

‘Vineyards and Dogs Make for Potent Mix’

For immediate release

287 words

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Grazing a vineyard is a good deal it keeps the land tidy for the Vineyard operator and it provides grazing for sheep farmers sound good? Not always!

Dan Lynch, project manager for Ovis Management says every year in winegrowing regions lambs grazed in vineyards are processed with high levels of Sheep Measles.

In many cases as the lambs have no immunity it results in a type of severe outbreak, known as a ‘storm’, which can and does catch farmers off-guard.

“Because they have no immunity whatsoever, you see a very high rate of infection in the lamb carcasses with many condemned or downgraded.” Hence the ‘storm’, which is both frustrating and costly for those involved.

Lynch states that It is important that if a vineyard or orchard brings in stock to graze it should have a policy of no foreign dogs allowed during the year in order to minimise risk of infection to grazing lambs.

He gets frequently receives reports of people taking dogs out with them at pruning or harvesting or when visiting vineyards and wanting to let them roam, with no understanding or idea of the potential cost of a Sheep Measles outbreak.

Sheep Measles does not harm humans, but causes unsightly cysts which lodge in lamb muscle tissue. Affected carcasses are downgraded at slaughter.

The parasite responsible for the cysts is carried by dogs, with sheep acting as the secondary host. One dog can shed as many as 250,000 eggs a day in their faeces, so pasture contamination can build up very quickly.

Eggs can survive on pasture for up to six months.

For more information on controlling sheep measles, contact your veterinarian.

To obtain restricted entry signs, contact Ovis Management 0800 222 011.

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