# Drenching

Internal parasites in livestock can be controlled through drenching, which involves giving animals a chemical substance to kill the parasites. Drenches are typically given orally, through the mouth. Drenching animals improves their health, condition, and fertility, leading to improved lambing percentages, weight gain, and milk production.

To keep animals healthy, sheep and calves should be given the medicine every 28 days during their first summer and autumn. After that, the time between doses can be increased to every 6-9 weeks until they are 15-18 months old. This helps prevent health problems caused by parasites while avoiding the overuse of drenches.

**Watch:**

Beef + Lamb New Zealand- [Drenching Techniques](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9qcmeiq2k0)

Make Sheep Drenching Easy! **|** [PGG Wrightson Tech Tips](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMX4fojQN1w)

Drenching Pre – Lamb [PGG Wrightson Tech Tips](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XoOW7QJqbO8)

**Steps involved in drenching**

1. Check the drench gun is correctly operating and has no rough edges.
2. Weigh a sample of animals.
3. Read instructions and calibrate the drench gun to the heaviest animal in the mob.
4. Drench animal correctly to ensure they swallow the drench.
5. Record date, drench, dose rate, weight, batch number and expiry date.

***Exercises***

1. *Why do farmers drench lambs?*
2. *Sheep farmers generally start to drench lambs at weaning why?*
3. *Explain why sheep farmers drench ewes*

* *before mating?*
* *before and after lambing?*

1. *Why should a farmer set the drench dose to the heaviest animal?*
2. *Describe how you would drench a lamb?*
3. *List the benefits of drenching sheep.*
4. *What information should be recorded and why?*

**Answers**

1. Farmers drench lambs to prevent them from getting internal parasites which affect their growth rate.
2. Farmers generally start to drench lambs at weaning because pasture is now their sole diet, so they eat more worm larvae, so the risk of internal parasites increases.
3. Farmers drench ewes

* before mating so they increase in weight and therefore release more eggs from their ovaries, increasing the number of lambs they have.
* before lambing to make sure they have no parasites to excrete onto pasture which can then affect the lambs. Also, the ewes will produce more milk, increasing lamb growth rates.
* after lambing because this is a stressful time, and they are less resistant to internal parasites. If they get worms these will be excreted onto pasture and infect the lambs.

1. Farmers set the drench dose to the heaviest lamb to prevent under drenching which can lead to drench resistance.
2. Steps to drench lambs

* weigh a sample of lambs to find the heaviest
* check drench gun is working and is adjusted to the right dose rate
* hold head up and
* place the drench gun down the side of the mouth and hold the head up until it has been swallowed.

1. The benefits of drenching are

* faster lamb growth rates so lambs can be sold earlier
* higher wool production
* less lamb losses
* higher lambing percentage therefore more lambs to sell.

1. The information recorded should be

* the date the animals were drenched,
* what animals were drenched
* what drench family was used
* the dose rate

This information is important, so the farmer knows

* when animals need to be drenched again, and
* so, animals are not sold within the withholding period of the drench, or they will get fined as people do not what chemical in their meat or milk