

Facial eczema update

Prepared 22nd February 2015

Last weekend we received close to 50 mm of rain in the MID and this has been followed by warm, humid weather. These are the conditions under which we might expect the spores that cause facial eczema to multiply - but we also have to admit that we have not been good at predicting possible outbreaks of facial eczema by simply looking at weather conditions. This is why it is important to have our Sentinel farms submitting pasture samples so that we can see if there are marked increases in spore counts.

In the week following the rain, in the MID there has been a tendency for spore counts to increase with fewer paddocks with 0 counts, higher average counts and at least one fairly high spore count paddock. These are shown in the table below.

Week beginning	Number of counts	Number zero	%		Average count	Highest count
			Zero			
26-Jan-15	12	4	33%	6250	25,000	
2-Feb-15	19	12	63%	2,898	25,000	
9-Feb-15	10	3	30%	4,500	10,000	
16-Feb	17	5	29%	9,118	40,000	

It will be very important to look closely at the counts this week - we are encouraging all of our Sentinel farms in the MID to submit samples this week so that we can see if this trend towards increasing counts is continuing. Based on the counts we have already seen, and climatic conditions, some of our farmers have already decided to add zinc oxide to their feed.

In the Yarram area, there has been no marked increase in cell counts for those Sentinel farms that were tested last week. The Yarram counts for the last month are as follows:

Week beginning	Number of counts	Number zero	%		Average count	Highest count
			Zero			
26-Jan	4	4	100%	0		
2-Feb	6	2	33%	8,333	15,000	
9-Feb	6	2	33%			
16-Feb	4	3	75%	3,750	15,000	

We do not have spore counts for West or South Gippsland for the week beginning 16th February 2015

So in summary, at least in the MID, there has been an increase in spore counts last week and conditions could be right for further multiplication this week - only by closely monitoring the spore counts on our Sentinel farms can we really assess whether or not this multiplication is occurring.