A seasonal reminder for flock owners: care needed in lamb marking

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A Seasonal Reminder

For Flock Owners

CARE NEEDED IN LAMB MARKING

With winter and spring lambing becoming increasingly popular there are still plenty of lambs to be marked this year. A word of warning now may save unnecessary mortalities due to lamb marking diseases in the next few months.

Ear marking, tail docking and castration cause wounds and the destruction of tissue. This provides an ideal place for entry and multiplication of the organisms which cause tetanus, gangrene, arthritis and cheesy gland.

TETANUS

Tetanus is the most important of these diseases. The micro-organisms which cause tetanus are widely distributed as spores in the soil and animal manure, and particularly heavy spore populations exist in farm stock yards.

These spores are air-born in dust which rises in the yards with the movement of stock, and there is a high probability of lambs marked in the yards being infected by the tetanus spores.

Blunt Knife:
Blunt knives and dressings such as Stockholm tar cause delayed healing of the wounds and the moist inflamed tissue is an ideal medium for the spores which develop and produce a deadly toxin.

Rubber Rings:
Rubber rings tend to produce areas of dead tissue similar to that caused by a blunt knife. They have been used successfully for many years on some properties but on others have not been so successful. As a result tetanus has caused high lamb mortalities in some cases.

Preventatives

The farmer has a choice of two preventatives:

Tetanus anti-toxin: A 1 c.c. injection under the skin gives the lamb an immunity for at least two weeks.

A victim of tetanus. Note the rigidly extended legs and the head and neck bent backward