

Entropion in Lambs

Entropion is the presence of in-turned eyelids in newly born or very young lambs. It may affect one or both eyes, initially causing the eye to weep, and in more advanced cases causing damage to the cornea due to scratching by the eyelashes. If untreated, it can cause ulceration and blindness.

Entropion has a strong genetic component, so it is advisable not to keep breeding females that have suffered from the condition, and you may be able to identify rams that are likely carriers. Whilst culling these rams may not be possible from an economic perspective, you should bear in mind that keeping breeding females from them is likely to lead to the disease becoming endemic within the flock.

Treatment

Sometimes manual correction of the eyelid is sufficient to treat the problem. However, in other cases the eyelid will turn back in after being corrected, and further measures are necessary. The preferable option is to use one or more Michel suture clips, applied with fine-nosed pliers perpendicular to the lower eyelid and 2-5mm below the eyelid to clip the eyelid into place and prevent reversion. The advantages of these clips include that they can be applied by one person, they reduce the infection risk compared with surgical or injectable alternatives, and they fall off once the eyelid is permanently corrected, so there is no need to remove them.

1. Before you start, use fine-nosed pliers to pick up one Michel clip. Make sure it is held at the very end of the pliers, so the teeth of the clip extend out from the nose of the pliers.
2. Restrain the lamb by sitting or kneeling, with the lamb across your lap and the eye that is to be clipped facing away from you
3. Use your left/non-dominant hand to securely restrain the lamb's head, and to correct the position of the eyelid
4. Use your right/dominant hand to apply the clip 2-5mm below and perpendicular to the eyelid
5. You may need to apply multiple clips – often one in a central position and one towards the outer corner of the eye



If you don't have Michel suture clips available, there are other options for treatment. 0.5ml of procaine penicillin can be injected into the lower eyelid, expanding the eyelid so that it does not turn in. However, this method is inferior to suture clips and manual correction as two people are required to administer it, and there is an increased risk of incorrect application & introducing infection. With all treatments apply a topical antibiotic to treat or reduce the risk of secondary infection. This also provides lubrication for the eyelid to help prevent it turning in again.

