



## Lameness

There has been quite a significant amount of rainfall recently leading to pasture poaching in places and this is certainly a risk factor for lameness. With many of you already having tups in or about to put them in with the ewes it is worth making sure that your flock are not suffering from the ill effects of lameness. Lameness can have a significant impact on fertility and subsequent lamb crops. Also, if you have any lambs or replacements around don't forget them. Ideally any problems should be sorted before the tup goes in as any stress, including handling, can prevent embryo implantation. Therefore try to minimise gathering groups of sheep if they are already with the rams. However, the effects of lameness are significant so individual sheep should still be treated as soon as possible.

Common types of lameness are:

### Scald

- Inflammation of the skin between the digits
- Typically red & swollen, very often with a white pasty scum
- No under running of hoof horn
- More common in lambs than ewes however in ewes often progresses to footrot so prompt treatment is essential
- Antibiotic spray is generally enough e.g. Engemycin spray
- If several animals in a group are affected, footbathing can be used however you need to be sure of your diagnosis as footbathing can spread footrot
- If using a footbath follow correct procedures, 10% Zinc sulphate or 3% Formalin – ANTIBIOTIC FOOTBATHS ARE NOT APPROPRIATE. Allow animals to stand on a dry yard afterwards



### Footrot

- Interdigital infection that also causes separation of hoof horn
- Has a characteristic foul smell!
- Antibiotic spray and injectable are required e.g. Engemycin spray and Alamycin LA, as well as cleaning debris from the interdigital space
- A different antibiotic may be required if you have resistance to Alamycin LA or an animal with a repeat case
- Isolate affected animals from healthy animals as it is very infectious
- Footbathing is NOT appropriate
- There is a vaccine – this can be very successful so please discuss with a vet if you think footrot is a concern for you

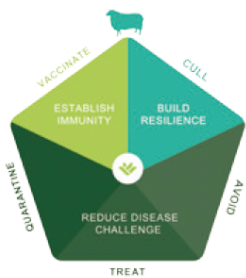
### CODD

- Red raw lesions starting at the top of the hoof/corony band and hoof separation
- May have grey scum and a foul smell

- This condition is hard to resolve and is easily confused with footrot - if in doubt, speak to a vet
- Antibiotic spray e.g. Engemycin spray and an injectable antibiotic – discuss with your vet the correct one for you

Consider the use of pain relief in all cases as this will promote healing and good welfare e.g. Metacam or Allevinix. With these common types of lameness, trimming is not appropriate, delays healing, spreads infection and makes it more painful for the animal. When working with lame sheep always clean and disinfect equipment and your hands between animals/groups to prevent the spread of infections from one to another. This applies to handling races and yards too. As always, please take the animals ear tag number, mark the affected leg and record your treatments – this will help you identify and cull repeat offenders!

**The Lameness 5 Point Plan** is a useful tool to help effectively minimise lameness on your farm, some of you will already be using it. It is the official agreed national strategy for achieving the Farm Animal Welfare Committee (FAWC) target of reducing lameness to less than 2% by 2021.



The five points of the plan can be split into three areas:

- Cull to build resilience
- Treat, quarantine and avoid to reduce disease challenge
- Vaccinate to establish immunity

The 5 point plan is split into sections designed to reduce lameness incidence rapidly on farm. These broadly include building a resilient flock through selective culling, helping to reduce overall disease challenge on farm through rapid treating and boosting your flock’s immune status.

If you are concerned about your lameness rates, or would just like to assess where else you can improve control, we are able to carry out an assessment to give you an idea of where you can implement areas of the 5 point plan effectively on farm.

Action / Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Cull</b>							Cull ewes with misshapen or chronically diseased feet. Cull any 'repeat offenders' after two cases in one season.					
<b>Quarantine</b>							Quarantine incoming stock for a minimum of 28 days. Inspect all sheep. Treat even mild cases and footbath. If the flock is vaccinated, treat all incoming stock.					
<b>Treat</b>	Promptly catch and treat lame ewes and mark repeat offenders for culling.				Consider footbathing lambs to control scald.			Catch all lame ewes within three days. Treat and mark				
<b>Avoid</b>	Avoid spreading infection by ensuring housing and pens are as clean as possible prior to and during lambing.				Ensure handling systems are as clean as possible before every use.			Use hydrated lime, gravel or woodchip around handling and high-traffic areas to reduce the accumulation of infection. Move mineral buckets and troughs regularly.				
<b>Vaccinate</b>	Carry out winter vaccination with a footrot vaccine. Coincide this with winter housing or pregnancy scanning.				Carry out summer vaccination with a footrot vaccine around shearing time.						Carry out winter vaccination with a footrot vaccine. Coincide with winter housing or pregnancy scanning.	

### Ill thrift in lambs

Do you have any poor looking lambs left over? This time of year, we commonly see groups of lambs that haven’t thrived linked to cobalt deficiency, which if concurrent with a worm infection can be severe. Poor growth should trigger an investigation, which will entail blood and faecal samples being taken to identify if one, the other or both are involved. Cobalt is important for energy production and wool growth hence why lambs suffering with deficiency are seen to be lethargic with poor quality fleeces. If you are suspicious or have had similar problems in the past give us a call to discuss and take some samples.

### Sheep breed survey

With Brexit still looming, the sheep industry is at a critical point with the possibility of many changes to come in the near future. Therefore, it is important for policy makers to have an up to date understanding of the sheep industry. That is why AHDB with the help of British wool are asking for you all to complete the sheep breed survey. See the link below for further information and access to the survey.

<https://www.signetdata.com/technical/projects/sheep-breed-survey/>