

Surveys of practices, perceptions and attitudes in relation to integrated management of gastrointestinal parasites in sheep flocks

Denise Bélanger¹, Gaston Rioux², Christopher Fernandez-Prada¹, Anne Leboeuf³

¹Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Université de Montréal ²Centre d'expertise en production ovine du Québec ³Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food (Quebec)

CONTEXT Anthelmintic resistance (AR) is widespread in gastrointestinal parasites of sheep and its impact on sheep production is important. A multi-component project (2015-2018) was conducted in Quebec with the aim of documenting the magnitude of this problem. The project was divided in four (4) activities in order to:

- 1 Determine the prevalence of AR in Quebec sheep flocks;
- 2 Survey the perceptions, attitudes and practices of the main players regarding parasite management;
- 3 Develop tools to promote integrated parasite management (IPM);
- 4 Transfer knowledge to promote the adoption of new practices.

This poster describes the second activity of the project.

OBJECTIVES To assess the practices, perceptions and attitudes of producers, veterinary practitioners and advisers relatively to IPM, with the goal of targeting the right content and strategies for knowledge transfer.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to acknowledge the participating producers, veterinarians and advisers, as well as our social science adviser from McGill University, Paula L. Bush.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Producers

Main results are presented in the "Study Highlights" section. Most producers who were not applying specific best practices answered they would be willing to do so in a near future but under certain conditions:

- lower costs
- less time-consuming strategies
- more knowledge and technical transfer.

Veterinarians and Advisers:

More than 70% answered they knew about best practices, but would appreciate getting more information. As expected, advisers knew more about pasture management than veterinarians (Fig. 1), but only 57% of the advisers knew about specific plants that could help controlling parasites. However, few veterinarians and advisers recommend those best practices to their clients, and more than 60% perceived that most producers would not adopt them, except coprology.

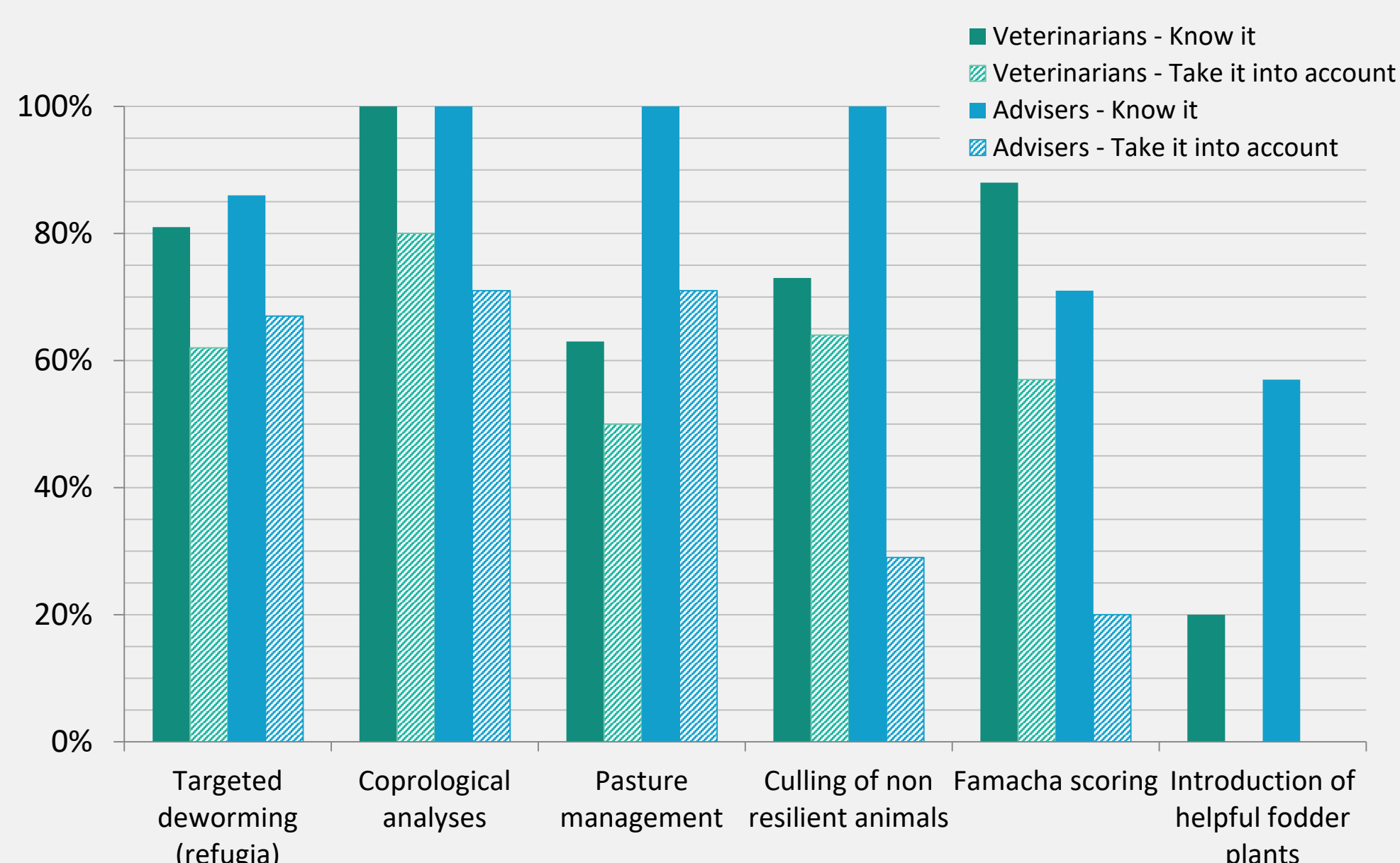


Fig. 1 Expertise and attitudes of veterinarians and advisers towards several best practices in IPM

METHOD A semi-structured questionnaire was developed with the help of a social scientist (P. Bush) and a focus group whose members included sheep producers, veterinarians and advisers. Developed in three versions, the questionnaire:

- Included 4 sections (farm description, parasite management, resistance and best practices, information and knowledge).
- Was sent via personal email to sheep producers whose flock was managed on pasture (n=32), veterinary practitioners (n=15) and sheep advisers (n=7).

Descriptive statistics were computed.



FINANCING

This project was possible thanks to funding from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada as part of their Agri-Innovation program.

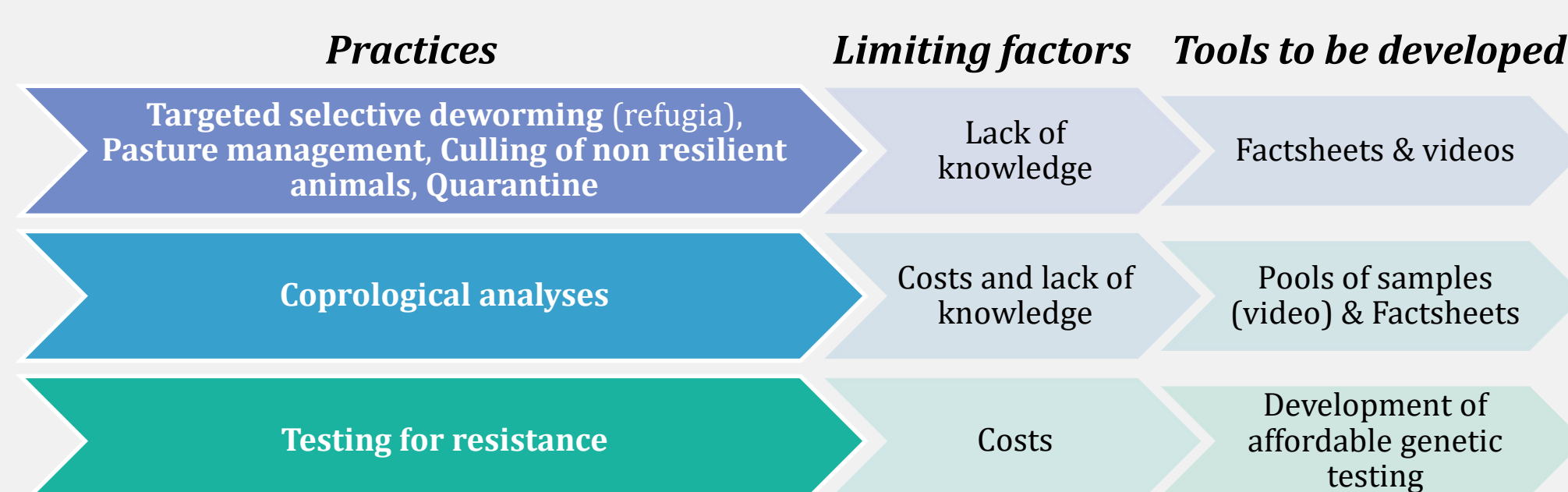
WHAT DID WE LEARN FROM THIS STUDY?

- Implementing IPM is a big challenge, as shown by Jack et al. (2017) and Woodgate and Love (2011): veterinarians and advisers must work as a supportive team with the producer.
- Most producers were willing to implement some or all best practices under certain conditions.

→ Very few producers tested for resistance, and it

is known that being affected is a known incentive to change practices.

→ In order to change this paradigm, various tools need to be developed as there is a need for knowledge transfer.



WHAT WAS NEXT?

Production of videos and factsheets to help knowledge transfer (see next poster) • **Organization** of workshops and conference to promote IPM and good practices • **Implementation** of IPM through a new campaign of awareness and technical transfer supported by the government of Quebec that will start in 2019 (PISAQ) – This campaign will bring together veterinary practitioners and producers to deal with this issue.

REFERENCES

Woodgate, R.G. & Love, Stephen. (2011). DOI: 10.1016/j.vetpar.2011.11.045.
Jack, Corin & al. (2017). DOI: 10.1016/j.prevetmed.2017.01.018.