



Entropion (Inverted Eyelids) in Lambs

Dr. Vlietstra

Entropion is the medical term referring to a rolled-in eyelid. In young lambs, this is termed “congenital entropion” and typically only affects the lower lid(s). One or both eyes may be affected. This is the most common eye disorder in young lambs. The eyelid is rolled inward, causing the lashes to brush against the cornea of the eye and creating a constant source of irritation. Early on, the easiest way to detect this is finding a lamb with eyes that are always tearing, and may be slightly reddened or puffy. Left untreated, the cornea will be damaged and the eye will become infected.

There are several methods of non-surgical entropion repair. One of the oldest methods is to inject a small amount (typically 1-2cc) of long-acting penicillin subcutaneously just beneath the eyelid. The volume of penicillin will create a “bleb” that will cause the eyelid to roll back out, and hopefully the penicillin will be irritating enough to the sensitive tissues that it will create a scar that will function as a permanent repair. Others have used sutures or surgical staples to hold the eyelid out. My favorite way to repair these is to pinch the skin under the eyelid and apply a metal wound clip to hold the eyelid in place. The wound clips are cheap and with a little practice, are quite easy to place. They fall out on their own nearly 100% of the time after staying in long enough to create scar tissue to keep the eyelid from rolling back in. With any of the non-surgical treatments, it is a good idea to apply an antibiotic eye salve twice a day for a few days. Your veterinarian should have these—just be sure that the salve does not have an anti-inflammatory steroid like hydrocortisone in it, as this can create problems if the cornea was scratched by the eye lashes.

I have never repaired a lamb entropion surgically. Most references say to do this only if non-surgical methods have failed. This would be a relatively expensive procedure, and would most likely require the lamb to undergo general anesthesia. A small piece of skin is then cut from below the eye and the gap is sutured together, creating more tension and rolling the eyelid out. In this case, even when the stitches dissolve, if the proper amount of skin is removed, it should not be possible for the eyelid to roll back in. In addition to the risks associated with putting a young lamb under general anesthesia, there is also a risk of taking too much skin out, and creating a secondary “ectropion” where the eyelid is rolled out too far.

Aside from being asked how to repair an entropion, the most common question I am asked is whether or not to cull the lamb, the ewe, or the ram. Here’s where I throw in my little disclaimer, and I’ll get a lot of arguments about my stance on the issue. It is generally accepted that there is a degree of heritability to the rate of entropion occurrence. The means of inheritance is unknown, however, and thought to be more complicated than a simple autosomal recessive gene (meaning you can

Sheep For Profit School

The Pipestone Lamb and Wool program will conduct a Sheep for Profit School July 9-12, 2008 in Pipestone, Minnesota.

The Sheep for Profit School is a professional management and business school for the sheep industry. The purpose of the school is to help producers improve their sheep management skills; increase the profitability of their sheep operation and form business relationships. The school will be intense and combine lecture, group discussion and visit two outstanding Pipestone area sheep operations. Expert instructors with diverse and practical sheep experience will help you define your vision and build a practical plan to achieve goals. This is a three and a half day investment that will change your sheep operation and how you view the sheep industry.

Enrollment in the school is limited to a maximum of 20 students to create an ideal learning environment and allow for one-on-one advising. Visit our website www.pipestonesheep.com for registration information and a course schedule. For more information, contact the Pipestone Lamb and Wool Management Program, Minnesota West Community and Technical College, PO Box 250, Pipestone, MN 56164. 1-800-658-2330 or email : jodi.christensen@mnwest.edu.

Pipestone Sheep Facilities Tour

The Pipestone Lamb and Wool Program will host a sheep facility tour on Monday, June 9, 2008. The purpose of the tour will be to show the latest innovations in sheep buildings, handling systems, feeding systems and facility layout.

Four sheep operations that range in size from 300 to 1,000 ewes will be visited. Tour participants will see a state of the art lambing barn, hoop barns, remodeled buildings, drive thru feeding barn along with various feeding systems designed to reduce labor and minimize feed waste. Each farm also has sheep handling systems that are unique from one another. In addition, this will be an opportunity to hear the philosophy of sheep production from four successful sheep producers.

Visit our website www.pipestonesheep.com for registration information and a few pictures of this years tour facilities. For further information and a registration form, contact the Pipestone Lamb and Wool Program at Minnesota West Community and Technical College in Pipestone, Minnesota. Call 507-825-6806 or email: jodi.christensen@mnwest.edu.

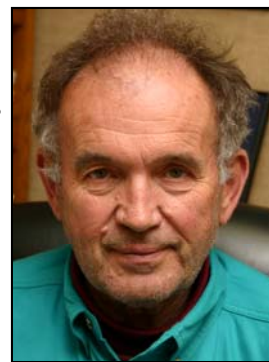
Entropion continued...

predict the number of lambs that will have an entropion by knowing if the ewe and ram are negative, positive, or carriers).

My advice is to use some uncommon sense. If you bought a new ram this year and nothing else changed and are having a lot of inverted eyelids, don't keep him. If you have a nice ewe lamb that has an entropion, and she is born to a good mom, I wouldn't cull her based strictly on the eye problem. Make it part of the decision process, though. In my experience, the repairs are quite simple and less important in making cull decisions than things like a good udder, healthy feet, and a pleasant disposition.

I spent ten hours with sheep today and most of it was in the lambing barn. The weekends are when I get caught up. There is always extra processing to be done and ewes and lambs to be moved. Lambing time is the most enjoyable part of raising sheep for me.

Today was challenging, but successful. I have an older, White Dorper ewe, probably the best one on the farm. She had twins and has had no udder for several lambings. I was near the end of this group but I got lucky, two ewes had singles. A rarity at our farm, and I got both lambs transferred. I had one Dorper ewe that had lost a lamb. I skinned that lamb and put the hide on the new born, but she wasn't convinced. Probably could have made it work but another single was born to help me out.



We have just lambed a group of 50% Katahdin ewe lambs, the other half being Dorper and White Dorper cross ewes. We have lambed a lot of different breeds of ewe lambs over the years but I have never experienced anything as successful as this group has been. Large, vigorous lambs. Mostly twins, adequate milk and no prolapse trouble.

Our new creep feed – mini pellet and cracked corn is working well. Big Gain did a superb job putting this product together. Always include choice alfalfa hay in your creep. Lambs really like hay and regardless of what others might recommend, include alfalfa hay all the way to the market. Free choice, good quality hay actually increases utilization of grains and is much better for health and doesn't restrict the marketing window like all grain rations do.

Don't forget to keep free choice loose salt available and don't feed mineral to fattening lambs. Limestone in the ration is all that is necessary. We have put ammonium chloride back in the Big Gain creep rations because occasionally they get fed too long.

When weaning ewes, withholding water is a bad idea. Very difficult to water starve a ruminant. Withholding water just increases stress on the ewes.

Stop feeding grain the last week and switch to grass hay or poorer quality hay is a good practice. Don't wean on grass for many different reasons. Bed ewes well at weaning. Keep them clean. Watch for mastitis; off feed, lameness, asymmetrical swelling and depression are clinical signs. I like Nuflor, Penicillin, and Dexamethasone for treatment. Treatment is targeted at saving the ewe, udder probably will become nonfunctional.

Vaccinate with Type D at weaning and three weeks later is a recommended practice.

Best Pneumonia treatment – early diagnosis – Nuflor – follow up with Draxxin second day. Draxxin needs to be diluted with water to assure correct dosage on small lambs.

On a lighter note, we anticipate spending nine to ten interrupted weeks at our lodge on Kodiak Island in Alaska. We will be back for Sedalia, State and County fairs and return soon enough for my 55 year high school class reunion in September. Anyone wishing a DVD of the lodge just give us a call 877-710-9453 and we will send you one or check out our website. For most of the summer I can be reached at 877-710-9453 or www.wildernessbeachlodge.com. When in the states, I will be at the office or on my mobile 507-215-0487.

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Veterinary services, procedures, biologicals, and drugs mentioned in this publication represent the personal opinions and clinical observations of the contributing author. They are in no way intended to be interpreted as recommendations without the consent of the producer's own practicing Veterinarian. We strongly urge that producers establish a patient-client-veterinarian relationship that allows extra-label use when there are no drugs approved for treatment or if approved drugs are not effective. This procedure allows veterinarians to go beyond label directions when "prudent use" is necessary. The limited availability of drugs and biologics in this country is a major factor in restricting the growth of the sheep industry and allowing producers to compete in the world Market place.

Question: We had keds five to six years ago, on a couple of sheep we had purchased from another farm. Since then we have moved to another brand-new farm and have never had any recurrence. However, I'm suspicious that at least one group of our sheep is dealing with them again. I just put de-licing juice on that group this afternoon. My question is, where do keds come from, out of the blue like that? We had one of the worst winters in history here too, though maybe that just encourages their propagation?

Answer: Keds do come from sheep—infested with keds. Keds, which are commonly called ticks, are actually a wingless fly. They do not lay eggs but rather egg and larval stages occur in the female which lays the pupa stage on wool. The pupal stage is resistant to chemicals but the ked itself is easy to kill. Most sheep get keds from other sheep but transfer on sheep equipment is possible (trailers, feeders, blankets, etc.) it is certainly possible that if it is keds, a low population could have survived the past six years. Winter is the time of most activity. Another possibility is lice.

Either way, I suggest that you pour the sheep with ultraboss pour-on. Two applications, 14 days apart will nearly eliminate lice or keds.

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