

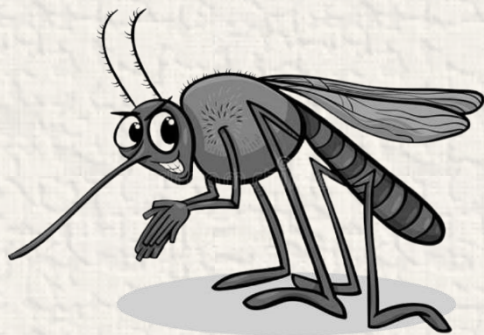
Creepy crawlies...

EXTERNAL PARASITES THAT AFFECT SHEEP AND GOATS



Sheep and goats can serve as hosts for various external (or ecto) parasites, including fleas, lice, mites, ticks (including keds), and flies (flystrike; maggots).

External parasites feed on body tissue such as blood, skin, and hair and can impact health and welfare, productivity, and wool/pelt quality. External parasites are a biosecurity risk and can be brought to the farm or ranch via new animals.



Though technically not external parasites, some insects can cause serious disease in sheep/goats.

Bluetongue is caused by the bite of a virus-infected midge (gnat). Schmallenberg virus (in Europe) is similarly caused by biting midges.

Mosquitos are the vector for Cache Valley virus.

External parasites can cause

- Excessive itching and rubbing
- Hair or wool loss
- Skin lesions
- Dull coats
- Wool and hide damage
- Secondary infections
- Anemia (blood loss)
- Poor performance
- Ill thrift
- Weight loss
- Even death



External parasites are usually treated with insecticides (synthetic pyrethroids: sprays, dusts, dips, and pour-ons) or systemic dewormers (macrocyclic lactones: ivermectin *especially*, doramectin, and moxidectin). Unfortunately, many treatments are not labeled for sheep and goats. There are also some “natural” remedies for external parasites. Shearing and docking are practices which help to prevent flystrike. It is common treat after spring shearing.