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National Agricultural Research Institute

## Drenching sheep and goats



TOKTOK SERIES  
LAB 015 E  
March 2004

# Drenching

## What is drenching?

Drenching is giving medicine for the treatment of worms in the intestines of animals. There is a basic drenching practice with sheep and goats and this is normally through the mouth with liquid medicines (drenches).

## Why drenching?

There are some worms that live in the animals' intestines. They compete for digested foods and make the animals sick. These parasites can be controlled by drenching using a suitable medicine. Heavily infected animals will show signs of weakness, not eating well, diarrhoea, white eyes and swollen jaw (bottle jaw). Animals lose hair and if not treated quickly will die.

If there is no drenching gun, use an injection syringe without the needle, or a small bottle.

Hold the animal by the jaw and open the mouth with the fingers by pressing the loose skin between the upper and lower jaw inward. The picture shows a man drenching a sheep. The animal should open up the mouth and you push the nozzle or syringe in and press. After pressing the syringe or trigger of the drenching gun, gently lift the animal's head and let it swallow the medicine. Release the animal after it has swallowed the medicine.



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## How to drench?

Use a drenching gun (automatic drencher) attached to a backpack container with medicine. Adjust the drencher to the recommended dose for the animals based on their live weights.

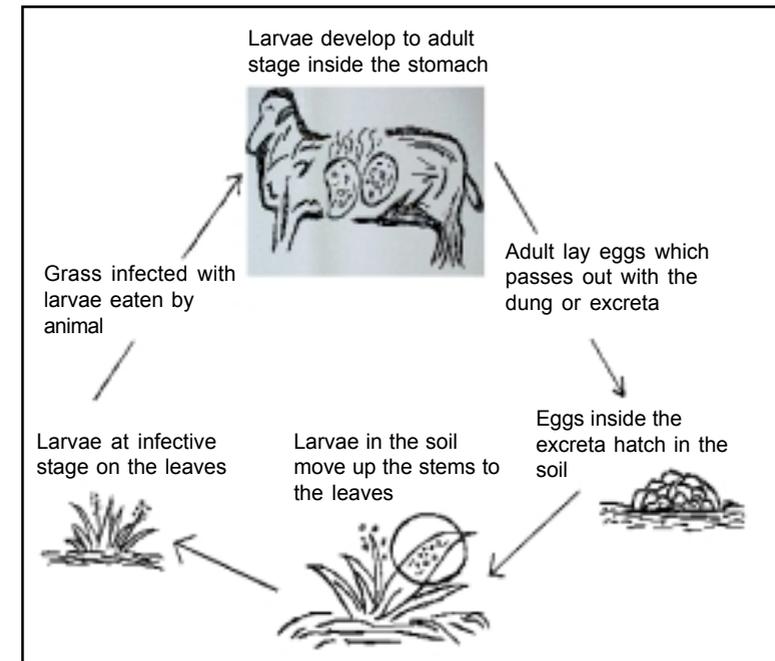
The picture shows a man drenching a sheep



## How animals get infected?

Grazing animals pick up worms from the pasture through grazing. The larvae of the worms develop in the faeces (manure) of the infected animals. After the eggs hatch in the soil, the larvae move up the pasture stems and attach on to the green leaves, awaiting the animals to graze them. When the pasture with larvae is grazed, the worms enter the digestive tract as larvae.

Life cycle of worms in sheep and goats



The larvae develop into adult worms in the intestines of the animal. The life cycle completes when the eggs leave the animal in the faeces and larvae enter another animal. The representative diagram on page 3 shows the live cycle of the worms in sheep or goats.

## How to control worms?

There are many drenches available for control of worms in sheep and goats. The medicines are available in the agricultural stores like Farmset, Chemica, and Agmark.

There are different medicines with different brand names. Some of the drenches are for particular parasites whereas others kill a wider range of worms. Some examples of common drenches are Nilverm, Valbazen, Nematet, Ivomec, Seponver and Panacur. These medicines have different recommended doses for sheep and goats depending on the live weights. The dose rates are normally given on the medicine containers. If these are not given on the label, seek advice from the distributors.

Managing pasture areas properly with good grazing management is another way of controlling worms. This will be described in another NARI Toktok.

## Where and when to drench?

Drenching can be done in the night house where animal rest at night or in the stockyard or other place as appropriate. Drenching must be done in the morning before the animals go out grazing or eat anything.

Check the animals thoroughly for any sign of worm infection and drench them quickly. It would be wise to drench at the early signs of infection rather than later.

Use different drenches to avoid the worms building resistance to a particular drench if it is used continuously.