

Flystrike

What is flystrike and how does it happen?

- Flystrike occurs when flies lay eggs on dirty, daggged area of a sheep's fleece.
- These eggs then hatch into maggots which eat away at the sheep, eroding the skin, muscle and tissue.
- As this process progresses, more flies are attracted to the damaged area, which worsens the problem.

What are the symptoms?

- Sheep appear irritated, restless, and off food in the early stages.
- Some animals may show no signs until a large amount of damage has occurred.
- Wool loss only occurs in the later stages.
- Skin blackening and sores with a foul odour can be visible.
- Maggots can be physically seen with the human eye on the animals.

How can we treat it?

- Treatment should be initiated immediately when flystrike has been noticed.
- Ring for veterinary assistance if your sheep is dull and lethargic.
- Move your sheep to a small pen or yard: this makes it easy to monitor your sheep. Provide plenty of water, feed and shelter.
- Clip and clean the area: a wide clip beyond the affected area is needed, as eggs and maggots can be hidden within the wool outside the edges.
- Clean and remove any maggots and eggs that remain.
- Products available to purchase from the clinic which can be used in the case of flystrike:
 - o Cyrex
 - o Zapp Encore
 - o Maggo



How to prevent it?

- The key to prevention is shearing your sheep, and regularly! Keeping a short clean fleece reduces dags and areas the flies can lay eggs.
- Cyrex can be used as a preventative treatment just before the risk period (December).
- Having a good drenching program reduces diarrhoea and therefore minimises dirty fleeces.