Sheep scab outbreaks peak in late winter (July to September).

Several reports of sheep scab outbreak investigations attribute the cause of the outbreak to sheep that were recently purchased, usually from an auction. Some also contain lengthy accounts of how the farmer attempted to treat the sheep himself for several months, the disease steadily worsening, until he called the state vet as a last resort. State officials then struggle to make a positive diagnosis, as most of the mites have been killed by the previous treatment attempts. One notable individual, when the state officials arrived on his farm, hid or lost several sheep in a copse of trees during the treatments. Naturally, sheep scab re-emerged on his farm a few months later, re-infecting all his neighbours’ farms as well.

Continued on following page
Buying of animals from auctions is always risky, but if it is done, the new sheep should be quarantined and treated as if they were infected with sheep scab. Depending on the ivermectin product used, this can cost from R1.00 to R6.00 per sheep. The costs of treatment pale in comparison to the potential costs should be entire flock become infected. Costs then will be in the form of treatment as well as loss of production. To maintain a farm free of sheep scab mites, farmers should try, if at all possible, to prevent contact between their sheep and those on neighbouring properties.

It is clear that farmer education and compliance with the law is crucial for the control of sheep scab. This, however, is not quite so simple. Read the account of Nita Vosloo, AHT Laingsburg on page 4 for insight into conditions in the field while investigating a sheep scab outbreak.

The extent of wool-loss in a severely infected flock of sheep. Photograph: Jacques Kotze.
Western Cape Veterinary Services has been participating in the DAFF national pig survey 2013, sampling for which began in July this year. While the SAPPO is sampling commercial piggeries in the province, our AHTs were tasked with finding small commercial or free-roaming pigs to sample based on random points generated in the province. Serum samples are being taken from a sample group on each farm, and recently we have also partnered with the NICD and started taking nasopharyngeal swabs from the pigs. The serum will be tested for classical swine fever, porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome, influenza A, Aujesky’s disease, coronavirus including transmissible gastroenteritis and African swine fever. The swabs will be used by the NICD in their research on the transmission of influenza between animals and humans.

The courage and competency of our AHTs must be mentioned, as sampling of pigs on small farms is no easy task. The larger pigs are often aggressive and there are usually no facilities or enough extra hands to immobilise the pigs. The process can be dangerous for the pigs too: the jugular vein of the pig can be easily sliced open if it moves too much during sampling.

In general however, the sampling has been progressing well and our province has thus far sampled 38 of our 78 allocated farms. The Swellendam office in particular must be commended for sampling all 15 of their points within a week of receiving their sampling boxes.
Skaapbrandsiekte in die Laingsburg area  N Vosloo

Op 1 Julie 2013 het die eienaar van Plaas 1 aangemeld dat sy skape jeuk en krap. Cobus Ferreira (DGT Prins Albert) het gaan monsters neem en dit was positief vir skaapbrandsiekte. Die eienaar van Plaas 1 het nog ‘n plaas, Plaas 2, wat nie aan Plaas 1 grens nie, Plaas 2 se diere was ook positief.

Plaas 1 en Plaas 2 is albei twee keer behandel en al die aangrensende plase is ook behandel. Tydens behandeling van aangrensende plase is nog twee plase positief bevind.

Plaas 3 – ‘n Skaap van die bure het tussen sy skape gekom, hierdie skaap was die enigste een wat positief was, sy eie skape was negatief maar weens die feit dat daar ‘n positiewe skaap op sy plas was is sy plas as positief verklar.

Plaas 4 - Een van die skape van Plaas 2 het by sy skape in die kraal gespring. Dit is ‘n klipkraal, skape kan inspring maar nie weer uit nie, toe het hulle die skaap van Plaas 2 tussen hulle skape gevind in die kraal en so het hulle aangesteek.

’n Vyfde positiewe plas is gevind toe ‘n boer my in kennis gestel het dat hy by die eienaar van ‘n aangrensende plas van hom gehoor het dat sy skape kolle op het. Hierdie plas grens nie aan die positiewe plas nie maar die eienaar beweer dat sy werksmense op Plaas 1 gewerk het. Hy het later gesê dat daar ‘n vreemde skaap tussen sy skape was en toe het hulle die skaap geskiet en gesien die skaap het brandsiek.

Ek kan nog nie bevestig waar die skaapbrandsiekte vandaan gekom het nie. Volgens bewerings het die eienaar van Plaas 1 skape ingekoop vanaf Upington. Dit is nog nie bevestig nie want die boere praat elke dag ‘n ander storie, niemand praat dieselfde storie nie.

’n Totaal van 8084 skape is behandel en 141 bokke is behandel (dip)

Op al die plase is baie rooiluis en blouluis op die skape gevind. Ek het by die boerevereniging van Laingsburg ‘n praaitjie oor luise aangebied en Dr Jaco Pienaar het gepraat oor skaapbrandsiekte. Ons het ons beste gedoen om mense weer in te lig oor skaapbrandsiekte en die vereistes.

Sheep in Laingsburg showing severe clinical signs of sheep scab. Photographs: Nita Vosloo

Recent Publications

State Vet: Disease Control, Lesley van Helden recently co-authored a paper that was published in the June edition of the journal of the European Molecular Biology Organisation, EMBO reports. The paper, titled “One world, one health: Humans, animals and the environment are inextricably linked—a fact that needs to be remembered and exploited in our modern approach to health,” described the importance of the concept of one health and encouraged education and collaboration between experts in all fields to better understand the health of our planet. The journal can be found at http://www.nature.com/embor
Outbreak Map

Disease outbreaks in the Western Cape Province identified during July 2013

Western Cape Province

Reported animal diseases for July 2013

Legend (Outbreaks in bold, follow up transparent)

- Anthrax
- Avian Influenza
- Bovine Brucellosis (B. abortus)
- Bovine Malignant Catarrhal Fever
- Botulism
- Lumpy Skin Disease
- Rabies
- Sheep Scab
- Other non-reportable diseases
- Routine Vaccination Events - All diseases
- Other farm visits by officials

Map produced by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Republic of South Africa.
Other Outbreak Events

- A case of rabies in the town of Beaufort West has initiated a vaccination campaign for all the pets in the town. A rabid water mongoose attacked a dog, which was subsequently euthanased. The owners of the dog, who had killed the mongoose, were exposed to its saliva through broken skin on their hands and were immediately referred to the Beaufort West hospital for treatment.
- Two cases of lumpy skin disease occurred near Malmesbury. Reporting of this disease is very important for, amongst other reasons, to give the vaccine manufacturers an idea of how much vaccine needs to be produced and distributed to different areas of South Africa.
- An ostrich farm in the Riversdale area was found positive for avian influenza with initial indications showing a HSN2 subtype - the pathogenicity is being investigated.
- Anaplasmosis was reported in a Jersey cow near Beaufort West.
- A cattle farm in the Stellenbosch area was found positive for bovine brucellosis. A private vet called in to treat animals that were emaciated with swollen joints suspected the disease and it was confirmed by the Provincial Vet Lab. The cattle had recently been bought in this condition from an auction.
- There was a case of malignant catarrhal fever (MCF) in an cow near Beaufort West. The cattle graze with sheep and clinical cases of MCF occur from time to time. The farmer slaughters any animals that show symptoms but does not attempt any further control measures.
- Brucella ovis was discovered in rams on a farm in the Beaufort West area.
- Outbreaks of sheep scab occurred in the Malmesbury, Riversdale, Laingsburg and Vanrhynsdorp areas.
- A goat in the communal farming area of Beaufort West showed signs of botulism.
- Enterotoxaemia was encountered on a farm near Beaufort West.

Web based event logging AHT leader boards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total logs</th>
<th>Most rabies vaccinations performed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>State Vet area</strong></td>
<td><strong>July 2013</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SV Boland</td>
<td>janicaf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SV Malmesbury</td>
<td>hendrikh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SV Beaufort Wes</td>
<td>CobusF</td>
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<tr>
<td>SV George</td>
<td>alwynnk</td>
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<td>SV Beaufort Wes</td>
<td>antonb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SV Swellendam</td>
<td>thulit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Disclaimer: This report is published on a monthly basis for the purpose of providing up-to-date information regarding epidemiology of animal diseases in the Western Cape Province. Much of the information is therefore preliminary and should not be cited/utilised for publication.