

# Sheep & Beef Talk

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## Clostridial Diseases in Sheep

Clostridial diseases can be a common cause of ewe and lamb death in spring and summer. They are caused by a bacteria that is commonly found in the environment.



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Veterinarian

With the widespread use of crops, high energy feeds and rapid changes in diet there comes an increase in incidence of sudden death.

There are multiple options available for clostridial vaccinations:

- Unvaccinated animals need a sensitiser followed by a booster 4-6 weeks later.
- Prelambing vaccinations should be given 2-4 weeks prior to lambing; the immune response results in high levels of antibodies in colostrum. Good levels in colostrum help to protect lambs against clostridials for 12 weeks.
- Ideally, a sensitiser and booster should be given prior going onto 'rocket fuel' or crop.

### 5-in-1

- Protection against 5 clostridial pathogens: Tetanus, black leg, black disease, pulpy kidney, malignant oedema.
- Options are available with selenium and Vitamin B12.

### 8-in-1

- New vaccine available for clostridial protection.
- Protects against 3 additional pathogens compared to 5-in-1: those associated with lamb dysentery, enterotoxaemia, necrotising enteritis and enterocolitis.
- Additional protection against Clostridium perfringens type A, B and C. The added type A protection is especially important in NZ.

- Not available with selenium or Vitamin B12 – as you add more components to a vaccine, it is less likely to be effective.

### 10-in-1

- Protection against 10 clostridial pathogens: including protection against red water.
- Not available with selenium or Vitamin B12 – as you add more components to a vaccine, it is less likely to be as effective.
- Possibly better for cattle and valuable (stud) stock.

### Is it worth changing from 5 in 1?

First of all, it's important to know which class of stock are you having deaths in: ewes or lambs?

### Lamb Deaths:

- Fast-growing lambs are the most likely class of sheep to die of clostridials, especially if they are undergoing a change in diet.
- If you are losing a lot of lambs before their first clostridial vaccination, consider bringing forward the first clostridial vaccination. You could vaccinate lambs at tailing and preweaning drench; preweaning drench and weaning; or weaning and second drench.
- If you are losing lambs to clostridials later in the season, after they have already had a 5-in-1, it is worth considering a change to 8-in-1 or 10-in-1, for added protection.

### Ewe Deaths:

- If you are having ewe deaths after vaccination, consider timing and type of vaccine.
- Have replacement ewe hoggets received a sensitiser and booster?
- Have all ewes had an annual pre-lamb booster?

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# Clostridial Diseases in Sheep

	Common Name	5 in 1	6 in 1	8 in 1	10 in 1
Clostridium tetani toxoid	Tetanus	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Clostridium perfringens type A toxoid	Sudden death, enterotoxaemia			Yes	Yes
Clostridium perfringens type B toxoid	Pulpy kidney/enterotoxaemia			Yes	Yes
Clostridium perfringens type C toxoid	Pulpy kidney			Yes	Yes
Clostridium perfringens type D toxoid	Pulpy kidney	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Clostridium chauvoei	Blackleg	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Clostridium novyi type B toxoid	Black Disease	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Clostridium septicum toxoid	Malignant Oedema	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Clostridium haemolyticum toxoid	Red Water				Yes
Clostridium sordellii toxoid	Sudden death		Yes		Yes

## Pink Eye

By Rochelle Thomas, Veterinarian

Pink eye is a highly contagious disease that can spread through your beef herd like wildfire, and cause significant production losses. Spring through to late summer provides the perfect conditions for Pink eye to establish through a herd.

### What is it?

- Caused by Bacteria *Moraxella bovis* (different to sheep pink eye).
- Highly contagious eye disease.
- Affects all ages of cattle but affects younger cattle more.
- From exposure to infection takes 2-3 days.

### Risk factors:

- Dust, high stocking rate, flies and grazing cattle low on stalky pastures (scratches their eyes) are all risk factors for pink eye spread.
- High risk season is spring through to late summer.

### What does it do?

- Causes ulceration of the eye beginning as pinpoint ulcers
- Untreated eyes will progress rapidly to ruptured eyes and permanent blindness in one or both eyes.
- This is a very painful condition and consequentially will result in decreased growth rates and/or poor body condition in affected animals.

### Treatment:

- Isolation of infected animals ASAP is key to reducing the spread of pink eye. This includes separate grazing as it can last on the pasture for weeks.
- In early stages it can be treated with topical antibiotics. Regardless

of how they look, both eyes need to be treated (start with the better eye then move to the diseased eye).

Because it is highly contagious and is likely to cause significant production losses and animal welfare issues it is important to get a vet out to assess. Often the animals require subconjunctival injections, and third eyelid flaps which are veterinary procedures.

### Prevention:

- Avoid grazing calves on long pasture. This will reduce irritation of their eyes, and reduce contact with grass already contaminated by affected animals.
- Avoid grazing low on stalky pastures to minimize scratching of the eyes.
- Avoid overcrowding, especially in dusty conditions.
- Control flies.
- Remove affected animals as soon as possible, and keep isolated until recovered which can be up to 60 days.
- Vaccinate.

### Vaccination:

Piliguard is useful for prevention. It should be given 3-6 weeks annually before the pink eye season. It is less effective when used in the face of an outbreak.



Initial presentation is a pinpoint ulcer



Progresses to a blind/ cloudy eye



Progresses to a large ulcer and can rupture