



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

Asiantaeth
Iechyd Anifeiliaid
a Phlanhigion

Information Note

**Increase in tick numbers and tick-borne diseases
reported, particularly in sheep**

Published May 2020, updated July 2024

Contents

Common ticks	1
Tick prevention treatments for sheep - always check up-to-date data sheets	1
Resistance	2
Useful links & further information	2

There has been a general increase in the number of ticks and tick-borne diseases diagnosed and or reported throughout the season, but some cases have been seen as early as January. This is likely due to the recent milder winters.

Common ticks

Ixodes ricinus, the sheep, deer or castor bean tick is the most common tick associated with outbreaks of clinical disease in UK. This tick is found mainly in areas of rough grazing, moorland, woodland and areas where wild deer and rabbit are in abundance.

However it has been notable this year that there have been reports of severe infestations, disease and deaths in sheep grazing the South Downs associated with the less common red sheep tick, *Haemaphysalis punctata*, which is predominantly an ectoparasite of livestock, however severe infestations on horses and human biting incidents have also been reported. This tick inhabits grasslands including downland and coastal marshland rather than the rough grazing that *I. ricinus* requires. It has appeared to have expanded its range in southern England in recent years.

Tick prevention treatments for sheep - always check up-to-date data sheets

<https://www.noahcompendium.co.uk/>

Chemical	Applications	Use	Persistence	Comments
Organophosphate Diazinon	Plunge dip	Treat ticks	Will depend on: The species of tick and its feeding habits. The level of challenge. Location of sheep post-dipping.	Operator safety, dip licensing and disposal. Mobile dippers may be an alternative. Interaction with Levamisole.
Synthetic pyrethroids (Various - deltamethrin, cypermethrin, permethrin,)	Topical (spot-on or pour-on)	Treatment and control of ticks	Varies from not recorded to normally 12 weeks	Some not for use in lambs less than 1 week. Some have specific measures for lambs less than 10kg.

Resistance

There have not been confirmed reports of resistance to acaricides in the UK, but there have been reports in reduction in persistency of products when animals are faced with large numbers of ticks.

Useful links & further information

APHA Focus Article on Tickborne diseases of sheep in the Veterinary Record

<https://bvajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1136/vr.m1352>

Medlock, J.M., Hansford, K.M., Vaux, A.G.C., Cull, B., Pietzsch, M.E., Gillingham, E.L., Johnson, N. and Phipps, L.P. (2018), Has the red sheep tick, *Haemaphysalis punctata*, recently expanded its range in England?. *Med Vet Entomol*, 32: 473-480.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/mve.12335>

Phipps, L. P., Hernández-Triana, L. M., Goharriz, H., Welchman, D., & Johnson, N. (2016). Detection of *Theileria luwenshuni* in sheep from Great Britain. *Parasites & vectors*, 9, 203.

<https://doi.org/10.1186/s13071-016-1486-5>



© Crown copyright 2024

You may re-use this information (excluding logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence v.3. To view this licence visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/ or email PSI@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

Data Protection:

For information on how we handle personal data visit www.gov.uk and search Animal and Plant Health Agency Personal Information Charter.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/publications

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at SIU@apha.gov.uk

www.gov.uk/apha

APHA is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Food Standards Agency to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.