



Sheep Scab Initiative

Bulletin #5

Sheep Scab in Northern Ireland – Treatment and Control

There are two types of treatment available to treat or prevent sheep scab in the UK: injectable Macrocytic Lactones (MLs) and Diazinon Organophosphate (OP) dips.

Macrocytic Lactones (MLs)

MLs (moxidectin, doramectin or ivermectin) are available as injectable products for either prevention or treatment of sheep scab. As MLs are also widely used as anthelmintics (for worm control), reliance on them for sheep scab control increases the risk of resistance developing in roundworms. Speak to your vet about the impact that using a ML will have on your control plan for worms.

MLs are not effective against lice, ticks or blowflies.

Checklist for ML use:

- Always read the data sheet instructions before use. Withdrawal periods are subject to change.
- What is the correct dose, where should the injection be given and by which route?
- How many doses per animal are required? (Is this a preventative action or treatment?)
- Will the sheep be going to clean ground after treatment? (Some products act for a short time: sheep could be re-infected within the 17 day mite survival period.)
- Will treated sheep be mixed with untreated sheep? (Some products allow infectivity to persist for up to 14 days after treatment.)
- Report any suspicion of treatment failure to your vet, who can give you appropriate advice.

Diazinon Organophosphate (OP) dips

Remember that OPs are highly toxic and approved training is compulsory before use.

OP dips are only effective when used for plunge dipping of sheep and are not authorised for use in NI in showers or through jettors, as such use could interfere with the future effectiveness of the dips.

The mites are killed within 24 hours and the residual action of the dip lasts for several weeks, meaning that sheep will continue to be protected during this period if they contact infected material.

Dips are effective against other ecto-parasites including lice, ticks and blowflies.

Checklist for OP use:

- Always read the data sheet instructions before use. Withdrawal periods are subject to change.
- Mobile dippers operated by trained persons may be an option. Ensure that dispensing and replenishing of the product is accurate. Dirt in the dip will reduce the effectiveness of the product.
- Immerse the sheep (except the head and ears) in the dip for one minute, to ensure that the dip gets down to the skin to kill the mites. Plunge the head under at least once and keep sheep moving in the dipper.
- Dispose of used dip correctly, using a licenced waste disposal contractor or apply for an authorisation from NIEA.

A full treatment guide can be found on the SCOPS (Sustainable Control of Parasites website) <https://www.scops.org.uk/workspace/pdfs/scab-product-options-table.pdf>