

## Target Sheep event supports Armidale producers in the fight against worms

Virbac Australia's latest Target Sheep program event has just wrapped up, with attendees describing the afternoon's proceedings held last Friday in Armidale, NSW as a golden opportunity to learn more about parasite management, with a special focus on current drench resistance levels in the New England region. The Target Sheep animal health initiative is aimed at optimising the health and performance of livestock at three key stages of the production cycle; pre-joining, pre-lambing and marking/weaning - by focusing on how we can increase productivity by managing drench resistance, and improving health and reproduction through strategic topping up of trace minerals and an effective vaccination program. The program brings together industry experts, veterinarians and producers to improve on-farm productivity and profitability through leading animal health management practices and industry benchmarks. Key speakers at the event included Invetec Parasitology Research Leader, Tim Elliott and Virbac Australia Area Sales Manager, William Hiscox. During his presentation, William explained the importance of the program, based on findings from Faecal Egg Count Reduction Tests (FECRT) that have been undertaken throughout the New England region which have been independently analysed by Invetec Parasitology. "The results indicated that every farm we tested showed a varying level of drench resistance and no two farms were the same," William revealed. "The results really highlighted the need for all sheep producers to carry out Faecal Egg Count Reduction Test's and be aware of the resistance levels on their farm. In some cases even neighbouring properties had completely different levels of resistance." Meanwhile, Tim's presentation educated producers about worm biology and their life cycle, with tips on pasture management strategies to reduce the seasonal risk of internal parasites specific to the New England. "Drought conditions, such as those currently in the New England region, can make worm management even more challenging," said Tim. "These types of ongoing drought conditions-with-sporadic-rain events can lead to a much greater variable worm risk, because small rain events can trigger faster more concentrated parasite outbreaks. With there being already high levels of resistance in this particular region, it's important for producers to tackle this problem head on and tailor a drench program that's suited to the drench resistance status of their farm." Almost 20 local sheep producers attended Friday's event, and Philip Carlon from Queenlee Merino Stud at Uralla explained why he was excited to be a part of the Virbac Target Sheep program. "I think the whole sheep industry needs to be aware of their individual resistance status so we can prolong the drenches we have available and take advantage of the current strong lamb and wool prices moving forward. The Target Sheep group is a step in the right direction for a collaborative approach to fighting drench resistance," Philip said. With the event demonstrating Virbac Australia's continuing commitment to supporting producers in the fight against drench resistance, each attendee also has ongoing free worm egg count testing provided by Virbac for the entirety of the program "We encouraged all attendees to continue monitoring their sheep throughout the duration of the program," said William. "Hopefully this has been a useful discussion for the group, and it's given them some useful information to now go out and act on." Virbac will be hosting further Target Sheep and Target Beef events throughout Australia in the coming months. For more information, visit <https://au.virbac.com>, follow Virbac Australia on Facebook or Instagram or call 1800 242 100. Ends Media Enquiries: Kate Munsie - C7EVEN COMMUNICATIONS (02) 6766 4513 / 0421 935 843 [kate.munsie@c7even.com.au](mailto:kate.munsie@c7even.com.au) Adam Arndell - C7EVEN COMMUNICATIONS (02) 6766 4513 / 0403 372 889 [adam.arndell@c7even.com.au](mailto:adam.arndell@c7even.com.au)

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