

Attempted treatment of cutaneous lymphomatosis in a ram

I have recently seen an interesting case of cutaneous lymphoma in a 5-year-old Merino ram in the Krugersdorp district.

The ram presented with fever, inappetence and many fibrous 'neoplastic-like' lumps diffusely spread over the skin, especially on the flanks.

A biopsy was taken and submitted to Vetpath (Botha/van der Lugt) and a diagnosis of cutaneous lymphoma was made.

This tumour is invariably linked to enzootic bovine leukosis in cattle, and as is normally the case, occurs when sheep are grazed with cattle. The ram was bought from a farm in the Vrede district of

the Free State and was apparently grazed with cattle on this farm. It is not known whether enzootic bovine leukosis has ever been diagnosed on that farm.

The skin form of lymphoma is well documented, but what made this interesting was that it was diagnosed ante-mortally. There has never been an attempt at any form of chemotherapy in these cases. Although the condition has a grave prognosis, considering the genetic value of the ram, it was decided to treat it with cortisones to see if death could be delayed long enough to obtain more progeny from him.

The ram was treated with 2 mg/kg

prednisolone injectable (Kela 1%, Centaur) OID for 3 days, and then decreasing the dose every 3 days by 20%. Appetite and habitus improved initially, but when the dosage dropped below 1 mg/kg OID his health deteriorated. Long-acting penicillins were used for the biopsy wounds.

The ram continued to deteriorate despite treatment, and died 16 days later.

Unfortunately no *post mortem* was conducted, and the suspicion of metastasis to the lungs remains unconfirmed.

This case history suggests that treatment with cortisones would be hardly worth contemplating should similar cases present themselves in future.

D L Da Silva

Muldersdrift Animal Clinic, PO Box 105, North Riding, 2162 South Africa
E-mail : muld_vet@mweb.co.za