DIAGNOSING CAUSES OF LAMENESS

The first step in any attempt to control or treat lameness in a flock is to establish the cause of any disease - only then can an effective control programme be implemented.

Scald

- Scald predisposes to Footrot.
- It is a **'between the hooves'** problem and is found predominantly in young lambs between one and three months old.
- Classic signs are a reddening and loss of hair between the hooves.
- Treat susceptible flocks around three weeks before the condition normally appears.

CODD

- Contagious Ovine Digital Dermatitis (CODD) is a disease of the **coronary band** and is best defined as an 'over the top of the hoof ' problem.
- CODD starts in the coronary band, but quickly under-runs the wall of the hoof.
- It is characterised by the involvement of the outside wall of the hoof (rather than the sole as is the case with Footrot), a tendency to bleed easily and the lack of a Footrot smell.
- Very contagious and painful. .
- A veterinary diagnosis is essential for the correct treatment of CODD.

Footrot

- Footrot is a hoof disease with under-running of the hoof and **foul smelling**.
- A whole flock disease management programme will control Footrot, incorporating a combination of Footrot vaccination, antibiotic treatment, footbathing and culling.

Shelly Hoof

- Shelly hoof (also known as **'white line separation'**) is synonymous with white line disease in cattle.
- The wall of the hoof detaches and debris and soil enter the space resulting in abscess formation.
- Judicious paring may be required to release the pus or it can exit at the coronary band in severe cases.
- To date the cause of shelly hoof is still unclear, but there are suggestions it could be linked with damage from rough or wet ground, stony standings or nutritional imbalance.

Lameness costs the sheep industry in Ireland approximately €5m* annually.

VACCINATE AND PROTECT AGAINST FOOTROT

Check out this video on vaccinating against Footrot ← **Scan with phone camera**

*O'Leary C. Eradication and control of lameness in sheep. VIJ Vol 4 No 7

**Lovatt F. Causes, control and costs of lameness in sheep. VIJ 2015 Vol 5 No 4. As per exchange rate June 2017.

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FOOTROT GOT YOU DOWN?

Talk to your vet about vaccinating sheep against Footrot

MSD Animal Health

FOOTROT

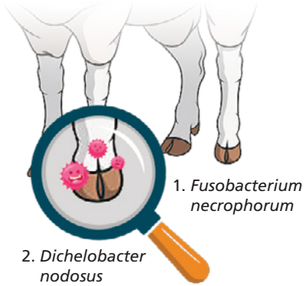
THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CAUSE OF LAMENESS IN IRISH FLOCKS

Footrot - The Facts!

- The bacteria which cause Footrot are already present on the sheep's foot.
- It causes pain, reduces mobility, impairs fertility and inhibits feed intake.
- An outbreak of Footrot in finishing lambs can easily reduce growth rates by 50g per day per affected foot.
- Affected sheep may also be more susceptible to fly strike.

DID YOU KNOW?

Footrot is caused by two bacteria



1. *Fusobacterium necrophorum*
2. *Dichelobacter nodosus*

What causes Footrot? - Present bacteria!

- Footrot occurs when sheep come in contact with two separate bacteria.
- *F. necrophorum* first infects the hoof space. This bacterium is commonly found in the gut and faeces of sheep, so it is often already present on the foot. This bacterium also causes Scald.
- This initial infection provides the opportunity for *D.* (Bacteroides) *nodusus* to enter the foot and cause a more severe infection.
- The maximum period of survival of *D. nodosus* (even in optimal conditions) is no more than 10 days.

How infectious is Footrot? - Highly infectious!

- Feet of affected sheep are the main source of infection; therefore it is easily transmitted from sheep to sheep, particularly when they are confined in a small space (eg. housing or in handling yards).
- Footrot is also transmitted via pasture, contaminated bedding or access routes.

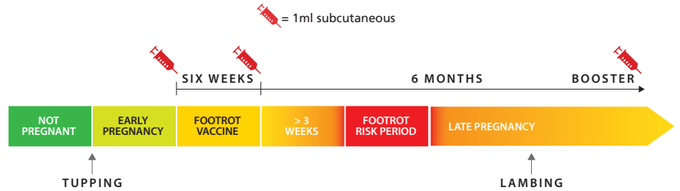
When does Footrot occur? - Anytime!

- More likely to occur in the spring and autumn when warm and wet conditions normally prevail.
- Moist conditions with temperatures above 10°C create the opportunity for *D. nodosus* to survive on pasture or bedding.

Why vaccinate against Footrot?

1. Footrot is a distressing disease causing pain and increasing the labour requirement on farm due to treatment. Therefore reducing the risk of disease through vaccination is key.
2. Whole-flock vaccination is an important part of the Footrot control programme, providing all sheep with an antibody response to the bacterium *D. nodosus.*
3. Footrot vaccine contains **10 strains** of *D. nodosus* providing comprehensive protection against Footrot[1].
4. Sheep do not produce a natural antibody response to *D. nodosus*. This means they will never develop a natural immunity to Footrot, remaining susceptible year after year.

Vaccination protocol



Please note: Revaccination should take place at 6 month intervals in areas with a constant disease challenge

Precautions

1. Flexibility is required to avoid using Footrot vaccine within:
   - Six to eight weeks of shearing
   - Four weeks of tupping and lambing

2. Vaccinate the whole group at the same time

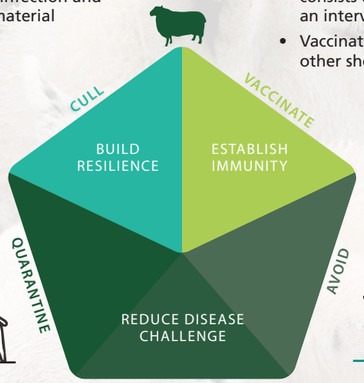
3. Turnout onto clean pasture post vaccinating

The primary course for Footrot vaccination involves a single 1ml subcutaneous dose given two to three inches behind the ear with a second shot given 6 weeks later.

The Five Point Plan Approach

- Cull persistently lame sheep and badly affected/repeat offenders
- These sheep are a drain on resources, a source of infection and are not replacement material

- Can vaccinate lambs > 4 weeks of age
- Primary vaccination course consists of two vaccines with an interval of 6 weeks apart
- Vaccination reduces the risk of other sheep becoming infected



- Separate purchased sheep for 28 days
- When buying in sheep, purchase from a known source (vaccination status etc.)
- Examine and monitor purchased sheep
- Footbath

- Ensure clean grazing
- Separate lame sheep to remove the source and reduce the spread

- Routine hoof paring not recommended
- Foot bathing
- Topical antibiotics, such as sprays, are an effective treatment against scald
- Injectable antibiotics essential for Footrot & CODD