

LET'S KEEP SHETLAND SHEEP SCAB FREE



Developments in
sheep scab
control in
Shetland

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Background - sheep scab efforts in Shetland

- Shetland had been free of sheep scab since 1994
- In 2021 there was an outbreak linked to an imported ram.
- Following this 10,000 sheep were dipped on a voluntary basis in March 2022 using a dipping contractor from the mainland.
- For the import season of 2022 Shetland Livestock Marketing Group set up a community dipping facility for imported sheep
- In the import season 2022/23 LHS funded a project to blood sample sheep coming into Shetland and test for exposure to sheep scab.
- Shetland has had sheep scab regulations since 2003, this was amended in 2024 to use dipping as the primary treatment for sheep scab following import to Shetland.

Project Plan for LHS funded Sheep Testing

- This project ran during the 2022 import season to monitor the levels of sheep scab in imported sheep coming to Shetland.
- Imported sheep were screened on entry for sheep scab through blood sample.
- Initially there were plans to resample all imported sheep 4-6 weeks after import.

Introduction of the Staney Hill Community Dipping Facility

- The Staney Hill Community Dipping Facility was set up for importers to dip their sheep before taking them home.
- This was voluntary but received good uptake and a high percentage of imported sheep were dipped.
- Following the success of the dipping facility, we felt it was unnecessary to retest as many sheep as they would be negative following dipping.

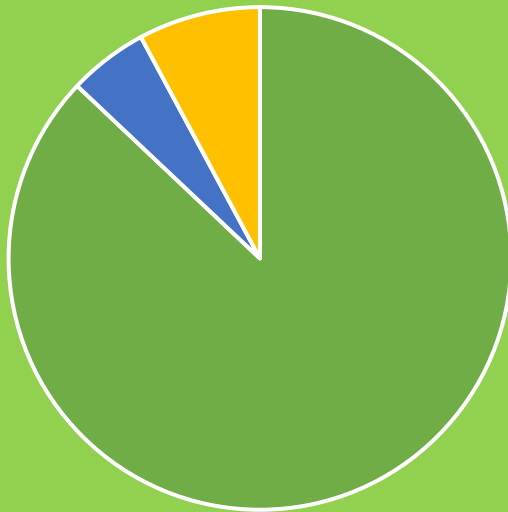
Modifications following set up of the Staney Hill Community Dipping Facility.

- Instead any sheep testing positive or suspicious were resampled to make sure the injectable product administered had been effective
- Any sheep that were not dipped were retested to make sure they hadn't picked up any sheep scab during transit that had not been effectively treated by the injectable product.

Import Test and Proportion Dipped

9/9/22 – 9/12/22

Negative	Positive	Suspicious
477	43	28
87%	7.8%	5.2%

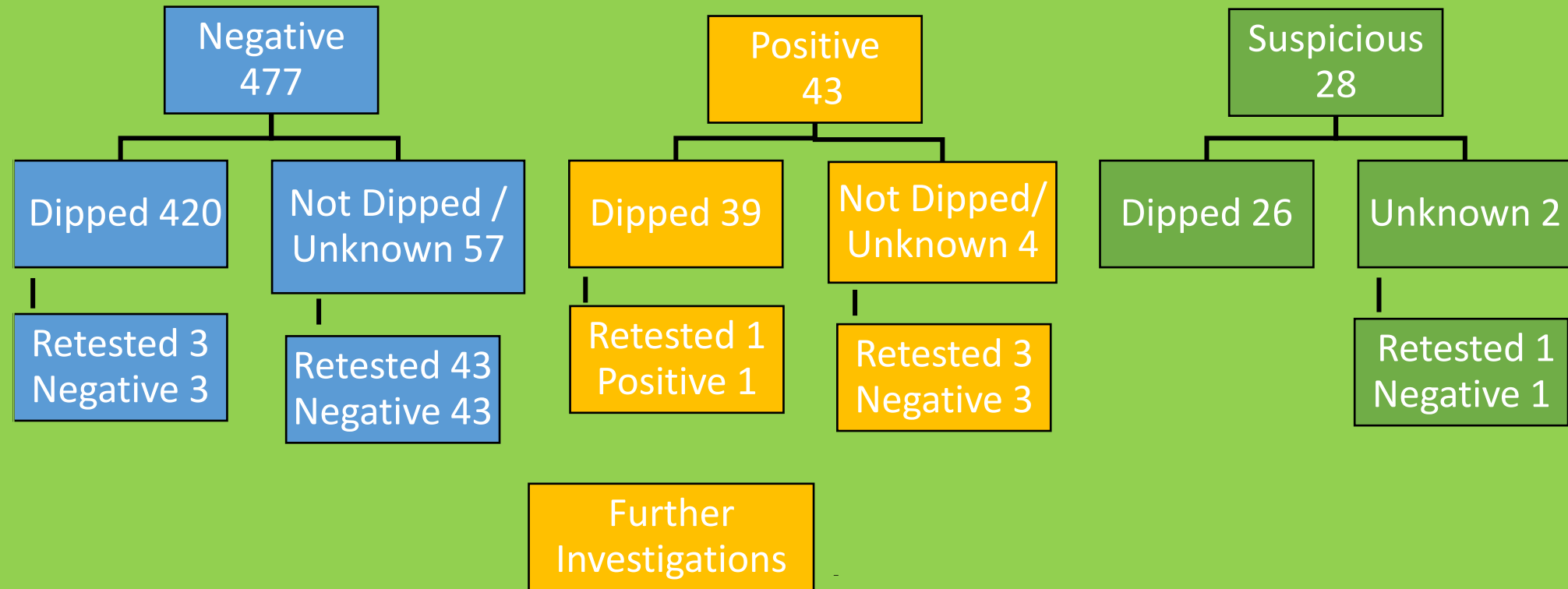


■ Negative
 ■ Suspicious
 ■ Positive

Negative			Positive			Suspicious		
477			43			28		
Dipped	Undipped	Unknown	Dipped	Undipped	Unknown	Dipped	Undipped	Unknown
420	42	15	39	4	0	26	0	2

- Over 10% of imported animals were positive or suspicious for sheep scab.

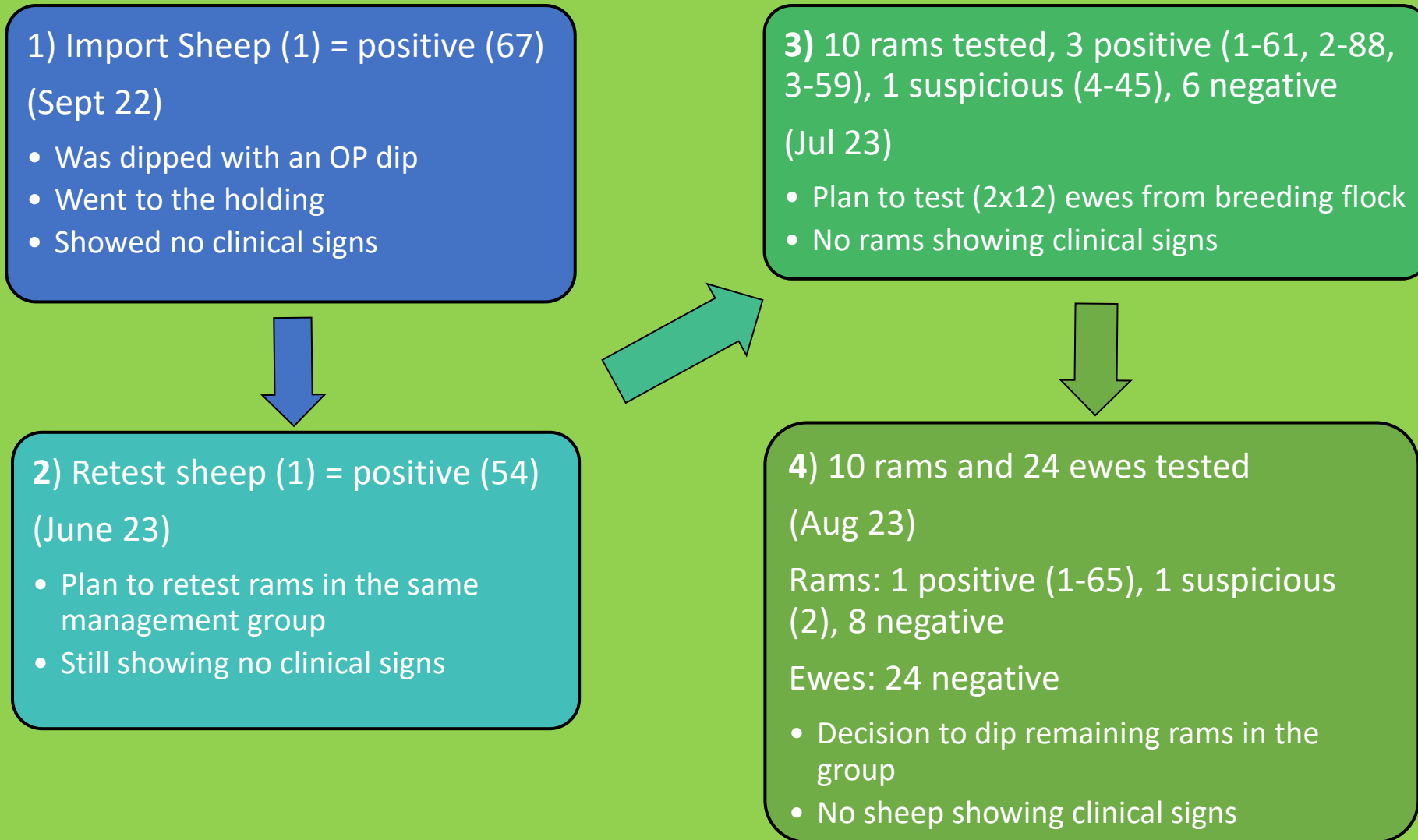
Retesting



As the project was voluntary not all animals that were tested could be followed up

Further Investigations on next slide

Further Investigations - Timeline



<40 negative 40-49 suspicious >49 positive

Further Investigations - Testing

Summary of Sheep Scab Testing (Farm)					
	Import Test (1)	Retest 1 (2)	Ram Management Group Test (3)	Ram Management Group Retest (4)	Breeding Ewe Management Group (4)
Positive	1	1	3	1	0
Suspicious	0	0	1	1	0
Negative	0	0	6	8	24
Total	1	1	10	10	24

Following these tests positive animals were dipped

Progression of Positive Cases (Farm)								
Tag Number	Import Test (Sept 22)		Retest 1 (Jun 23)		Ram Retest (Jul 23)		Ram Management Group Retest (Aug 23)	
1	Positive	67	Positive	54	Positive	61	Suspicious	45
2					Positive	88	Positive	65
3					Positive	59	Negative	14
4					Suspicious	45	Negative	26

Learning

Shetland

- Beneficial to be able to give farmers and crofters data on the risk of buying sheep exposed to sheep scab.
- Useful for vet practice to assess risk level of different batches of sheep.
- Proved difficult to sort sheep into those which were to be dipped at the pier so blood samples were taken from all animals. Animals were taken from the pier by owners to the community dipping facility and to be dipped.
- Not possible to carry out a second test on sheep scab on a timeframe useful for farmers/sheep scab control.

Scotland

- Animals were mostly purchased from Scotland. This project can give an idea about sheep scab levels in 2022.
- Project gives an idea of the risks of buying sheep recently exposed to scab.
- Demonstrates that communities can take the initiative in reducing the chance of buying in sheep scab.
- Interpretation of sheep scab serology on individual animals with no history can be problematic.