

Barbervax: A new weapon against Barbers Pole worm

Barbers Pole worm is a major problem for sheep graziers in summer rainfall and some other areas, often causing sheep mortalities. Control costs are significant, and the need for frequent drenching has led to severe drench resistance. Many producers now have few remaining drench options.

A new solution has now emerged: the world's first sheep worm vaccine, "Barbervax", was released late last year. The vaccine is the result of many years of research by the Scottish Moredun Research Institute, with support by MLA, and is produced at the laboratories of the Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia in Albany. Feedlot sheep are given small doses of the worm, which are harvested after slaughter to provide the proteins used in the vaccine.

At present Barbervax is registered for use in lambs, and is given as a course of 5 vaccinations - similar to current drenching schedules on many properties. Initial feedback indicates it has provided highly effective prevention over the main risk period, from summer to early autumn. Once registration of Barbervax for other sheep classes is achieved, its use over the entire flock will reduce the reliance on drenches and the problems due to drench resistance.

More information can be found on the website: www.barbervax.com.au .

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Editor's Notes:

- *There was a limited release (60,000 lambs) last year, but supplies are much larger this year.*
- *More than twenty years research has gone into developing this vaccination.*
- *Despite hundreds of millions of dollars being spent on research into worm vaccination (for both humans and animals), there is only one other worm vaccination in existence.*
- *The vaccination was developed by extracting the extract the proteins (antigens) directly from the worm.*

Disclosure

- *The great majority of funding over the 20+ years was from Moredun, with numerous external funders. However, the recent push to take the concept to a commercial vaccine took place over the last 6 years, funded by Moredun, DAFWA and MLA.*
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