Flystrike control methods

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FLYSTRIKE CONTROL METHODS

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An article in next month's *Journal of Agriculture* will—
- show the relationship between flystrike control methods and the biology of sheep and of blowflies;
- summarise the evidence on various control methods;
- combine recommended control methods into control *programmes* to suit various situations.

**Recommended flystrike control methods are summarised here.**

**Tail length**
- Unmulesed lambs—Cut tail level with the tip of the vulva or slightly longer.
- Conventionally-mulesed and tailstripped lambs—Cut tail level with the tip of the vulva or slightly longer.
- Radically-mulesed lambs—Tail length does not normally affect flystrike. For faster curing, cut tails shorter.

**Bare skin under the tail**
- Conserve this, using the knife blade to push it towards the lamb before cutting the tail off.

**Crutching**
- Crutch as late as practicable before the expected flywave (late March and/or August-September, depending on shearing date).

**Mulesing**
- Mules lambs at marking time (except lambs for slaughter).
- Mules bought sheep and other unmulesed sheep after shearing or after crutching.
- Radical mulesing is even more effective than conventional mulesing (see article in February *Journal*, Bulletin 3784).
- Judge the quality of mulesing by the size of the bare area after curing, and by seeing what scope there is for further stretching of the bare area.

**Fleecerot resistance**
- In fleecerot areas, buy rams from studs in bad fleecerot areas.

**Mycotic dermatitis**

- Be sure lambs and young sheep are completely dry when shorn.
- Dip within a fortnight of shearing, in fine weather, to avoid dip scald which can favour lumpy wool.

**Wounds**
- Wounds that will be curing during a flywave should be dusted with an effective insecticide powder (this often applies to marking and mulesing wounds and sometimes to shearing wounds).

**Treating struck sheep**
- Clip or shear the wool from affected areas and all surrounding stained areas, to dry the skin and avoid re-strike. Treat with an effective insecticide.
- When *extremely* effective insecticides are available, jetting the affected area can be an effective treatment and can prevent re-strike.
- Prompt treatment of struck sheep might restrict the development of flywaves.

**Jetting**
- As soon as there are “too many” struck sheep in a flock to cope with by individual treatment, jet the flock.
- Jetting depends on getting an effective insecticide onto every moist, attractive patch of skin, to kill maggots before they eat through the skin.
- Blowflies are developing resistance to present insecticides and other control systems are needed.

**Setstocking**
- Setstocking gives less scouring than other grazing methods and generally results in cleaner sheep.