



Agrisolutions

N A T U R A L A N S W E R S

SHEEP DRENCHING PROGRAM USING LIQUID KELP

The use of kelp as a conventional drench substitute is gaining popularity with many farmers. The reasons are simple.

1. Lower costs and **better results**.
2. No resistance build up by worms - the kelp works by lifting the health of the animal so it can naturally deal with the worm burden.
3. Better all round performance by stock - **higher wool quality, greater twin rate, improved growth rate, better appearance**.
4. Easier on the sheep and on the farmer because of the **non-toxic** nature of the drench.

From the outset, it must be pointed out that the kelp will only best work to the benefit of the farmer if the sheep are not under too much stress. The degree of stress on the sheep is determined by:

1. The seasonal conditions
2. The stocking rate
3. Grazing management - the quality and quantity of available feed.

The recommended program of treatment involves the **optional** addition of apple cider vinegar. The vinegar should be mixed with the kelp just prior to drenching.

1. Apply **20ml kelp** plus up to **20ml apple cider vinegar** as an oral drench. (In severe cases, there may be no signs of improvement ie scours or loose faeces still prevalent, so repeat dosage up to 4 weeks later.)
2. Follow the usual seasonal pattern for drenching your sheep at the above dose rates but consider drenching several weeks earlier than with conventional drenches to help improve health levels.
3. Early autumn drenches are most important when the available feed starts to deteriorate. Better use of the feed is made when kelp is introduced as it is known to **aid digestion** and absorption of feed.
4. Keep in mind that it is beneficial to respond with a kelp drench as soon as the first signs of ill-thrift show - remember that you are raising the health of your stock and not attacking the worms directly.

5. In the first season it may be necessary to drench up to 8 times dependent on stocking rates, seasonal conditions etc. In a good year, as few as 4 drenches could suffice.
6. Timing of kelp drenches, whilst primarily influenced by your farm management and seasonal conditions, would need to be also considered at the following times:
 - 5-6 weeks **before** sales or shows - helps the sheep present a lot better.
 - 5-6 weeks **before** joining - improves cycling and conception rates.
 - in the lead up to **lambing** - provides micronutrients for the unborn lamb(s) and eases lambing especially when apple cider vinegar is used.

Be sure to include your **rams** in the program as they will respond in kind when asked to perform. Should you have any doubts about the effectiveness of the kelp on rams, consider treating the old rams only and see how they measure up to the younger ones. This has been tried on other stock with interesting results.

Mix only enough kelp and apple cider vinegar drench as can be used on the day - keep in mind that they are both **natural** products with no added preservatives. Because of the organic nature of these products, even doubling the dose in severe cases of ill-health will be of benefit and there is **no with-holding period**.

It is appropriate that a **worm count** and even a blood test is done prior to the commencement of the kelp and apple cider vinegar treatment so that a reference can be set. Where possible with the blood test, the usual deficiencies such as copper, cobalt and selenium plus any others known for your area, need to be assessed and recorded.

The **full** benefits of this drenching program may take up to 9 months to show. This is dependent upon the initial condition of the sheep and the time of commencement of the program. If the sheep are fresh off-shears and a kelp drench is administered at this time, the new wool will show rapid signs of improvement. Obviously if the main concern is scours or loose faeces - usually a sign of worms - then the effectiveness of the kelp drench can be more easily measured.

Keep an eye on the general condition of your sheep, without discounting footrot, to see the effectiveness of the kelp and apple cider vinegar drench when given over a period of **time**. You will marvel at how a **low cost** natural supplement can give such good results when integrated with a sound farm management program.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

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