

SMALLHOLDER SHEEP CHEAT SHEET!

Looking after a flock of sheep is enjoyable and rewarding, but there are a number of important things to be aware of to ensure the health, welfare and biosecurity of your sheep, which in turn impacts all of Australia's sheep.

Key biosecurity points:

- Keep visitors (people, animals and vehicles) out of paddocks where possible.
- Ask visitors to wash hands and boots before going near animals.
- Isolate any new or returning livestock from shows or agistment for a minimum 21 days.
- Maintain secure fencing.
- Minimise access of stray stock, pest animals and wildlife onto your property.
- Store feed out of the weather and away from pests.
- Maintain clean drinking water and minimise access by pests and wildlife.
- Control weeds on your property.

Key buying and selling tips:

- Obtain a Property Identification Code (PIC).
- Register online for an National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) account.
- Become accredited with the Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) program.
- LPA registration gives you access to National Vendor Declarations (NVD), which are a requirement for moving stock.
- Ask for a Sheep Health Declaration when buying sheep.
- Movements of sheep must be recorded in NLIS by the buyer of the sheep.
- Do not buy sheep off Facebook!!!
- Buy sheep directly from reputable breeders or seek help from a livestock agent.

Vaccinating and drenching:

- Vaccinate all adult sheep annually with a 6in1, ewes should be vaccinated 4 weeks before lambing.
- The first vaccination for lambs should be done at marking between 2-8 weeks old with 6in1 + Vit B12 and Gudair.
- Vaccinate lambs again with a 6in1 6 weeks after the first vaccine to boost immunity, lambs can be weaned at this time.

- First lamb drench is given at weaning, weaning is recommended at 12-16 weeks of age.
- For all sheep, collect faecal samples for testing of worm eggs at the change of each season. Use the results to consult with your vet on a best practice drenching routine. Check the WormBoss website for more information.

Key management points:

- Avoid lambing during very hot or very cold weather.
- Trees, shrubs, and native tussock plants are great to shelter sheep and lambs.
- Observe sheep regularly for signs of swelling, limping, discharges, and abnormal eating, drinking or defecating. Seek advice from your vet for treatment.
- Rotate the paddocks your sheep are grazing to help maintain healthy pastures and reduce the soil burden of worm eggs.
- Consult with your vet or rural store specialist for nutritional advice suited to your sheep and your location.
- Sheep handling yards are essential to have. Make sure your yards can fit all of your sheep comfortably, avoid any sharp corners and include a narrow race to handle sheep safely.
- Consider getting you, your family or any farm workers vaccinated against Q-fever

Destruction and disposal:

- On-farm sheep destruction (without using a vet) should be done by shooting with a firearm in the back of the head between the ears towards the chin.
- After destruction, confirm death through the 5 finger test- dilated pupils, lack of corneal reflex, loss of jaw tone, lack of tongue tone and loss of rhythmic breathing.
- Disposal of carcasses (whole or in part) can be done through licenced landfill sites, or burial in an elevated spot, away from ground and surface water, away from neighbours and public areas and ideally covered in 2m of soil.
- If death is suspected from disease contact your vet for advice.

EXAMPLE CALENDAR OF MAJOR SHEEP HUSBANDRY EVENTS

Key

Faecal Egg counts
Ram in with Ewes
Vaccinate all adult sheep
Move ewes to lambing paddock
Lambing period
Lamb marking
Lamb weaning

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19
20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
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24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24
25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26
27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27
28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29
30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31

This is an example for a spring lambing herd. Timings are approximate and can be modified to suit your location, feed availability and breeding objectives.

We would like to acknowledge the support of Sheep Producers Australia and WoolProducers Australia through the National Sheep Industry Biosecurity Strategy (NSIBS) project.