph: 03 5941 1234) and cost about \$60 each.