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Some Recently Discovered Aspects of Ewe Abortion and Ram Sterility

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SUMMARY.

During the seasons 1949-50-51 the investigation of ram wastage from testicular disease and ewe abortion and neonatal mortality resulted in the finding of at least three specific infections, one probable infection and one estoparasitic condition of the scrotum.

1. (a) Infection of ram testes by a small, as yet unclassified, gram negative acid-fast organism.
   (b) Infection of foetal membranes by a small, as yet unclassified, gram negative acid-fast organism.

It has not been proven that the ram and ewe organisms are the same; these infections occur on the same properties; the ram organism will cause typical foetal membrane lesions and the ewe organism will cause typical testicular disease. This infection is widespread in New Zealand.

2. **Vibrio foetus** infection. This is similar in all respects to the condition as described overseas. This condition is common, but not as widespread as (1) above.
3. **Erysipelothrix monocytogenes.** This organism was isolated from one outbreak only.
4. A widespread and serious type of abortion has been associated with typical gross lesions of the cotyledons and with microscopic lesions of an infective inflammatory nature.
5. A scabby condition of the scrotum has been associated with **Chorioptes bovis var. ovis.**

Discussion

Mr. HART: In the flock where one form of infective abortion occurred the farmer expected 120 per cent. of lambs from his flock of 1200 ewes, but there were only 50 live lambs born to the first 600 ewes.

Mr. HANCOCK: Is there any relation of these conditions to ruptured livers in new-born lambs? At what time does abortion occur?

Mr. McFARLANE: Ruptured liver in lambs appears to be rare and not a common lesion in any of these diseases. Abortion is usually late.

Mr. ALLAN: What is the incidence of chorioptic mange and what is the recommended treatment?

Mr. CRAWFORD: I have no figures of the incidence with me, but recently I saw a flock of two-tooths in which over 10 per cent. were diagnosed clinically and confirmation was obtained from some of them from Wallaceville. The sheep had been dipped. No definite recommendations have been made for treatment. There are a numbr of non-infective causes of infertility. Facial eczema, late shearing, dipping and the use of arsenical footrot baths all have a detrimental effect on fertility.