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News from New Zealand

DRENCHING RESISTANCE

A recent trial in New Zealand looked at the efficacy of pour-on and injected drenches where the active ingredient was moxidectin. Various grants and donations helped the Elk and Wapiti Society do a small but revealing trial on a farm in Southland. Although a small trial, involving six control deer, six deer treated with pour-on and another six treated with injected drench, the Project Manager, Vet Dave Lawrence, was surprised to find that the efficacy of both treatments was lower than expected.

The abomasums of the deer were inspected immediately after slaughter which was 12 days after treatment. The adults and the larvae of the ostertagia worms were then counted. It is assumed that a drench is effective if there is a greater than 95% kill of these worms. This trial showed that 71% of the adult worms were killed and only 19% of the larvae were killed when using the pour-on. When the injectable drench was used, 83% of the adult worms were killed and 81% of the larvae were killed.

Evidently, some farmers in NZ have been drenching their stock up to 13 times each year. This may have been the practice since the 1990s when research showed that moxidectin had been the most effective drench against ostertagia. In the belief that they were controlling the stomach worms and aiding the health and weight gain of their stock, some farmers have inadvertently been building up the degree of resistance of these worms to the drench.

Dr Lawrence recommended two management tools to reduce the problem. The first is only to drench those animals which look lighter or obviously affected. Secondly, farmers can integrate other species of livestock into their grazing management system.

Although these worms have no threat to humans, the repercussion for farmers could be severe. Apart from wasting time and money on drenching, if growth rates are affected, premiums for chilled venison may be missed because stock may have to remain on-farm longer.

Reference: Southern Rural Life. Oct 27, 2010.