

Goatveto Winter Newsletter

Goat Veterinary Consultancies - goatveto

Spring 2021

Lice on Goats

Finding lice on goats is very common. There are 2 main types

- Sucking lice
- Biting lice

The sucking lice actually suck blood and can cause anaemia in goats. Biting lice live on the goats' dander and dead skin cells but can cause hair loss due to their itching.



Hair loss

Biting lice have rounded heads and are thicker in their body. Sucking lice have narrow heads and you can often see the blood inside their body, making them red-blue in colour. You can also see the white eggs (nits) attached to their hair shafts.

In Australia there are only 3 products registered for lice control in goats. These are:

- Diazinon for sheep cattle pigs and goats
- Pestene powder (also used on poultry)
- CloutS backline (which is no longer made or sold)

Pestene powder can't be used on dairy goats. Diazinon can be used on milkers and has a withdrawal period of 48 hours for milk. Buy a new garden sprayer and label it carefully. Add 10 ml of the product to 4 L of water then spray the goats, following the label instructions carefully. Diazinon is an organophosphate so there are serious toxicity concerns so read the safety instructions carefully. COOPER'S DIAZINON and WSD DIAZINON FOR SHEEP, CATTLE, GOATS AND PIGS can be sprayed on milking goats with a 48 hour milk with-holding period. Amitraz used to be registered for lice and goats but is now just registered as a spray for tick control on goats and has nil with-holding periods for milk and meat.



No matter what spray treatment you use, nothing kills the eggs/nits so need to repeat spray to kill the recently hatched lice.

Fortunately lice are host specific so you, your pets and other livestock are safe and they won't even spread to

sheep. Research confirmed that goat lice won't infect sheep but that sheep lice can get transferred and infect goats (Hallam, 1985). Lice can however be spread mechanically so never share brushes or goat coats with anyone else at shows. Shearers' clothing and moccasins can introduce lice onto a property so it is best to put shearers' moccasins into a plastic bag and microwave them for 5 minutes. Clipping will reduce lice numbers as long as the hair is disposed of carefully.

Whatever treatment is used it is generally repeated in 2-3 weeks as the egg/nits are very resistant to treatment so you need to let them hatch and kill them as young lice just after hatching. The lifecycle of lice is around 3 weeks.

Your veterinarian can prescribe sheep lice treatments "off label" which can be very useful. When choosing a sheep lice treatment it is best not to use a drug that is also a worm drench. Ivermectin injections are not recommended as they will only kill sucking lice, not biting lice. Also ivermectin injections or sprays could lead to worms that are resistant to ivermectin and hence other "mectins" worm drenches. A full range of sheep lice treatments is can

be found here –
www.liceboss.com.au .

Veterinary textbooks have recommended the following drugs to treat either species of lice on goats: amitraz, permethrin, deltamethrin, alphacypermethrin, pyrethrin/piperonyl oxide, flumethrin and some “mectins”. Fipronil, as found in spot on treatments for dogs, is illegal to use on goats in Australia, the UK and USA as goats are classed as food producing animals. When treating for lice it is important to treat all the goats (as long as the label or vet’s prescription allows kids to be treated) and repeat as mentioned above. For fibre goats there are many sheep options that can be used “off-label” including exstinosad and deltamethrin. Exstinosad comes in a 250ml size suitable for jetting small fibre goat herds. Permethrin is found in some flea washes used on dogs and sold in small amounts. Talk to your vet about options.

To check for lice you need to do 20 partings of the goat’s hair all over the goat (wear glasses if you need them to read fine printing).

Alternatively use a dog flea comb or human head lice comb and comb through several area over the goat.

Both types of lice can have economic consequences for cashmere and mohair goat producers due to damaged fleeces.

Lice don’t like sunlight nor high temperatures so tend to move away from the top areas of the goat and hide in underneath areas like the groin or shoulders. However the lice are more likely to spread in summer as the lice aren’t huddled down close to the skin to keep warm as happens in winter and hence more easily spread. Lice often breed up in winter then spread in summer.

Approximately one third of kids that I disbud have lice they got from their mothers.

Cheesy Gland

Cheesy gland is common in sheep and can affect goats. The scientific disease name is Caseous Lymphadenitis and is often shortened to CL or CLA. This is a bacterial infection that settles in the lymph nodes, causing them to become full of pus. These lymph nodes are generally external ones but can also be internal.

Not all abscesses are due to CLA. Goats in particular can have a severe reaction to vaccines and the dead tissue can look like pus. Always record where you vaccinate. Grass seed can also introduce bacteria under the skin and then form an abscess. Other bacteria can also cause external abscesses. For this reason getting your vet to take a sterile sample before

the abscess bursts is the only way to confirm CLA.

If CLA is confirmed there are 2 choices: culling the goat before the abscess bursts or keeping it isolated until the abscess is healed with good hygiene to prevent any exposure of other goats to the pus.

As mentioned research in feral goats showed that goats either get external abscess (the majority) or internal lymph nodes (mainly the lungs). CLA is spread via pus or coughing (if lung abscesses).

In Australia, goats need to be vaccinated with “Glanvac 3 (Zoetis) every 6 months. This has eradicated CLA from many goat herds, especially if combined with culling. “Glanvac 6” also works for CLA & is registered in Canada. You should monitor your herd by examining them for any signs of scar tissue indicating a past abscess and the common sites are under the ear, in front of the shoulder and in front of the stifle.

Probably because “Glanvac” is very efficient as a prevention there is no blood test regularly used in Australia. The CLA blood test is available overseas but only picks up antibodies, which can be positive due to exposure, rather than a current infection.