Analyzing the Effectiveness of De-wormers in Sheep, Phase Two

Blaha, Evan

Appropriate de-worming procedures in sheep are essential to ensure the overall health of the animal. To destroy parasitic worms, producers commonly use substances called anthelmintics. An example is Cydectin, a drug that kills internal worms by paralysis. Unfortunately, all such anthelmintics eventually create resistance in worms forcing some producers to seek out an alternative means of parasite prevention. One of the most popular “folk remedies” for de-worming is diatomaceous earth (DE). It is thought that the sharp surfaces of the skeletal remains of diatoms found in DE damage the cuticle of the nematode thus causing dehydration and death. However, a limited amount of scientific evidence would say otherwise. To investigate the worth of DE versus Cydectin as a de-wormer, a flock of sheep was broken into three groups of 12. One group was given Cydectin, the second diatomaceous earth, and the last group was used as a control. A fecal sample was collected from each ewe before administering the de-worming method and another fecal sample was collected eighteen days later. A fecal egg count was done for each sample. A statistical test comparing the three groups revealed that only Cydectin worked. It would appear that, despite many testimonials as to its worth, DE may be of little value as a means of controlling worms in sheep.