The importance of tapeworm infestation in sheep has usually been overemphasised by farmers and underestimated by veterinarians. Our view is for a young lamb, life is a risky business. They are vulnerable to cold, predators and worms. As soon as a lamb starts to eat pasture, they are developing a worm burden. Unlike older sheep, lambs haven’t built up their immunity against worms. Worm infections lead to reduced wool production and lower bodyweights in sheep of any age; and young sheep are far more susceptible to heavy worm burdens. Cydectin® plus Tape can be safely used in young lambs.

The sheep tapeworm, *Monezia expansa*, is acquired in the late spring through to autumn when the sheep ingests the pasture mite that carries the immature forms of the parasite. *Monezia expansa* is a cestode or a flat worm made up of many segments. Each segment looks like a grain of rice and is filled with thousands of eggs (Fig 1). The head of the worm has small suckers that suck onto the wall of the intestine and the segments break off as the worm matures (Fig 2). The pasture mite eats the eggs when the segment is released onto the pasture and then it in turn is eaten by the sheep where it attaches and grows.

Lambs and sheep under stress such as late pregnancy are the animals most likely to suffer a temporary set back from worm infection.

In healthy lambs the mature tapeworm, which can be up to 2 metres long, is expelled when the lamb develops natural immunity, usually around 5 – 6 months of age. Prior to this period of natural immunity heavy infections of tapeworm have been associated with unthriftness, poor coat, mild diarrhoea, dysentery and occasionally anaemia. There is also a correlation between heavy tapeworm burdens and pulpy kidney. In the prime lamb industry, where every kilogram counts, Table 1 (see over) indicates how including a tapeworm anthelmintic in the worming program increased weight gains in the trial period by 25% compared to the roundworm only drench.
The trial involved 300 lambs with beginning weights between 12 and 28 kg. During the 8 week trial period, the lambs treated with a roundworm plus tapeworm drench gained 10.52 kg compared to the lambs with roundworm treatment gaining only 8.26 kg. At August 2011 prices this could be worth up to $5.00 in only 8 weeks, if sold as store lambs, simply with the addition of an effective tapeworm drench into the current program. The lambs with a roundworm only drench would require almost another 2 weeks of feeding to reach the same weight gain as the group with tapeworm control.

### Table 1: Increase in weight gain in lambs from tapeworm control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weight (kg)</th>
<th>Start</th>
<th>4 Weeks</th>
<th>8 Weeks</th>
<th>Weight Gain During Trial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Untreated</td>
<td>17.23</td>
<td>22.07</td>
<td>24.77</td>
<td>7.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roundworm Drench</td>
<td>17.30</td>
<td>22.11</td>
<td>25.56</td>
<td>8.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roundworm + Tapeworm Drench</td>
<td>17.13</td>
<td>22.92</td>
<td>27.65</td>
<td>10.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Monezia expansa takes about 6 weeks to develop into a mature worm within the animal. Hence to achieve its full benefit Cydectin® plus Tape should be used either as a first drench or as a weaning drench.

Praziquantel is a proven effective cestocide or tapeworm killer. It kills both the heads of the tapeworm as well as the segments, which is important as leaving the head behind can allow the worm to regrow. Cydectin is a proven broad-spectrum wormer.

Cydectin plus Tape has a broad spectrum control and will kill susceptible Haemonchus contortus (Barber’s Pole worm), Trichostrongylus spp. (Black Scour Worm), Teladorsagia (Ostertagia) spp. (Small brown stomach worm), Cooperia spp. (Small intestinal worm), Nematodirus spp. (Thin necked intestinal worm), Strongyloides papillosis (Intestinal threadworm), Oesophagostomum columbianum (Nodule worm), Chabertia ovina (Large mouthed bowel worm), Dictyocaulus filaria (Large lungworm) plus Psorergates ovis (Itchmite).

Cydectin plus Tape will prevent reinfestation with susceptible Teladorsagia (Ostertagia) spp. (Small brown stomach worm) for at least 14 days and pasture contamination for at least 35 days after a single treatment.

Cydectin plus Tape should be stored at temperatures no greater than 25 degrees Celsius.

### References
4. Auctions Plus, Friday August 5th 2011, p1

For more information on Cydectin plus Tape, contact your Territory Sales Manager who can be found at www.virbac.com.au or by calling Customer Support 1800 009 847.

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