The impact of worms on animal production begins as soon as animals are exposed to worm larvae on pasture. These effects may be viewed as a continuum from no exposure to worms, and therefore no impact, to the presence of heavy burdens in animals leading to disease and even death. Physical signs represent the end stage of a complex and progressive disease process. Their appearance represents failure of worm management strategies.

Larval challenge occurs whenever animals graze pasture contaminated with infective L3 larvae. Infection reduces appetite as well as demanding an immune response with losses directly proportional to the level of parasite infection. No drench can completely eliminate the effects of larval challenge. Production loss due to worms is of greatest importance in young stock. Young animals are born with no immunity to worms and are a major source of pasture contamination until immunity is developed.

Successful worm management strategies should aim to minimise larval challenge at critical points in your farming operation.