

The benefit of including vitamin E to regular drench routines

Australia is a particularly dry continent, receiving little rain during warmer summer months. Throughout summer animals graze predominantly on dry pasture and grain stubble, containing little nutritional value and deficient in essential vitamins such as vitamin E. Vitamin E is plentiful in green pasture, however in summer pastures, hay and grain vitamin E is lacking.

The fundamental function of vitamin E is as a natural antioxidant, preventing damage of animal cells by free radicals. As an antioxidant, vitamin E is potentially involved in disease resistance and maintenance of the immune system. In addition, vitamin E has an important role in reproduction and muscle function.

Current research demonstrates the importance of vitamin E for health of animals, particularly sheep. Body stores are sufficient for approximately 2 months when no green feed is available, but beyond this time supplementation is required to maintain animal performance and in particular to satisfy the extra needs of lambs being finished for market. Sheep have a high requirement for vitamin E, particularly weaners at risk of developing deficiencies due to rapid growth rate. Ewes in late gestation should also receive some form of vitamin E supplementation to benefit lamb production.

A deficiency of vitamin E may cause slow growth, decline in immune function and reproductive performance and diseases such as white muscle & stiff lamb disease. Vitamin E deficiency is an important cause of ill thrift in lambs over summer and autumn period. In extreme deficiencies death may occur. To treat this illness and vitamin E deficiency, vitamin E should be supplemented in high dosages throughout the dry summer months.

Varying methods of vitamin E supplementation are available. A loose vitamin mix containing vitamin E will supplement, however, levels may need to be reviewed for adequacy throughout summer. Spraying water miscible vitamin E, commencing 4 weeks after pastures hay off and at regular intervals over dry periods. Oral administration, using a standard drench gun, is an effective and accurate method to administer required levels of vitamin E to sheep.

Advanced Liquid E Concentrate contains a stable source of Vitamin E in the acetate form (**750 mg/g d,l alpha Tocopherol Acetate**) and can be simply included into periodic drenching routine. At less than 20 c per head, administering the recommended dosage every 6 to 8 weeks is an economical, efficient method of ensuring health and condition of your lambs. Vitamin E supplementation is highly recommended by a number of sheep farmers within WA. A trial by a farmer showed a significant increase in marking percentages after drenching with *Advanced Liquid E* one month prior to lambing.

Try *Advanced Liquid E Concentrate* today, available from your leading rural stockist. For more information contact Advanced Feeds, Midvale on 9250 5344.