

Why use Dry Licks and Urea Supplementation for Sheep?

Dry Licks and Urea Supplementation for Sheep

Dry licks are a practical way to provide nitrogen (e.g. urea) to sheep when they are protein deficient. They stimulate the sheep's appetite which can increase their intake of pasture by 20-30%; therefore, urea supplementation on is only useful when sheep have access to a good body of dry feed.

The increase in pasture intake can result in increased wool growth, and reduce the rate of weight loss and death rates.

Dry licks can be used to supplement major nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus and sulphur. Attention on is required to ensure that the sheep receive enough of the nutrient that is deficient in the diet.

Thorough mixing of the dry lick is required, preferably using a mechanical mixer. The dry lick should be available at all times, and fed in open-ended troughs, hollow logs or drums that have good drainage to allow rainfall to run off.

Urea Toxicity

Most dry licks contain urea. To avoid urea toxicity or death, an introductory period is required in which only salt is fed. Providing only salt until the sheep satisfy their craving will prevent them from gorging supplements when they are first put out.

Signs of urea toxicity include abdominal pain, muscle tremors, incoordination on, weakness, laboured breathing and bloat. It is not recommended to feed rams urea, as it's not worth the risk of toxicity.

*From <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/agriculture/livestock/animal-welfare/sheep-health/supplementary-feeding/dry-licks-urea>