

CHAPTER 6

Disease management

There are hundreds of known diseases of sheep. Some of the more commonly occurring diseases of sheep in southern Australia are described in this chapter. It is important that people working in the sheep meat and wool industries manage their flocks to prevent commonly occurring diseases. It is also important to recognise signs of disease and distress and take immediate action to diagnose the cause and implement control and prevention strategies.

Diseases that result in very high costs to the sheep industries, such as internal parasites, flystrike, lice and footrot, have been dealt with in detail. Common diseases associated with abortion and reproductive failure are described in Chapter 5.

The possibility of an 'emergency animal disease' should always be in the minds of livestock producers and it is vital that livestock managers report any unusual signs of disease immediately to their veterinarian or animal health staff of state Departments of Primary Industries or equivalent.

Internal parasites

Internal parasites – roundworms, tapeworms and liver fluke – are found in the in the gut or some other internal organs.

Roundworms

Roundworm-related losses are due to:

- death of sheep
- weight loss and/or reduced weight gain/scouring/dags
- reduced quantity and quality of wool
- reduced milk production by ewes resulting in poor lamb survival and growth
- depressed appetite and poor feed utilisation
- predisposition to other diseases
- costs of drenches, labour and associated management practices.