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New WormBoss website delivers on the spot advice

Sheep producers now have at their fingertips access to localised best practice advice for controlling worms, with the launch today of a revamped WormBoss website.

Worms cost Australian sheep producers more than any other animal health problem and sustainable management is essential for on-farm productivity.

The WormBoss website, www.wormboss.com.au, has been redesigned to help producers develop management plans specifically for their local environment, and access advice and worm control tools, including a database to assist with drench selection.

“The aim of WormBoss is to reduce unnecessary drenching and minimise the onset of drench resistance while increasing animal productivity and profitability,” WormBoss manager Dr Lewis Kahn said.

“Most sheep producers actively manage to reduce the impact of worms in their flocks, but the timing and precision of their practices is crucial to maximising the effectiveness of their strategies – particularly in minimising the risk of the worm population developing drench resistance.

“The new WormBoss website brings together the best available research and localises the development of management plans to suit different regions across Australia, so that producers can maximise the effectiveness of drenching and other worm management practices.”

The highly successful WormBoss program was developed in 2005 by the Cooperative Research Centre for Sheep Industry Innovation (Sheep CRC) and then hosted by Australian Wool Innovation (AWI).

Since then new research results have been incorporated into WormBoss training workshops for both producers and industry advisers with the aim of further reducing the cost of worms and developing materials tailored to meet regional requirements.

NSW grazier Nigel Bourne, ‘Box Hill’, Ben Lomond, said WormBoss training had resulted in a number of changed farm management practices, which have resulted in cutting out at least two drenches each year.

Mr Bourne, who runs 1000 fine Merino ewes and about 900 first-cross ewes in a summer rainfall environment, said a change in pasture management in autumn had significantly reduced worm populations in spring.

“We now select our spring lambing paddocks early in the year, and by keeping stock off those paddocks for two months during autumn, it prevents further worm contamination ahead of winter, and significantly reduces the worm burden come spring when our ewes are under the most stress,” Mr Bourne said.

“The WormBoss training also improved our drench management. By raising our worm tolerance thresholds, we now aim to only drench our adult sheep twice a year, with a short-acting application in spring just prior to lambing and another in late summer with timing depending on our worm counts.



An Australian Government Initiative



“I’m excited about the new website because it offers a one-stop reference point for me to access best management advice, and the very useful Drench Decision Guide. And if I need further advice I know where to look.”

The online Drench Decision Guide helps producers assess their worm control strategy through a series of questions, before making specific drench recommendations.

The site also provides links to leading advisers in each state as well as advice on grazing management to reduce infection, advice on breeding to increase resistance and information on the importance of nutrition to provide further protection.

- The new WormBoss website is online at www.wormboss.com.au

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