

# THE WOOL PRESS

February 2007

Volume 206

£1.00

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## **EDITORIAL**

Welcome to the February edition of the Wool Press. As usual a host of people have put their ideas and information into print in an attempt to share experiences. It is hoped that you find the articles thought provoking and maybe in some small way, of use.

The department welcomes articles from other interested parties willing to share their knowledge and experiences. It is extremely please to read articles from Zoe and Gosia and to hear how things are progressing at Sand Bay Abattoir at the start of the export season.

Vic Epstein and Joe Hollins have been very busy writing this month as usual. The information contained in their articles on Dog Pilling, TB Monitoring and Drug Withdrawal Periods are recommended for both reading and very close scrutiny. Please do not hesitate to contact Vic or Joe if you have any queries or require further information.

We are also very thankful to Barry Armstrong for providing such a comprehensive overview of what his team at the Dohne Nucleus Flock in South Africa do with their ram team to ensure maximum rates of genetic progress are achieved.

Thanks also to Ben Berntsen for taking the time to give a summary of his recent trip to South Africa and thoughts on how it will affect things at EBF over the coming years.

A whole host of general items are also contained in this edition. Included are summaries of rainfall across the Falklands (thanks to all contributors), advertisement for the upcoming NSF Ram Sale and a delightful recipe provided by Krysteen Ormond.

The Wool Press relies on such contributions, well done. We look forward to hearing from more people in the future.

Best Regards,

**Neil Judd**  
**Senior Agricultural Advisor**

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## **OFFICIAL VETERINARY SURGEON (OVS) AT THE ABATTOIR**

*By Zoë Luxton*

Well, the 2007 Export season got underway on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January. There have been some expected teething problems like us all getting used to the new Animal Movement Certificates but as we use them more and more I am confident the hiccups will be ironed out.

The first week of production was slow as there were a few new members of staff on the line (and some new ones not on the line, me included) so it was obviously going to take a while for people to find their feet and get back into the swing of an efficient production line. We were also hampered by the 3 days of dreadful weather, which prevented the transport of

anything to kill. We killed 1220 sheep in the first week.

In this second week we are aiming to kill approximately 2000. The OVS (i.e. me) is here to make sure we are complying with the EU legislation that we have to follow in order for Member States to accept our meat. Starting from the welfare of the animals as they arrive in our lairage and their pre-slaughter fitness through to welfare at slaughter and down through the line verifying that the meat hygiene is meeting FIMCo standards.

I am here to guide and help, not to just nag slaughter staff and farmers but some days I am afraid it probably does look like that! I guess the thing to remember is that if we don't do things to follow the EU requirements they will seriously tell us off when we are audited and they easily have the power to stop us exporting meat, which, economically, will be bad news.

If you have any questions or problems feel free to drop me an email, [ovs@falklandmeat.co.uk](mailto:ovs@falklandmeat.co.uk) or give a call at the abattoir on 27213.

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## THE NEW MEAT HYGIENE INSPECTOR

*By Gosia Dabrowska*

Hi Everybody! My name is Gosia and I'm Polish. Actually the real name is Malgorzata, but because most of the people experience difficulties trying to pronounce this name, I always introduce myself with Gosia.

I am the new Meat Hygiene Inspector in the Sand Bay Abattoir. By education I'm a veterinary surgeon, Member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. I graduated in Poland though, where I used to work for 3 years as a vet. In October 2005 I moved to the UK, looking for new opportunities. Since then I have been working as a Meat Hygiene Inspector in EU approved abattoirs in England and Wales.

I have quite wide interests, from cinematography and arts to wildlife and endangered species protection. In my free time I usually go for a walk and take pictures of everything which arouses my interest. I also draw, usually animals, and mostly pets of my friends. That's why I don't have any of my drawings for myself.

My stay in the Falklands has given me the opportunity to observe the diversity of a local nature, meet wonderful and friendly people and see the completely different world of two little Islands in the South Atlantic. It's a beautiful and interesting place and there's no chance to be bored here. And the job? That's just by the by.

I would like to thank:

Vic and Coralee Epstein	Zoë Luxton and Andy P
Lyn Dent	Joe Hollins
Glynis King	

for a very warm welcome and being of help for the first few days of my staying here. See you later then!

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# DOG PILLING PHONE BACK - WHY?

*By Vic Epstein*

Camp dwellers: Please don't forget to contact the DoA after you pill your dogs.

## Why are we asking?

Although some are; not everyone is perfect. The experts are still telling me that the most likely cause of us still having hydatids in the Falklands is non-compliance ie people don't worm their dogs or allow their dogs access to offal.

We know there is **NO** MALICIOUS non-compliance!

How?

If this were the case then there would be an area/s in the Falklands where the level of hydatids is much higher than everywhere else. This is **NOT** the case. So the only non-compliance is the **FORGETFUL** kind. This could possibly be the case!

There are those that never forget and there are many camp dwellers in this category. There are some who forget sometimes - we have to send reminders to about 10% of the Stanley dog owners each 6 weeks to remind them to bring their dogs to the DoA for pilling. They forgot!

If you haven't advised that you have treated your dogs you will be contacted on the Monday following and asked if the job was done. Don't be offended if you are a never forgetting person. For the forgetful person it may act as a reminder.

**Remember hydatids should have been eradicated over 10 years ago based on the basic knowledge and life cycle of the disease BUT it is still with us. We can't go on pilling forever!**

## DOG DOSING REPORTING SYSTEM

In the AAC meeting on 15 November 2006, the following proposal was discussed.

The committee decided that dog owners in camp report to the DoA that their dogs have been pilled after dog dosing day. The reporting system will continue for a trial period of 12 months.

**All camp dog owners please advise that their dogs have been pilled by:**  
**Telephone Veterinary Section: 27366 (if after hours leave message)**  
**Email: [imports@doa.gov.fk](mailto:imports@doa.gov.fk)**  
**Fax: 27352**

***If one person is responsible for an entire community only one phone call is necessary.***

Please advise by the end of the week in which dog dosing day occurred.

When leaving a message please simply state:

1. Name
2. Location
3. Number and names of dogs
4. Actual day pills were administered

If you would like to raise any issues please contact Ian Hansen, Richard Stevens, Terrance McPhee or Justin Knight.

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## **TB MONITORING ON FARM**

***By Vic Epstein***

It was proposed to change the methodology of TB monitoring in the Falkland Islands to one whereby when cattle are killed on farm, the 'handy slaughterman' carries out a check, and report back to the DoA.

Why was this decided?

The current system of testing monitoring only tests those farms who can:

1. Can catch cattle
2. Have facilities
3. Have been tested before and are TB free

It is in fact not very effective! And I can't see much value in it.

A quick survey demonstrated that farms with cattle slaughter one/some every year. If the farm slaughtermen have a look for signs of TB the scope is widened.

In reality we are assuming the Falklands is free of TB, not because of our testing regime but because Dr Diggle hasn't heard of a case of bovine TB in humans for over 30 years!

Does it matter if there is TB in the Falklands as far as potential export of beef is concerned? The answer is probably NO as all cattle killed at the abattoir will undergo a PM inspection and further testing if required to ensure the meat is TB free. NZ has bovine TB; England has bovine TB and they export lots of meat! (I am sure there would be marketing advantages however.)

Would it be good for farmers to know what TB looks like and be able to diagnose it when they slaughter animals?

The answer is definitely **YES**.

In a country that allows 'home killing' and sale of home killed meat surely it would be good for the consumers to know that at least there has been some sort of check on the disease status of the slaughtered animal.

The AAC committee decided that a training course should be run in the diagnosis of TB in the slaughtered animal. A course will be conducted during or around Farmers Week. If successful, other courses will be run around the Falklands.

Anyone interested or has comments please contact the Veterinary section of the DoA on 27366.

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## **DRUG WITHDRAWAL PERIODS**

*By Joe Hollins*

The printing presses have been whirring and hopefully by now pads of the new Animal Movement Certificates will have reached every farm and transporter in the archipelago. Guidance on how to fill the form in was covered in the last Wool Press, but a section which will be fairly unfamiliar to Falkland farmers involves the concept of 'withdrawal periods' (also known as 'withholding periods'). This is in the important treatment declaration, section 13 on the form.

### **The treatment declaration:**

As mentioned last month, one of three central elements for EU accreditation of the abattoir which this form covers is the monitoring of drug and chemical residues in the meat, in other words the prevention of these substances entering food destined for human consumption. Each year the DoA submits a detailed plan for residue sampling at the abattoir for a wide range of substances, which has to be approved by the EU before meat can be exported. The current plan was recently approved and is already underway.

Any positive results can have a serious impact on not only this approval, but on the enthusiasm of overseas customers for our product, and any future organic or part organic status the FI may gain. So the importance of this is paramount. You will see that we have asked for a declaration of all treatments given in the 5 months prior to the animals being sent to the abattoir. This seems a long time, but in fact 5 months is based on the longest meat withdrawal period we could find for any drug. All farmers should keep an animal medicine record book in their drugs cabinet for all treatments administered.

It should be noted that this also applies to meat destined for local consumption, whether pork, beef or mutton/lamb (as well as milk and even eggs). Falkland islanders need to be protected too!

### **What is the withdrawal period?**

The withdrawal period is literally the period of time that must elapse after a treatment is given before the meat can be used for human consumption. This information is provided by

the drug company and is an obligatory requirement for them. In other words all drugs and treatments should have a meat withdrawal period in the small print either on the labelling of the bottle or the enclosed leaflet. If it is not there – if the label has rubbed or the leaflet gone missing – then either check with us at Veterinary Services or get on the Internet, google the drug company and check their site or email them. For drugs provided by the department, we can provide the information. Treatments such as wormers which might be obtained independently or via a wholesaler we can try to find out if you are unable to.

**Sample Animal Movement Certificates:**

Each pad of forms has a filled in sample pasted to the back, and we have given a couple of classic drug examples in Section 13. If you have a look you'll see that the withdrawal periods are written in days within brackets as guidance notes. This is not expected from the farmer, but is helpful if you have the information handy. After all, you will need to check that you are not sending sheep to the abattoir which are still within the meat withdrawal period after having been treated with, for example, a wormer. These sheep can not be killed for human consumption before that period has elapsed. Don't think that we can not kill your sheep if there are any treatments to declare. As long as the withdrawal period has elapsed there is no problem, but we still need a treatment declaration in case your animals give an anomalous lab result and we need to trace the problem back.

To illustrate this, both the examples given are acceptable. Noracillin LA – often used for the odd wound or infection – has a withdrawal period for sheep of 60 days (NB old bottles say 14 days); Ivomec injectable has a meat withdrawal period for sheep of 42 days. We've cunningly dated our sample Animal Movement Certificate as over 60 days from these treatments – so neither prevent the sheep from being killed for human consumption, but both are correctly declared.

**Wormers:**

Perhaps one of the greatest risks posed comes from wormers. You have some shearlings ready to be finished for the abattoir in a few weeks time, but their backsides look a bit soiled and their flanks are not as full as they might be – so you worm them all with Ivomec. 3 weeks later you send them off – but it's a mistake. Any of those sheep may test positive for avermectin residues. If you are sending sheep to the abattoir, plan ahead, look up withdrawal periods and work out dates to avoid this disastrous event.

If you are importing your own wormers for meat producing animals, please advise us at Veterinary Services so that we are aware of exactly what products are being used.

**Some common examples:**

Drug	Action	Meat withdrawal period
Norocillin	Antibiotic	Cattle, sheep and pigs 7 days
Norocillin LA	Antibiotic	Cattle, sheep and pigs 60 days

Oxytetrin LA	Antibiotic	Cattle 14 days. Sheep 21 days Pigs 35 days
Ivomec Classic Injection	Wormer	Cattle 35 days. Sheep 42 days
Ivomec Pour-on Cattle	Wormer	Cattle 28 days
Panacur 10%	Wormer	Cattle 12 days. Sheep 15 days
Coopers Spot-On	Insecticide	Cattle 3 days. Sheep 7 days

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## **ANIMAL MOVEMENT CERTIFICATES**

Reports from the OVS at the abattoir are that, bar a few teething problems, the forms are working well - so thank you to all concerned.

The farmer's faxed copy has helped iron out these minor difficulties and prevent delays.

One request – for the purpose of clarity, could farmer's overwrite the important details on their yellow copy prior to faxing so that they are easier to interpret at the other end.

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## **A FEW THOUGHTS**

*By Ben Berntsen*

Having just done my lambmarking and had some reasonable and some bad results, I have started looking back on my trip to South Africa and thought that I would share with you what I picked up from the trip.

Everywhere we went it became more and more obvious that all the lambing ewes were being put onto better feed. Some of this was planted especially for lambing and others were done by lambing when the feed was at its natural best, lambs hitting the ground when the growth was at its best. This always makes me think of riding along in a land cruiser with Neil Greyling through corn fields and asking the question, 'if you didn't plant this for your animals would they survive the winter', to which he replied, 'what the f--- do you want, productive animals or dead animals'. Needless to say I got the message loud and clear. You have to feed animals to get production, especially through that period from July to end of October. They have to supplement feed their animals through the same period.

The other thing that they put a lot of pressure on was selection. They selected animals for long bodies, clear faces, free flowing wool and good conformation clear of pigment with the exception of skin pigment. Things they told us here was the more wool you put on a sheep's body the less reproductive they become.

Why cull an animal for skin pigment when every thing else about the animal is ok? There is no such thing as the perfect animal - work with the best that you have. This year I have adopted the policy to work with those productive animals and the fat ones are on their last chance as they have obviously not struggled to bring up a lamb.

Other things that I picked up were;

Flushing ewes before mating. This immediately made me think of embryo's but not the case. It meant putting your ewes on good food just before mating so that they shed more eggs bettering chances of pregnancy and twins.

Scanning ewes for multiples and taking better care of them so that you get better survival rates. Something worthy of note here - lambs born as twins are naturally highly reproductive as the gene is inherited from the parents.

When you are trying to produce that perfect animal remember the genetic make up of a lamb is 50% mother and 50% father. So if you have a nice looking ram and just put him with any ewe, don't expect the progeny to all look like the ram.

Which brings me onto the things we were told to look out for in the rams. After selecting the rams that you are happy with, do the obvious checks and make sure that the working gear is in good order. Rams need to be in good condition before mating. Some rams are naturally gay and not interested in ewes so be aware of ram to ewe ratio so as to cover for this. Sperm test as some rams appear in good working order but are infertile. The ability of rams to mount a ewe. They do a simple test by putting a couple of ewes in a head bale and letting the rams in one by one to see if they can mount okay. One place we visited used ram marching so as to get the rams fit before mating. The use of teaser rams or injected wethers so as to get the ewes cycling so that they can be covered in the 35 day mating period which in turn will give a more even bunch of lambs and no little fellows having to face weaning after being born late.

As an after thought the other day I was thinking back to when the farms were big stations and remembering when all the camps on the farm used to be spelled at some time or other in the growing season, ewes off shears going to mountains in the San Carlos area until tallying. Talking to Snoozer at lambmarking similar things used to happen on the West. Could this be a reason for low reproduction rates as the food is not given a chance to re-grow due to constant grazing pressure?

I hope some of the above will be of interest to others looking to make progress in the farming world as giving excuses is not helping me to make progress. So I am going to put this new found knowledge into practise along with advice from our agricultural advisors.

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## **WOOL PRICES OVER TIME**

### **- HAS THE MESSAGE CHANGED FOR WOOL GROWERS?**

*By Neil Judd*

It has been obvious to wool growers for the last 150 years that prices for wool do not remain consistent. Prices have varied considerably over time for the same wool type and even more dramatically for different wool types.

The table shown below highlights the variation in wool price that has occurred for good quality fleece wool types between 18 and 32 micron over the last six years.



### Key Points

- Price has varied for fine/mid-micron wool (18 to 25 micron) by approximately 200 p/kg clean between years.
- Price variation for broad lots (26 to 32 micron) has been approximately 75p/kg over the six year period.
- Fine and mid-micron fleece wool lots have consistently achieved significant market premiums over broad wool lots (150 p/kg clean – 250 p/kg clean).
- At any point in time, wool price has consistently fallen away at the greatest rate for lots broader than approximately 24 to 25 micron, price then stabilises for very broad lots.
- At any point in time, wool price variation has consistently been less dramatic between 20 to 24 micron compared to broader lots between 24 and 28 micron.
- In 2007 broad wool lots (26 to 32 micron) have fallen to the lowest levels recorded for the period, while fine/mid-micron lots have increased to levels markedly above most earlier years (except 2003).

### On farm consequences

Overall the world wool market environment is showing strength with signs of increased consumer and hence processing demand. The critical point however, is that demand appears to be in the fine/mid-micron range where supply is most limited.

Farmers are urged to carefully consider the on-farm sheep breeding ramifications of the continued market demand for fine/mid-micron wool (18 to 25 micron). Given careful selection and attention to breeding detail, it is possible to produce a dual purpose sheep

type that has fine/mid-micron wool (as mature sheep), improved lamb growth rates and also improved hardiness.

If you would like to discuss any issue raised in this article, please do not hesitate to give me a call.

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## **PERFORMANCE TESTING OF THE DOHNE NUCLEUS FLOCK**

*By Barry Armstrong*

We have recently completed our performance testing programme of the August 2005 lamb crop. 560 lambs were born which gave us a lambing percentage of 126 and later a weaning percentage of 116%.

The whole process started 2 years ago in March 2005 when the ewes were mated. We put in Teasers (Vasectomised Rams) at a rate of 1% with the ewes for 14 days followed immediately by the rams in single sire groups at a rate of 40 to 45 ewes per ram for exactly 35 days.

The ewes for each ram were randomly selected but making sure that each ram got an equal number of ewes of each age group and equal numbers from each members family of our Group Breeding scheme. This was so that we could accurately and fairly assess the breeding potential of each ram.

This mating information was then entered into the Shepherd Sheep computer programme so that at lambing time the sire of each ram is already identified.

For many years we have found this practice at mating ensures that about 80 – 85% of the lambs are born within the first 17 days of the lambing period, which is beneficial and more accurate for the subsequent performance testing, as the lambs are all of a similar age.

At lambing time the lambs are given their permanent identity with a pre-marked tag in their ear within 12 to 24 hours of birth and this, together with the dams ear tag number, are entered into the lambing pocket book. This is all then also entered into the computer.

In early December the lambs are all individually weighed and the programme then calculates the 100 day corrected weights and indices. The computer programme makes correction factors for single and multiple births and also for lambs from maiden or older ewes.

The lambs are weaned at this stage and are then visually classed using the 100 day body weight indices as well as a visual appraisal for conformation. Any cull faults such as black spots or any other undesirable characteristics and remarks are made and recorded about wool quality and type as well.

At this 100 day classing the lambs were divided into progeny groups for each of the 10 or 12 sires used. We could then calculate the approval rate of the progeny of each sire together with the average 100 day body weight of each sire's progeny and this also gives a very good visual impression of how the progeny of each sire look. This allows us to make a

preliminary assessment of how each sire performed.

The lambs were then shorn even though the wool was very short, but the object is to get an even length of wool when the main Performance Testing and shearing is done later at 14 months of age.

All the lambs are retained, even the culls, and ewes and rams naturally kept separate but the ewes and rams run in one group each. It is important to retain as many lambs as possible until Final Classing in order to make the performance testing and assessment of both the individual lambs and their sires as accurate as possible.

The main Performance Testing was then done at shearing time in October 2006 when the lambs were 14 months old. This involves weighing and recording every fleece as well as taking a 30 gram mid-rib wool sample from each lamb which is then sent off to the Fleece Test Laboratory together with a shorn body weight which is recorded a week or so after shearing. We also record any remarks about the visual appearance of the wool such as style, colour and handle etc.

The Fleece Test Lab measures the staple length, microns, clean yield and number of crimps per inch for every sample and together with the shorn body weight calculates all the indices for each trait and a combined **Selection Index** using the current Dohne formula. This is **Body Weight + 8 x Clean Fleece Weight minus 5 x Fibre Diameter**. All the animals are then ranked according to this Combined Selection Index.

This gives us the best balance with the present prices we are receiving for wool and mutton. As Peter Johnson said in his article in the December issue of Wool Press this formula must not chop and change too often. It is only after this classing has been done that any obvious culls are removed from the flock and marketed for slaughter if necessary.

In mid January at the age of 17 months the FINAL CLASSING was then done using all the measured data available and then carefully checking each animal for conformation and any visual cull faults. All the remarks about wool and conformation are recorded so that a full picture of each sheep is available. At this classing the sheep are all again divided into sire groups for us to be able to get an overall impression of the progeny of each sire. This then allows us to accurately assess the breeding potential of each of the 10 or 12 sires used.

The best 10 young rams are then selected as sires for the following mating. We always use the best sire from the previous year's group in order to provide a genetic link between the years and also use an outside sire as well to provide another link to compare us genetically with the rest of the Dohnes in the country. With the BLUP (Best Linear Unbiased Predicted) breeding values that are now calculated and available to us we are more accurately able to see what genetic progress we are making in comparison with the rest of the Dohne population.