

PRACTICAL SESSIONS

2 DOSING (DRENCHING) – DO IT THE RIGHT WAY!

Gareth Bath & Lana Botha

Reason: oral treatment, mainly anthelmintics (also water for dehydration)

Animals: all except the very young kid or lamb

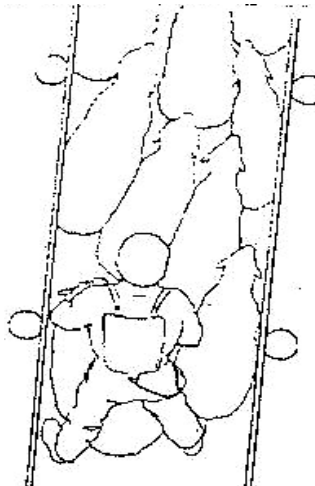
Method: Before starting on a dosing session, the dosing gun should be examined for the following:

- The tip should be rounded and smooth so as not to cut or damage the mouth of an animal. The sharp molar teeth of the sheep can cause multiple small sharp protrusions on the soft metal tip of the dosing gun- leading to injury of the oral mucosa. Use a piece of sandpaper or flat stone to smooth the tip.
- Close the tip of the dosing gun with you finger and simultaneously press the plunger. A release of pressure will indicate a worn down plunger (rubber) or poor one-way valves. Such a dosing gun will leak or suck in air.
- A functional gun will make noises on both pressure and release. This indicates that both one- way valves are working.
- There should be no air in the system, once the dosing gun has been filled. The pack in which the remedy is held (automatic dosing guns) should normally be higher than the gun when in operation. Ensure that air can get into the pack from time to time.
- The dosage setting should be correct according to the weight of the heaviest animal in a group. There should be as little variation between animals in a group as possible when they are brought in for dosing.
- Set the dose with the setting bolt, and secure with the locking nut.
- Check for accuracy, using an old disposable syringe.
- Check the repeatability of dose delivered. (several doses)
- Reconcile the total number of sheep with the volume of dosing remedy used
- Always clean out the apparatus immediately after use.



For a handful of animals, a plastic syringe with a flexible plastic tube extension will suffice.

Animals should be handled in a crush in a single file with the handlers standing on the outside. Alternatively the handler could move in amongst the animals in a broader crush. Animals that have been treated are left behind while the person moves forward (see illustration).



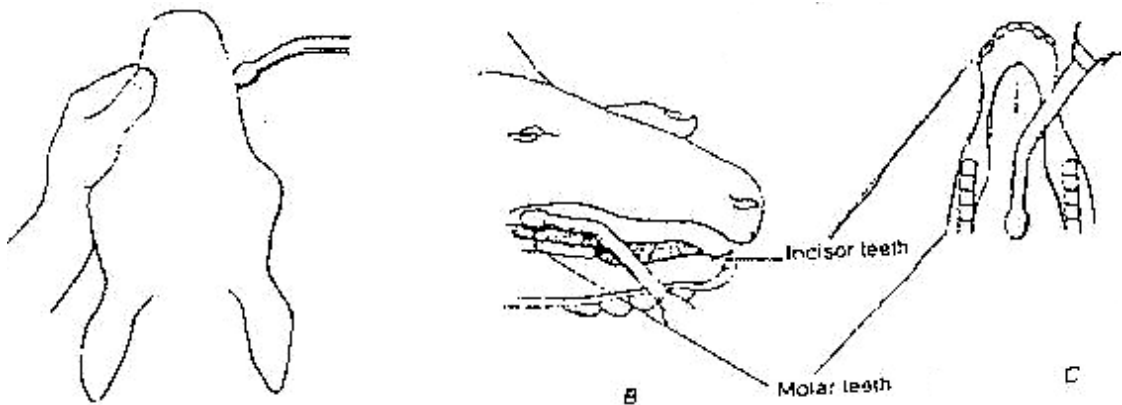
A double crush may be constructed with the purpose of saving handling time.

A single crush, with all heads turned one way, also speeds up handling time.

The position in which the head is held is shown in figure B. It is important **not** to:

- lift the head too high, or let it hang.
- block the nostrils
- grab hold of the tongue (avoid the "bekstang")
- introduce the dosing gun from the front (hitting the incisors)
- introduce the dosing gun underneath the tongue
- squirt the drench into the mouth too quickly
- remove the nozzle out of the mouth before letting go of the trigger of the dosing gun.

This is shown in the following illustration



Alternatively the dose can be delivered into the cheek pouch, but the sheep may spit it out, or it may dribble out.

Training: essential

Timing: as required by programme

Equipment: functional, checked dosing gun (or syringe)

Follow-up: usually unnecessary but check for the following problems.

Risks:

When a sheep jumps forward during the dosing procedure, one should ride with it in order to prevent injury.

Care should be taken not to cause damage to the roof of the mouth or to cause “dosing pneumonia” by squirting the remedy down the trachea.