



Fly Strike Decision Framework




Explainer:

- This decision framework is designed to help farmers quickly assess how at risk their sheep are to fly strike by working through the main variables in each category that influence risk i.e., livestock vitality, weather, field conditions, handling facilities etc. Not all variables will apply to every group of sheep and the assessment of risk level should be tailored to your individual circumstances.
- Using the traffic-light risk scoring system for each variable tick – **Green (low)**, **Orange (medium)**, or **Red (high)** relative to the individual group of sheep, some examples have been provided and may be of use.

Category 1 – Assess Vitality of Livestock




Variable	 low Risk	 medium risk	 high risk
Dirty bums	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foot rot/poor feet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strike cases in the last 24 hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worm burden	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Category 2 - Assess Field and Environmental Setting

Variable	 low Risk	 medium risk	 high risk
Flies present in the field	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Field aspect	<input type="checkbox"/> i.e., windy/open	<input type="checkbox"/> i.e., low lying/enclosed	<input type="checkbox"/> i.e., wet/still
Potential deer or other roadkill carcass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wooded edges	<input type="checkbox"/> i.e., sheep distributed across field	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> i.e., sheep seeking shade/high dung volume
Weather/temperature Risk	<input type="checkbox"/> i.e., cool/breezy	<input type="checkbox"/> i.e., hot/dry conditions	<input type="checkbox"/> i.e., wet/warm/muggy

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Category 3 – Assess Handling and other Practicalities

Variable	 low Risk	 medium risk	 high risk
Handling Facilities Nearby	<input type="checkbox"/> i.e., pens or race within easy reach	<input type="checkbox"/> i.e., facilities are further away or extra time needed to gather sheep	<input type="checkbox"/> i.e., no pens or difficult gather
Labour Available	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Assessing Forward Planning (to determine optimum time to act):

When deciding whether to use a flystrike treatment, it can help to think about what else is coming up on the farm. The additional points below are designed to help streamline your decisions around when to apply fly strike treatments.

- **Meat withdrawal limits:** if sheep are due to be sold for meat within 1-2 weeks, check whether a product's withdrawal period fits your plans to use a product. For example, a longer-acting product with a 40-day withdrawal may not be suitable compared to a product with a shorter-withdrawal or a natural product with no meat withdrawal.
- **Next grazing move/stocking density/field risk:** think about where the sheep are going next and the flystrike risk of that ground. If your sheep are being moved to low-lying/sheltered fields that may hold more moisture, the volume of flies might be higher, bigger groups make more of a target when closer together this may influence your decisions.
- **Timing of workload and other tasks:** consider whether sheep are already going to be gathered or handled for another job, for example moving. Combining tasks can save time and reduce stress on both sheep and farmers or other labourers on farm.
- **Planned holiday or time away:** if you are going to be away from the farm, think about who will be checking the sheep and what they are realistically able to do if a problem arises. For example, if a neighbour is tasked with looking after the sheep are they able to take appropriate action to deal with any strike challenge.