



## **National Sheep Association**

### NSA policy position on organophosphate sheep dips

- All veterinary products should be used responsibly and effectively, following the manufacturers guidelines to ensure the safety of the administrator and animal, as well as the sustainability of the product.
- It is vital OP dips remain available for sheep farmers to use, as sheep scab is a very major health and welfare concern and the only alternative to OPs are injectable MLs. 100% effective treatment with MLs is far more difficult to achieve than with OPS, scab mites are now becoming resistant to MLs, and the improper use of MLs is speeding up development of anthelmintic resistance in worm populations. OP dips also control ticks and lice, both are which are an irritant to sheep. Ticks can also transmit Lyme disease, which is an increasing human health issue, and can destroy grouse populations and have a devastating effect on other wildlife species.
- NSA recognises that organophosphate (OP) dips are highly toxic and must only ever be purchased and used under the supervision of someone holding an NPTC Certificate of Competence in the Safe Use of Sheep Dips. Container design (closed transfer systems) must be respected, instructions on dosage and administration followed, protective clothing worn and safe storage and disposal practiced. Meat withdrawal periods must be followed exactly.
- NSA recognises that OPs are damaging to the environment and must be disposed of legally. NSA believes it is essential that licences for on-farm disposal, as well as options for contract dippers to take waste product away with them, are easy to access and affordable – otherwise uptake will be low and the environment and animal welfare will suffer. A close working relationship between Defra and the Environment Agency is essential.
- NSA recognises there are sheep farmers who connect their ill health to OPs and, therefore, NSA strongly supports development of new sheep treatment methods, for scab in particular. Greater understanding of farming-related health issues should also be encouraged among rural GPs.

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