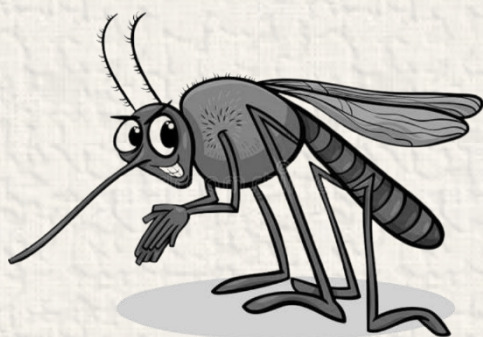


EXTERNAL PARASITES THAT AFFECT SHEEP AND GOATS



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

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.



Mosquitos are technically not external parasites, but they do feed on the blood of their hosts. Unfortunately, they are also vectors for many nasty diseases, including Cache Valley Virus, which causes infertility, abortion, and congenital deformities in sheep and goats.

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 “natural” remedies. Shearing and docking are practices which help to prevent flystrike. Woolled sheep should be treated after shearing (ideally before lambing).