




# A SURVEY OF PRIVATE SHEEP DIPPING FACILITIES IN GEORGIA

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## INTRODUCTION

Following the report on [Monitoring of Livestock Seasonal Movement on the Animal Movement Route](#) conducted in June 2020, a short follow up study on the sheep dipping facilities was conducted in August 2020. According to the above mentioned report, in total approximately 350,000 sheep are dipped on the ALCP facilitated and the National Food Agency (NFA<sup>1</sup>) owned six Veterinary Surveillance Points (VSPs) per season, which is 50% of the estimated 700,000 sheep seasonally migrating on the Animal Movement Route (AMR) to the summer or winter pastures. The NFA data shows that the other half of the migrating sheep was already treated by the farmers when passing the VSPs, but the agency lacks information about where and how they were dipped, they just assume that the farmers are using private self-made private or abandoned Soviet sheep baths.

The purpose of this report is to identify the locations and ownership status of the existing private and unregulated baths, the reasons for their use and to find out how they are operating and dealing with environmental and waste management issues. In total **fourteen** this kind of sheep dipping facilities were identified by the programme during the study, the majority of which are in Kakheti region. *See Figure 1. A Map of Sheep Baths and VSPs below.*

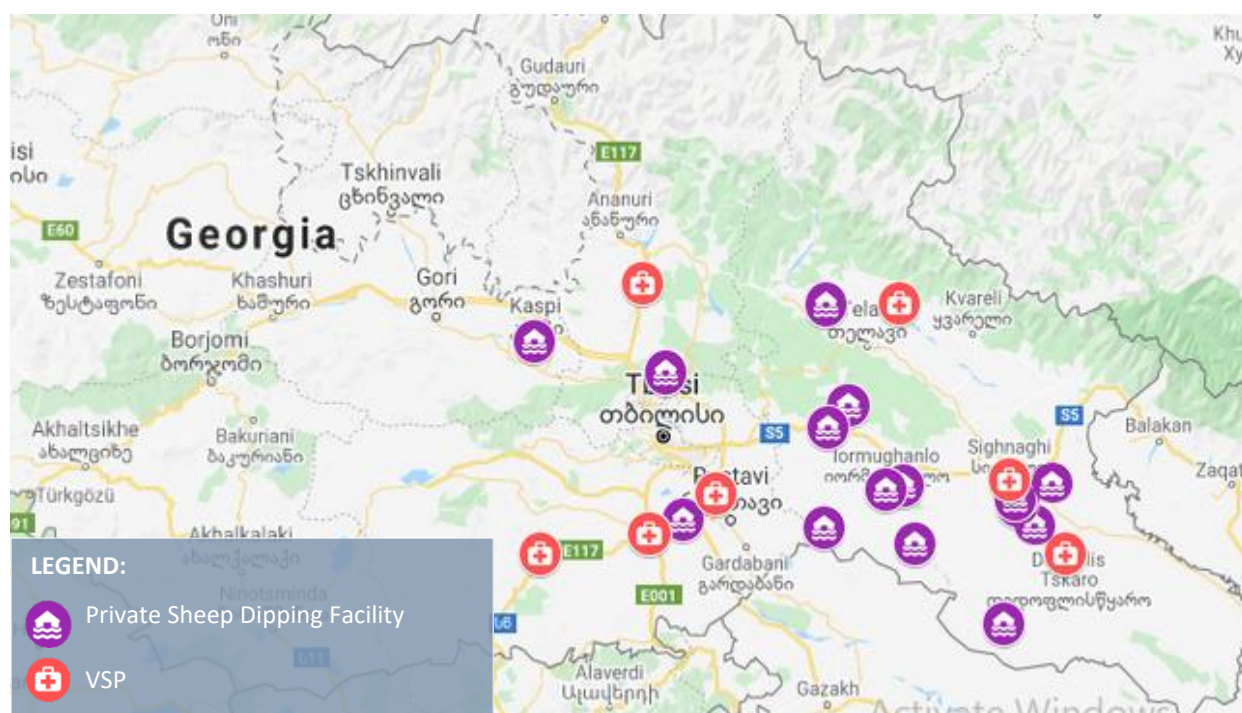


FIGURE 1 MAP OF SHEEP DIPPING FACILITIES IN GEORGIA

*The detailed map is available online at the following link: [Uncontrolled Sheep Dipping Facilities in Georgia](#)*

<sup>1</sup> The NFA is a governmental agency under the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture responsible for the monitoring and control of animal diseases in the country.

## METHODOLOGY

Field visits and interviews were conducted with the representatives of central and regional offices of the NFA, as well as sheep owners, shepherds and private sheep bath owners. The regions covered were Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Mtskheta-Mtianeti. Desk research on environmental and waste management regulations of Georgia was done to find out what, theoretically, the sheep dipping facilities should be doing according to existing legislation.

## THE MAIN FINDINGS

The study showed that there are three different types of sheep dipping facilities in Georgia, not including the governmental VSPs. The governmental VSPs, where sheep treatment against external parasites is free of charge and regulated, had a little negative impact on the working status of private sheep baths; only one out of five was closed because of the VSP opening in Dedoplistskaro. All these private facilities have poor infrastructure and are not controlled environmentally and are not registered as business operators. The private sheep baths are working for two months in a year, a month per season. According to the interviews with the owners the maximum number of dipped sheep per bath per month is 60,000 head which makes 3,000 Gel profit for the owner.

### TYPES OF PRIVATE SHEEP BATHS

As the uncontrolled sheep dips are self-made or made in the soviet times, they are off the record and there is a limited information about these facilities. The study showed that there are three types of uncontrolled sheep baths:

- **Private farm facilities** which are owned by big sheep farms (5,000 sheep and more), used only for their needs – *three* like this were identified, two in Kakheti and one in Kvemo Kartli
- **Abandoned Soviet era facilities** that are available for anyone – *six* like this were identified, in Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Mtskheta-Mtianeti. We do not know are shepherds using them or not.
- **Private Commercial facilities** offering a sheep dipping service for certain fee – *five* like this were identified in Kakheti and Mtskheta-Mtianeti (two in Iormuganlo Village, Sagarejo municipality; one in Khorkheli village, Akhmeta municipality; one in Kaspi municipality and one in Dedoplistskaro municipality). From these five only one in Dedoplistskaro stopped working after opening the VSPs.

### THE MAIN REASONS FOR USING PRIVATE SHEEP BATHS

As it was observed, the main reasons for using the uncontrolled private or abandoned sheep baths rather than the governmental VSPs by the sheep farmers are the following:

- The majority of big sheep farmers, owning their own self-made sheep baths, prefer to disinfect sheep locally, on the farms.
- Some of the shepherds prefer to dip their sheep several days before starting the transhumance to give the herd a rest after dipping, rather than doing it on their way to summer pastures, so they use the private facilities located nearby their farms.
- The majority of shepherds from Iormuganlo community prefer to dip sheep near their village and stay a few days more with their families. They also mentioned queues at the VSPs and timesaving as the reasons for choosing non-governmental sheep baths.
- Some shepherds avoid the checks at the VSPs to hide the real number of sheep.
- Lack of information on the VSPs was also named as a reason of using private baths by a few shepherds.

## THE PRIVATE SHEEP DIPPING FACILITIES – HOW THEY WORK

Private sheep baths are usually self-built, poorly fenced places (*see Annex 1*) with a small concrete pit and without a wastewater collection area. The wastewater is spilt on the ground and pollution is obvious. Before dipping the sheep owners buy insecto-acaricides - chemicals<sup>2</sup> for external parasite control, that are available in the nearby vet pharmacies and bring them to the sheep dipping facilities. In some cases they also need to bring in water by truck. All private sheep dipping facilities lack sewage systems and the toxic wastewater from sheep dipping goes directly to the ground without any neutralizing measures. The shepherds pay private bath owners 0,05 Gel per sheep plus 70 Gel per a water truck and 130 Gel for chemicals. So sheep owners are spending 250 Gel in total per flock of 1,000 sheep, out of which only 50 Gel is the payment the private bath owner gets. Sometimes shepherds are paying one head of live sheep for dipping a thousand sheep. In some cases, the bath owner buys the chemicals as well and takes one more sheep instead of money. This is an acceptable deal for both sides and also nobody is checking the number and condition of animals as at governmental VSPs. Some shepherds are still hiding the real number of sheep and avoid the checking at the VSPs.

After the opening the VSPs, only one private dipping facilities in Dedoplistskaro stopped working, others are still working, e.g. Iormuganlo Village facilities continued work without losing customers. Quite a large number of shepherds hired by sheep owners are from this community<sup>3</sup>. For the shepherds from Iormuganlo it is very important to stay with their families for a few days when passing it during the seasonal movement or dipping, it a tradition for them and, moreover, they do not want to lose those days in queues at the VSPs.

The main problem for the private baths is that unregulated use of chemicals is potentially damaging to the environment and the people that work there. The interviewed private bath owners stated that they are not aware about environmental safety measures, health and safety measures or waste management regulations, however if they are given clear recommendations about necessary arrangements for safe wastewater disposal, they are ready to abide by them and even make ‘a little’ investment to meet required standards.

## ENVIRONMENTAL AND WASTE MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS

The management of all kind of waste is regulated by the [Waste Management Code of Georgia](#) adopted in 2014. As defined by the code, waste is any substance or object that the holder of waste discards, intends to discard or is obliged to discard. **According to the code any type of waste whether it is toxic or not, must be collected and disposed by the operator who is granted a right to manage a waste.** The waste producer is responsible for following waste management standards. Discarding waste into the environment, or abandoning waste outside waste collection containers and facilities is *prohibited* (Article 8, paragraph 1).

The Department of Environmental Supervision, which is a sub-agency of MEPA, is responsible for maintaining control of waste management in the country, however as stated by department representatives, only after receiving notification on particular case of violation, can they respond and issue pertinent

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2 In Georgia available insecto-acaricides contain one of the following active substances: Deltametrin, Diazinon, Cypermethrin. Trademark Names may be different. Cypermethrin based chemicals are prohibited in Western Countries as it is extremely toxic, see [the Additional Report on Bio Security Points on Animal Movement Route](#). As a result of ALCP facilitation the NFA do not use cypermethrine based chemicals at the VSPs, however it is not officially banned in Georgia. The insecto-acaricides used at VSPs are Bitox (Deltametrin based) or Ectocidol (Diazinon Based). It is difficult to be completely sure which chemicals are used by private sheep dipping facilities, however based on the results of the site visits, the most frequently used chemical is Racidol (Diazinon based)

3 Iormuganlo community - six big, 100 percent ethnic Azeri populated, neighboring villages in Sagarejo municipality



penalties. According to the Waste Management law of Georgia (December, 2014) if any business operator collects from 2 to 10 tonnes of hazardous waste, they need to register their waste related activities. In the case of private sheep dipping facilities, if the wastewater was collected, it could be disposed by a licensed company as it is done at the NFA VSPs. However the waste management at the VSPs is the biggest cost for the NFA, on average 30,000 GEL per point per year and it is highly unlikely that the owners of private sheep dipping facilities could cope with the above mentioned expenses of waste disposal.

However the harm caused from environmental pollution needs to be addressed and mitigated. More research is required but one option practiced in the UK and Australia is that if waste water containing the chemical Diazinon is in appropriate concentrations/l of water it can be disposed of on the ground this would offer a cost effective, simple and safe method, mitigating the current problems if married with clear guidelines and technical know-how for appropriate chemical use, concentrations, disposal methods and locations of disposal<sup>4</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

Considering the demand for and essential value of these private sheep dipping services, their continued operation is very important. Further development of their poor infrastructure and operations including the implementation of essential and appropriate environmental and health and safety measures regarding their chemical use and wastewater disposal can be feasible following research of best practices in other countries and a Business Environmental Audit<sup>5</sup> (BEAT) of these facilities. When a cost effective solution is found and the BEAT assessments are done, the next step will be to develop simple operational guidelines and capacity building for these facilities and their owners and operators through the involvement of the National Environmental Agency (NEA) and the National Food Agency (NFA) of the MEPA.

## ANNEX 1. PHOTOS OF PRIVATE SHEEP DIPPING FACILITIES



Private bath in Khorkheli Village, Akhmeta municipality, Kakheti region

<sup>4</sup>Australian Journal of Experimental Agriculture (2007) [\*Effective remediation of diazinon from spent sheep dip wash by disposal on land\*](#)

<sup>5</sup> The modified EIA developed by Alliances in partnership with Gergili Ltd





Private bath in Dedoplistskaro municipality, Kakheti region



A private sheep bath in Iormuganlo Village, Sagarejo municipality, Kakheti region



A private sheep bath in Iormuganlo Village, Sagarejo Municipality, Kakheti region