



## Sheep CRC Practical Wisdom Notes

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## WORMBOSS: AUSTRALIA'S SHEEP WORM CONTROL RESOURCE

### Key points

- Integrated programs for worm control are the most effective.
- WormBoss provides the procedural information to make an integrated program simple and practical.

### Introduction

Worms are the major health issue for sheep in the moderate and higher rainfall areas of Australia. Integrated worm control programs are far more effective and sustainable than reliance on drenching, but they require some procedural knowledge to be done correctly—for many producers, such information, in simple language and to suit their locality, has not been easy to find. The WormBoss worm control programs and drench decision guides make implementation of an integrated program relatively simple on most properties.

### What is an integrated program and why is it more effective?

An integrated program combines a number of methods of control in the best possible combination to gain the most effectiveness.

The number of worms in the sheep at any time and how rapidly they build up defines the effectiveness of a worm control program. An integrated program provides more ways to reduce worm burdens and to slow the build up, so that a shortfall in one method is unlikely to cause failure of a program, which can occur if only one strategy, such as drenching, is used.

Increasing levels of drench resistance on most farms has led to reliance on drenching being less effective, and for some properties, even totally ineffective. This leads to reliance on a smaller number of effective drench actives, which hastens development of drench resistance options.

The key worm control strategies that are combined in the WormBoss worm control programs are:

1. Plan an annual program based on drenches at critical times of the year, or worm egg counts at those times to check the need for treatment.
2. Test the flock for worms at specific times to decide whether drenching is required.
3. Use grazing management to reduce the level of worm contamination on pastures at critical times and for the most susceptible sheep.
4. Breed for worm resistance to enable the sheep's immune system to naturally decrease worm burdens.
5. Use drenches correctly and choose only effective drenches (or drench combinations) based on a drench resistance test or drench check.

### Where are the WormBoss programs and drench decision guides?

The WormBoss worm control programs and drench decision guides are on the WormBoss web site: [www.wormboss.com.au](http://www.wormboss.com.au)



Choose your program from eight sheep production regions, from either a list or a map. The programs explain how to implement the worm control strategies over a year.

Each program has a summary page simply listing what to do and when to do it. More details, but still at a straightforward, practical level, can be found for each of the program components by clicking on their headings. There are also links within the program to other information on the WormBoss website.

The eight regional drench decision guides assist with the day-to-day timing of when mobs should be drenched. They also provide recommendations on whether a long-acting drench is warranted and when to check the mob again.

The drench decision guides ask you a number of simple questions, you select from a number of answers (no typing required) and a report is provided to assist your drenching decision. Each program and drench decision guide can also be printed.

### Why are the programs and drench decision guides so useful?

Most importantly they provide 'what to do and when to do it' procedural information for producers, keeping theory to an absolute minimum and making them simple and practical to apply.

Experienced and knowledgeable researchers and consultants dealing with sheep worms for each region have developed the programs and guides and they have received widespread endorsement as the national source of Australian sheep worm control information.

### Take-home messages

- An integrated worm control program that combines grazing management, breeding for resistance, worm testing and drench testing with drenching is much more effective and sustainable than a reliance on drenching alone.
- Finding and implementing such a program to suit your property is relatively simple: Go to [www.wormboss.com.au](http://www.wormboss.com.au), download and follow the program and drench decision guide for your region, (or use an interactive version of the DDG online).
- Use the Wormboss website as your reference for all worm control information, including drenches, management and testing.

### Further information:

[www.wormboss.com.au](http://www.wormboss.com.au)  
[www.paraboss.com.au](http://www.paraboss.com.au)

### Acknowledgements:

WormBoss was developed by the Sheep CRC and its partners as well as private and public agency veterinarians and consultants and continues under funding for ParaBoss from Australian Wool Innovation and Meat and Livestock Australia.



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