

# HOW TO STAY AHEAD OF FLYSTRIKE THIS SEASON

June 2026



## What is blowfly strike?

Blowfly strike, also known as cutaneous myiasis, is a life-threatening condition whereby maggot infestations feed on flesh. The condition causes a rapid deterioration in health and can be fatal in a short period of time. Mortality rates are estimated to be 2-3% of affected individuals (SCOPS).



The green bottle fly, *Lucilia sericata* is the primary culprit, with other fly species secondarily colonising flystrike wounds. Adult flies are attracted to warm, damp, foul smelling areas, such as soiled fleece, foot rot lesions and wounds.

Female flies lay batches of eggs in the fleece, which can hatch in as little as 12 hours under warm conditions. Once hatched, maggots feed aggressively on the skin surface before invading deeper tissues. Strike lesions become increasingly moist and foul-smelling, attracting more flies and creating a vicious cycle.

Feeding maggots damage skin, subcutaneous tissues and muscle. Dead and decaying flesh release toxins into the bloodstream which cause sepsis and death in severely affected individuals.

The risk period is becoming longer and less predictable due to a changing climate. Traditionally, the highest risk period is between May & September, but cases are increasingly being seen outside of these months. Stay vigilant following periods of rain and warmth, as fly numbers dramatically increase.

## Stay vigilant! Early warning signs to look out for:

- Isolation from the flock
- Irritation, biting or rubbing at affected areas
- Discoloured, damp fleece
- Loss of appetite
- Foul smell
- Wool loss or visible maggots

If you're unsure whether your sheep are affected, please call us promptly.



## Prevention: an integrated approach...

Reduce the attractive material

<p><b>Parasite control:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use <b>faecal worm egg counts</b> to monitor worm burdens &amp; treat appropriately.</li> <li>- Use NADIS for blowfly forecast.</li> <li>- Isolate and worm incoming stock with <b>zolvix</b>.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Lameness management:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prompt scald &amp; foot rot treatment.</li> <li>- Vaccination against foot rot with <b>foot ax</b>.</li> <li>- Remove chronically lame animals from the flock.</li> <li>- Quarantine new stock.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reduce fleece soiling risk:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shearing prior to the high-risk period.</li> <li>- Dagging</li> <li>- Tail docking</li> </ul>	<p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prompt wound treatment e.g., ram fighting injuries/shearing cuts.</li> <li>- Isolate affected individuals</li> </ul>

### Deter the flies:

- Insect growth regulators (IGRs)- for flystrike prevention:

Product:	Active ingredient:	Duration of action:	Meat withdrawal
CLiK	Dicyclanil	16 weeks	40 days
CLiK EXTRA	Dicyclanil	19 weeks	40 days
CLiKZin	Dicyclanil	8 weeks	7 days

- Cypermethrins & deltamethrin- treat existing strike & have residual activity for flystrike prevention of up to 10 weeks.

Product:	Active ingredient:	Duration of action:	Meat withdrawal
<b>Crovect</b>	Cypermethrin	Treats & protects for 6-8 weeks	8 days
<b>Deltanil</b>	Deltamethrin	Treatment only	35 days
<b>Spotinor</b>	Deltamethrin	Treatment only	35 days

- Organophosphate plunge dipping. Where possible, it is better to use a narrow spectrum product.

### Reduce fly numbers:

- Fly traps- place trap buckets in high traffic areas
- **Friendly fly control:** release parasitic native wasp species. The adult wasp lays eggs within the fly pupae. When these eggs hatch the wasps then consume the fly pupae as they mature
- Prompt carcass removal
- Avoid grazing near fly breeding areas, graze more exposed pastures & rotate to prevent build-up of material attractive to flies.

### Take home messages:

- Blowfly strike is a common problem and the upcoming months are the most important. Keep your eyes peeled for early warning signs
- Be prompt! Struck lambs and ewes can face life threatening levels of disease in 24-48hrs. Rapid identification and treatment saves lives
- Take an integrated approach to prevention: **faecal worm egg counts**, lameness control, shearing and pasture management
- Keep fly numbers low: use insect growth regulators for long-acting prevention. Cypermethrin products like **Crovect** will treat strike and provide residual protection



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