

## **Blowfly Strike in Sheep:**

### **Signs:**

- Agitation
- Shaking of tails
- Rubbing/biting at back end
- Matted/discoloured wool
- Wool loss
- Biting of feet/lameness



*Many strikes go unnoticed as signs are often subtle until very severe*

### **Cause:**

- Strike is common in the summer months, particularly in warm wet weather
- Soiled areas are very prone to fly strike, which is why the back end is the most common area
- Flies lay their eggs in the wool, which give rise to maggots in the fleece.
- These maggots irritate the skin creating redness and itching and in extreme cases can bury into the flesh.
- Self-trauma due to itching can manifest as skin wounds
- Maggots are also occasionally found in the feet, particularly if other foot problems are present.



### **Prevention:**

- Fly treatment is essential in summer months. Various products are available; check the labels carefully for a license for *prevention* and *how long it lasts* for.
- Observation and good shepherding are necessary to detect cases of strike
- Check sheep for strike regularly
- Dagging (removing excess wool round the back end) is essential particularly in those with faeces round the tail.
- Maintaining healthy feet



### **Treatment:**

- Only certain products are licensed for *treatment*; check labels carefully.
- Dagging and clipping out of stained wool
- If wounds are present as a result of self-trauma the area will need to be clipped, bathed and, if severe, antibiotics may be needed.



*\*\*Please consult your vet if you are worried\*\**

