

A Field Trial to Assess the Efficacy of the 5HTC Compound in Repelling or Removing Ticks (*Ixodes ricinus*) from Sheep.

Summary

1. Sheep were fed a herb-extract based food supplement (5HTC), thought to have tick repellent and acaricidal properties, for 31 days in July 2008 and then exposed to ticks. Tick burdens on the sheep were subsequently assessed at 5 and 14 days post exposure.
2. Groups of sheep took similar quantities of Plain and supplemented food, sufficient to have taken more than 40g of supplement over the 31 day feeding period.
3. There was no evidence that this supplement intake repelled ticks over the feeding period as ticks were found feeding at similar rates on both groups of sheep.
4. The effectiveness of the food supplement was considered in relation to a pyrethroid-based topical acaricidal product 'Dysect'.
5. Treatment with Dysect significantly reduced tick feeding numbers up to two weeks after application.
6. There was no evidence that 5HTC-fed sheep responded differently to tick exposure compared to Plain-fed sheep or that 5HCT and Dysect treatment together improved protection over Dysect alone.
7. The power of the trial was low but the effects were significant.
8. The data are being submitted to a scientific journal for peer review.

Adam Smith, Nicholas Aebischer, Nick Sotherton: Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust.