

ALBERTA SHEEP

Directions for the Use of Albendazole (Valbezen)

For the purpose of controlling gastrointestinal worms in sheep, albendazole (Valbezen) is “Extra Label Drug Use.” Therefore, you will require a prescription from your veterinarian.

Extra Label Drug Use (ELDU)

ELDU is the use of an animal health product such as an antibiotic, in a manner other than what is specified on the label. It includes using a product for a different species, weight or age of animal, and for diseases or other conditions not listed on the label; administering a product at a different dosage, route, frequency, duration or timing of treatment or failing to observe the stated withdrawal period.

(Canadian Sheep & Lamb Food Safe Farm Practices)

A prescription from a veterinarian is always required.

Recommended Dosage

7.5 mg/kg body weight for control of gastrointestinal worms, which is 0.3 mL per 10 lb. (4.5 kg) body weight of 113.6 mg per mL albendazole suspension.

Recommended Withdrawal Period

27 days (as recommended by the Canadian gFARAD).

Background on Dosages, Withdrawal Periods and Labelling

There are many instances of differing withdrawal times and Minimum Residue Limits (MRLs) between the U.S. and Canada. If albendazole were detected in U.S. lambs slaughtered in Canada, they would be condemned. This situation is plausible since the U.S requires only a seven day withdrawal period while Canada requires a 27 day withdrawal period.

Albendazole is approved for use in sheep **in the U.S.** at 7.5 mg/kg with a seven day withdrawal period. At one time, it was approved at the same dose, with the same withdrawal period, for sheep in Canada. Due to the small market, the manufacturer has never changed the Valbezen label to reflect the changes in Canadian regulations. And unfortunately, the Veterinary Drugs Directorate never established an MRL for albendazole in sheep liver.

At the approved label dose, albendazole is efficacious against *Fasciola and Fascioloides*, so there is no reason to increase the dose to 12 mg/kg. The U.S. FARAD previously recommended a 27 day withdrawal interval when sheep were administered doses of 10-12 mg/kg. Currently the Canadian MRL for albendazole is 0.2 ppm in cattle liver.



Given this information, and the fact that the residues in sheep tissues deplete faster than cattle, the withdrawal interval recommended for cattle (27 days) should be adequate for sheep. Therefore, the Canadian gFARAD recommends a withdrawal interval of 27 days, which should be sufficient so that detectable residues are not found. Because the Canadian gFARAD withdrawal recommendation is not an official withdrawal period, and is based on data that has not been reviewed nor approved by the Veterinary Drugs Directorate or the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, responsibility for residue violations rests with the attending veterinarian.

Also, albendazole should not be administered to ewes during the first 30 days of gestation, as it is teratogenic (may cause birth defects). This warning does not appear on the Canadian label.

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