



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

For immediate release 13 August 2010

### **New calculator helps sheep farmers estimate the cost of drench failure**

Sheep farmers can easily estimate what drench failure could be costing their business thanks to a new on-line calculator from Pfizer Animal Health.

Developed in conjunction with one of New Zealand's leading agricultural consultancies, Baker and Associates Limited, the calculator is part of a new web site [www.drenchwise.co.nz](http://www.drenchwise.co.nz).

The initiative supports a targeted television and print media campaign aimed at highlighting the importance of farmers knowing the drench status of their farm.

Ineffective drenches can result in slower growth rates. On a breeding operation, lower growth rates can mean lighter lambs to sell, longer finishing times and fewer hoggets to mate. On a lamb finishing operation, slower growth rates can mean longer finishing times and fewer stock that can be finished on time.

A recent New Zealand study estimated the presence of drench resistance resulted in a 14% reduction in carcass value<sup>1</sup>.

Sam Orsborn, a Director of Baker and Associates Limited, says the new calculator allows farmers to enter their farm's information to find out how much lost productivity could be costing them.

"Based on the model we've used, the calculator has shown that a loss of 10 per cent in productivity could cost a farmer up to \$10 per lamb\*, which is significant. Even a 5 per cent loss in lamb growth on a 3,000 ewe breeding operation could cost over \$15,000 in lost productivity."

Sam cautions that the reason for any production loss will vary from farm-to-farm and may not necessarily be caused by drench resistance alone.

"However, the calculator is another tool to add to the box. If anything, we hope that it will remind farmers about the importance of knowing their farm's drench status so they can rule it out as a possible cause of production loss," he says.

"Not enough farmers know the true efficacy of their worm management programme. By doing regular drench tests they can make more informed decisions instead of jumping in and investing in drench."

Drench resistance is estimated to cost New Zealand sheep farmers an additional \$20 million a year on top of the \$300 million annual cost of internal parasites in lost production and drench use<sup>2</sup>. This cost is expected to rise as drench resistance becomes more prevalent.

---

<sup>1</sup> The production costs of anthelmintic resistance in sheep managed within a monthly preventive drench program; I.A. Sutherland, J. Shaw, R.J. Shaw. 2010. Veterinary Parasitology.

<sup>2</sup> Risk factors for drench resistance in sheep. January 2008 - Issue 4, Wormwise

Studies have highlighted just how widespread the problem is. A 2006 study<sup>3</sup> of over 80 randomly selected New Zealand farms showed 41% had resistance to Albendazole, 25% to Ivermectin, and 24% to Levamisole.

This same study found that 64% of farms had resistance to one or more drench actives, which are those in currently available double and triple combinations.

Pfizer Animal Health technical advisor and parasitologist Tom Watson says resistance to drench is a growing problem on New Zealand farms and is a serious issue for farmers due to its cost and irreversible nature.

“There is a significant cost attached to the lost productivity as a result of drench resistant worms. Farmers risk losing money and compromising productivity by drenching without knowing its effectiveness.

“Regularly measuring drench efficacy is the only sure way to make informed decisions and determine the return on investment you are getting from your worm management programme.”

Choosing the right drench is important. Pfizer Animal Health encourages sheep farmers to use drenches wisely and take an integrated approach to managing internal parasites.

Pfizer is launching a novel new drench, STARTECT®, which is effective against production limiting worms, even those worms resistant to other drenches.

To find out what drench failure could be costing you, visit [www.drenchwise.co.nz](http://www.drenchwise.co.nz)

-ends

STARTECT is a registered trade mark of Pfizer Inc. Registered pursuant to the ACVM Act 1997, No. A10353

\*Productivity loss calculator predictions have been determined by Farmax modelling, prepared by Baker and Associates Limited, Masterton.

**Disclaimer:** Outputs from this model are predictions based on the listed assumptions found at [www.drenchwise.co.nz](http://www.drenchwise.co.nz). For farm specific information, farmers should contact their local farm consultant.

---

<sup>3</sup> Prevalence of anthelmintic resistance on sheep farms in New Zealand. Waghorn, T.S. et al: N ZVJ 54: 271-277, 2006.