

Advice on using dip for the treatment or prevention of Sheep Scab



Plunge dipping in an Organophosphate (OP) dip is something that many sheep farmers may not have done for some time and many now elect to use a mobile contractor. It is important to dip safely and effectively, for the sake of human health, animal health and the environment.

Remember that OPs are highly toxic and approved training is compulsory before use. Health and Safety requirements may be found at the following link:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ais41.htm> 'Advice for farmers and others involved in dipping sheep.'

OP dips are only effective when used for plunge dipping of sheep and are not authorised for use in NI in showers or through jettors. Using them this way is ineffective and could interfere with the future effectiveness of the dips. Dips are not licensed in sheep producing milk for human consumption. The mites are killed within 24 hours and the residual action of the dip lasts for several weeks, meaning that sheep will continue to be protected during this period if they contact infested material. Dips are effective against other ecto-parasites including lice, ticks and blowflies.

Purchasing OP sheep dip

- If you hold the Certificate of Competence for the safe use of sheep dip then you can purchase dip yourself using your Certificate number.
- If you do not hold a Certificate then a mobile dipping contractor can buy the dip for use on your sheep.
- **Always read the data sheet instructions before use. Withdrawal periods are subject to change.**

A Code of Practice for Mobile Sheep Dippers is available on the SCOPS (Sustainable Control of Parasites) website at <https://www.scops.org.uk/external-parasites/code-of-practice-for-mobile-dippers>

Where should I site a Mobile Dipper?

Before a mobile contractor arrives, discuss where the best place is to set up, taking into account the requirements of the NI Groundwater Regulations. The contractor will need access to a water supply for example, but you must make sure there isn't any risk of polluting water courses, wetlands, etc. The site should be somewhere you can safely and easily move sheep to and from.

How do I make sure the dipping is fully effective?

- Choose a cool, dry day and don't dip wet sheep or any with less than 1cm of fleece (about 4 weeks post shearing).
- To ensure that all scab mites are killed the sheep must be in the bath for 1 minute, so that sufficient dip gets down to the skin, and their heads dunked under twice. Ensure that sheep are kept moving in the dipper.
- The dip needs to be replenished with OP concentrate as sheep are dipped but it must also be emptied once the equivalent of 1 sheep per 2 litres of the bath has been through the dip because dirt builds up and makes the dipwash ineffective. In order to minimise the risk of post-dipping lameness, never leave dipwash in the bath overnight.
- Remember to protect yourself from contact with the OP when handling dipped sheep, by using PPE both during dipping and when handling sheep for 3 months after dipping.

How do I dispose of used dipwash?

If you do not have a NIEA Groundwater Authorisation to dispose of dipwash then you will need to talk to the contractor about what facilities they have for disposal and agree what will be done with your used dipwash.

