

Dipping in sheep and goats-A Glance

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Dipping is a method of using chemicals to kill ectoparasites on animals especially sheep and goats by submerging them in a dipping tank containing the dipping solution prepared by mixing the insecticide or acaricide in water. Dipping is the most commonly used method to control ticks and other ectoparasites such as fleas, lice and sheep scab mites. Dipping helps to get rid of ectoparasites thus improving the health and productivity of animals. Dipping is an internationally recognised method for treating ectoparasites.

The choice of insecticide or acaricide used for dipping should be selected as directed by the veterinarian and should be prepared according to the directions given by the manufacturer. All chemicals used for dipping are poisonous and hazardous, must be kept safely, handled and disposed properly. All these chemicals are intended only for topical application.

Dipping tanks: -

- **Hand bath:** This method is practised for small flocks of sheep and goats. A metal or concrete dipping tank (1.2 x 1.0 x 0.5 m) can be used. Sheep and goats can be dipped one by one into the bath by hand (excluding their heads and ears), then removed and placed on a drain board to drain off surplus dip back into the dip tank. The head should remain above the water for a while to allow for normal breathing, and then submerged thrice with hand or a dipping stick, again allowing time for breathing between dipping. Animals should be kept at least for 1 minute in the dipping tank.



- **Swim bath:** This method is practised for large flocks. The dipping tank can be constructed of metal or concrete. It should be 12 feet long at the top and 6 feet long at the bottom, with an incline for the other 6 feet. The tank should be 2 feet wide at the top, sloping to one foot at the bottom, and it should be 6 feet high. The sheep or goat should be allowed to enter the dipping tank, completely immersed in the liquid (including their heads and ears) and to exit on the ramp on other side and then into the drying pen. The animals must be continually monitored as they swim through the dip to ensure that they do not get into difficulty.



Practical Tips and Precautions in Dipping: -

1. Follow the manufacturer's instructions thoroughly for preparation of the dip as well as its disposal since it is critical in maintaining a proper concentration of insecticide. The total volume of the dip tank should be carefully calculated for determining the correct concentration of the dip. The insecticide or acaricide must be thoroughly mixed with water in the dipping tank.
2. Choose a bright, sunny day (neither too hot nor too cold) for dipping so that the treated animals will dry quickly. Avoid dipping in a rainy day so that the insecticide/acaricide does not get diluted by rain. Dipping should be done in morning hours and should be completed by noon so that animals get enough time for complete drying.



3. Always offer water and give enough rest to the sheep or goat before dipping to avoid their drinking of dipping solution. Thirsty animals should not be dipped. Give enough rest to animals before dipping.
4. Food should be removed overnight so there is less contamination of the dip by manure.
5. Animals should be separated into various age groups to prevent the larger animals being dipped together with smaller ones.
6. Avoid dipping of sheep or goat in advanced stage of pregnancy since it may lead to abortion.
7. Avoid dipping of sick animals, sheep or goat with wounds, young lambs or kids (less than one month old) and stock being sent for slaughter.
8. Avoid dipping of rams or bucks in breeding season to guard against injury to penis or scalding of thigh.
9. Ensure that the dipping tank is clean before adding the dip solution.
10. Keep sheep or goat in the holding pen for at least five to ten minutes so that they drain properly, thus avoiding wastage of dip and to avoid environmental pollution.
11. Do not return treated animals to the shed from which they came until it is completely cleaned.
12. After dipping, animals must be provided with fresh clean drinking water.
13. All guidelines given by the manufacturer should be properly followed in disposal of the dip solution after use.
14. Movable dipping tanks are also available.
15. Staff trained in handling the animals and preparation of the dip solution only should be engaged in dipping.

dipping must be decided based on the recommendations of the veterinarian depending on the prevalence of ectoparasites, season and overall health of the flock.

Dipping of sheep and goats if done correctly, will keep the animals healthy, improve wool quality, improve productivity and potentially increase the profitability of the farm. Dipping is a beneficial practise for the overall health and well-being of sheep and goat flocks. Frequency of