



A Strategic Approach to the Control of Lameness in Sheep

Lameness in sheep can be controlled through the implementation of a whole-flock programme. An effective programme will reduce the number of NEW cases of lameness.

A typical annual programme will involve:-

- Regular inspections and diagnosis of the causes of lameness
- Culling and/or treatment of affected sheep
- Segregation of treated sheep from sound sheep
- Routine foot paring
- Use of antibiotic injection and/or vaccine
- Quarantine programme for introduced sheep

The principal causes of foot lameness in sheep are:-

- Scald or interdigital dermatitis
- Classical footrot
- White line disease/shelly hoof
- Contagious ovine digital dermatitis (CODD)
- Granulomas (chronic infected foot)

Five Steps to Footrot Control

1. *An accurate diagnosis is essential.* - If you have any doubt about the cause of lameness in your flock contact your own vet. Remember there may be more than one disease causing lameness.
2. *Assess your handling facilities.* – There is no point in sheep with dirty feet going into a foot bath because the chemicals will not penetrate through the soil and maybe inactivated by the dirt. Also after leaving the foot-bath the sheep need to stand on a hard standing or stones to allow the chemicals to dry on to the hoof. There is no point in them walking on to muddy paddocks, bedding or wet grass that will wash off the expensive chemicals. If your handling facilities do not meet this minimum standard then forget foot bathing and vaccinate your flock with the only foot rot vaccine (Footvax: Schering Plough Animal

Health). You should always seek advice from you veterinary surgeon about the use of this vaccine in your flock.

3. *If your facilities for foot bathing* are good walk your flock through the foot-bath having first cleaned their feet. Then allow them to stand on the hard standing for an hour after bathing.
4. *After foot bathing* separate the lame sheep from the sound sheep. This is often easier to do after than before foot bathing. Segregate the lame sheep. The sound sheep should return to pasture which has not had sheep grazing it for the previous 5 days. The lame sheep should be regarded as an affected or hospital group. These should be treated with an injection of a long-acting antibiotic. Inspect these sheep 10 days later and only then pare any misshapen feet. Another walk through the foot-bath at that time is advisable.
5. *Assess the response to the treatment.* If less than 75% have recovered, call in your vet to review the diagnosis and treatment. Cull sheep that do not respond to the treatment programme. They are chronic carriers of infection.

If you have any doubt as to the principal cause of lameness in your flock or your treatment appears ineffective, seek advice from your veterinary surgeon.

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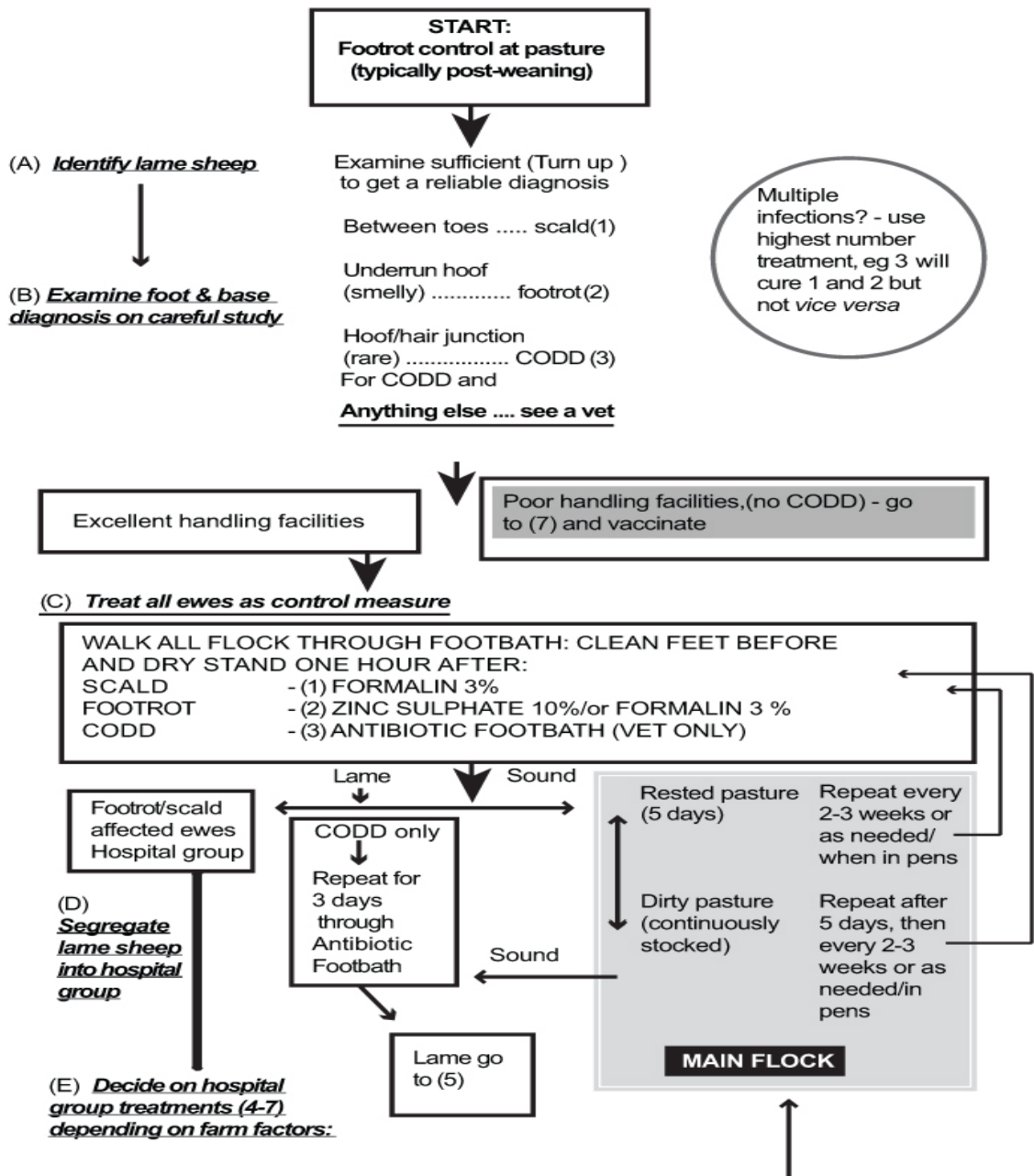
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SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

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Skilled/own labour/time available	No. of sheep affected	Facilities	Treatments : All successfully treated sheep return to main flock	Variable cost/ewe treated £
(4) Yes	High	Excellent	Pare to expose rot/correct overgrowth + topical AB spray or 30 mins zinc sulphate footbath but not both! - lame	0.60
(5) Yes	Low	Excellent for a small group only	Long-acting AB injection - 10 days later pare misshapen feet Cull non-responders	1.15-3.00 80.00
(6) No	High	Poor	Use contractor to pare + 30 mins zinc sulphate (contractor facility) or topical AB	
(7) Yes/No	High	Poor + wet land, and susceptible breed	Vaccinate (own labour) Do all ewes + rams	0.80

FINISH
Once clear remember to treat/vaccinate & isolate introduced sheep for 4 weeks minimum

Pasture free of sheep for 10 days