



South Australian worm update

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A dry beginning followed by a late break and modest mid-winter rainfall sums up the experience for much of the State in 2012. Consequently, feed has been and remains scarce in most farmed areas. Supplementary feed inventories will be well above average for many stockowners but fortunately meat and wool prices are sufficiently buoyant to give hope of a profitable outcome. However, modest lamb prices due to an abundance of carryover spring lambs and poor skin values has meant that many producers will struggle to turn a profit in the short term.

Worm monitoring indicates significant burdens from the south east to the mid north due to sustained grazing of short green feed with uncharacteristic but isolated cases of *Haemonchus* (Barber's Pole worm) species causing mid-winter losses. Soil temperatures have been around 10°C, with the odd frost and so not conducive to pasture growth or survival of *Haemonchus* larvae on pasture. Many ewe mobs will have received pre-lambing drenches due to the lack lustre autumn/winter and an early weaning strategy is indicated where feed remains limiting. A drench and a fresh start on the best feed is recommended for lambs over 6 weeks old if the ewes are in poor condition and struggling to meet their own energy needs.

The divergence and variation in condition score of ewes assessed recently in "Lifetime Ewe Management" groups highlights that every farm is unique and there is no substitute for frequent assessment of ewe condition score, feed availability and WEC to determine the best management strategy on each farm. The forte of this approach is that the only significant cost is your time and you have the tools at your fingertips to make informed decisions to optimise reproductive performance as well as worm control throughout the year. Seek advice about LTEM on the MLA or AWI website just as you do for WEC on the Wormboss site.