

Scabs on Sheep's Mouths.

"SHEEP" (MID-CANTERBURY):—

I would like your opinion on a scab with which some of the sheep are affected.

The scab is chiefly around the mouth, lips, and nostrils, with a little sometimes up the centre of the face. They are about as big as a sixpenny piece and dry and hard, except in the worst cases, where they seem to crack and run. In the worst cases the animal's lips are so swollen and cracked that it is hard for them to eat.

There seems to be about 10 per cent. of the two-tooths affected, with a very rare case in the rest of the flock. They were all wintered together on soft turnips, with a good ration of oat-sheaf

chaff, and since then they have been running on green oats.

LIVESTOCK DIVISION:—

The condition affecting your sheep is known as contagious ecthyma, a virus disease affecting the mouth, lips, and nostrils, resulting in scab formation in these parts. The disease is seen from time to time in lambs and younger sheep, but more rarely in older sheep because of the possibility of the latter having acquired an immunity to the disease.

Outbreaks are seen quite frequently in sheep on coarse feed or when the sheep are on turnips, especially during frosts. Although you are probably more interested in the treatment of your affected sheep, it is necessary to advise that this disease may be successfully prevented by vaccination of the susceptible flock. Therefore, on any property where the disease appears

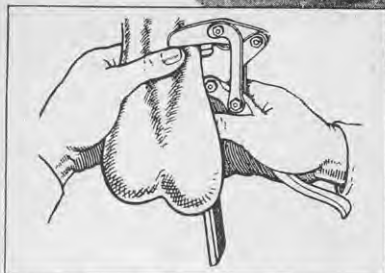
year after year it is advisable to vaccinate the lambs and young sheep. The virus may remain active in the scabs on the ground and carry on the infection in subsequent years.

The technique of vaccination is analogous to that of smallpox vaccination in the human subject. It is comparatively simple, and can be carried out on lambs at marking time. The vaccine is prepared at the Animal Research Station, Wallaceville.

A small area of skin inside the flank is cleaned and the skin stretched with the fingers and thumb of one hand; then several superficial scratches about one-quarter of an inch long are made with a scarifying instrument. One drop of vaccine is thoroughly rubbed into the scarified area with a small stiff-bristled brush. It is necessary to emphasise that the skin should be lightly scarified, only the superficial layer being broken through; it is neither necessary nor desirable to draw blood. The areas scarified must not be large, and the amount of vaccine limited to one drop or so, otherwise the resultant "takes" will be unnecessarily severe.

Medicinal treatment for this disease is not particularly satisfactory, but some benefit may be derived by cleaning the areas involved in badly-affected animals, and applying a preparation made by a mixture of one part of tincture of iodine to two parts of glycerine. Honey and boracic acid makes a suitable ointment. Repeated applications of the selected treatment are indicated.

A change on to soft feed such as the green oats you are now using will assist in bringing about recovery.



You Can't Reasonably Continue Using the Knife to Your Disadvantage!

Striking results are quoted in the Scottish Journal of Agriculture of an experiment with the two methods of castrating lambs—the knife and the bloodless castrator.

Ten pairs of twin half-bred male lambs were taken from a flock of Cheviot ewes. One twin was castrated with the castrator, the other with the knife. The live weight gain between castration and weaning was recorded for each lamb, and the gain made by one lamb castrated with the castrator compared with that of its brother castrated with the knife.

IN EVERY CASE, THE BLOODLESSLY CASTRATED LAMB MADE MORE RAPID GAINS, THE AVERAGE INCREASE BEING 59 lb., AS AGAINST AN AVERAGE OF 53 lb. FOR THOSE CUT WITH THE KNIFE, AN ADVANTAGE OF 6 lb. PER HEAD.

Seven single lambs castrated with the castrator averaged 64 lb. increase between castration and weaning, compared with an average of 58 lb. for seven cut with the knife, again an advantage of 6 lb. per head. In addition to yielding a heavier lamb, the bloodless castrator gave a bigger lamb with bolder head and stronger bone, and in better condition.



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Scours in Calves

"MACK" (TE PUKE):—

Would you please give me some advice about scours in calves?

Every year I have trouble with my calves. They do all right till about three or four weeks old, when they scour, at first foul-smelling liquid, usually blackish in colour, but not always. They go very thin and sunken in the eyes in 24 to 48 hours, and the scouring usually turns to blood in from one to three days.

Some of them die, though most of them get better eventually, but it puts them back very badly. They are often not much more than skin and bone in a week's time. I have tried many cures, but none are much good. At present I give a dose of castor oil at the first symptoms, and follow with a mixture made up by the local chemist.