

Dear Rochelle

by Rochelle Eisen

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I wonder if you could help me. I would like to administer garlic to my sheep once every 4 to 5 weeks to boost their immune system, and help control parasite loads. Can I use non-organic garlic?

Sheepish in Rutland

Dear Sheepish

Glad to hear you are considering feeding garlic! According to Anne Macey's Organic Livestock Handbook, garlic "is active against several types of worms including large roundworms (*Ascaris*) and lungworm. It acts by preventing the eggs from developing into larvae. It is generally used for prevention rather than treatment."¹



It is also important to keep in mind that the Canada Organic Standard² requires that you have a comprehensive plan to minimize inter-

nal parasite problems, which means you need to have a good pasture management plan and a health monitoring program.

Anything fed to livestock on a regular basis either has to be certified organic³ or listed as allowed in the Livestock section of the Permitted Substance List.⁴ Regrettably garlic is not separately listed in the Livestock PSL, but feeding garlic to boost the immune system could fall under the Botanical compounds listing.⁵ Be aware that a "garlic product" sold or used as a "wormer" treatment would have to be registered with the Veterinary Drug Directorate as a parasiticide and carry a drug⁶ identification number (DIN). As yet, no garlic products have been approved for this purpose in Canada.

That said, it appears to me the easiest approach is feed certified organic garlic, but it does appear that feeding of nonorganic garlic as a preventative botanical is allowed. Check with your certifier to ensure they agree with this interpretation.

Do read the excerpts taken from "Living with Worms in Organic Sheep Production" starting on page 6 of this edition. "Living with Worms" is a COG 2008 Practical Skills Handbook written by Peter Stockdale and Anne Macey and available

for sale from www.cog.ca/practicalskillshandbooks.htm.

Dr. Stockdale is a sheep farmer himself as well as a retired veterinary parasitologist. He maintains that "resistance and resilience can be built up in flock of sheep so that, when parasites are inevitably present, there is no loss of productivity."

I just finished reading this handbook and found it insightful. It is a must read, as it will definitely help you with your herd management approach. Lastly, I must thank the Canadian Organic Growers (COG) for reprint permission.

Rochelle

Notes:

¹ Anne Macey, Ed. (2000). *Organic Livestock Handbook*. Canadian Organic Growers.

² CAN/CGSB 32.310 para 6.7.9

³ CAN/CGSB 32.310 para 6.4.1 - "The operator of an organic livestock operation shall provide livestock with a feed ration balanced to meet their nutritional requirements and consisting of feedstuffs produced in accordance with this standard."

⁴ Specifically in Section 5.2 - Feed, Feed Additives and Feed Supplements of CAN/CGSB 32.311

⁵ The botanical listing specifies "botanical preparations according to label specifications," which means use would be restricted by any labeling limitation. If no label, no limitation.

The word drug or medicine is defined by the Food & Drugs Act (Division 8) as "any substance or mixture of substances manufactured, sold or represented for use in:

- the diagnosis, treatment, mitigation or prevention of a disease, disorder, abnormal physical state or symptoms thereof, in man or animal,
- restoring, correcting, or modifying organic functions in man or animal, or,
- disinfection of premises in which food is manufactured, prepared, or kept."