

Factors influencing the occurrence of sheep scab (*Psoroptes ovis* infestation) in Britain

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Sheep scab (Psoroptic mange) is widely distributed throughout Britain. The occurrence of sheep scab was studied using a questionnaire survey distributed to 5000 sheep farmers throughout Britain in September 1999. 1100 replies were received; this represents 1.8% of sheep farmers in Britain. Sheep scab had occurred on 94 farms (8%) over the previous 12 months and on 274 farms (24.9%) in the past 9 years. The environmental factors contributing to the occurrence of sheep scab in Britain over the past 9 years were explored. Occurrence was affected by land type, farm

size, flock size, sheep purchasing policy, grazing policy and sheep breed. The relative risk was significantly higher on hill farms than on other land types. Farms less than 35 hectares were less at risk than larger farms and risk increased with flock size. Farms purchasing sheep through a dealer were more at risk than closed flocks or those purchasing sheep direct from another farm. Island breeds (Shetland, Hebridean and Manx Loghtan) were significantly less at risk than other breeds.