



ROWCLIFFE
VETERINARY PRACTICE

Five Point Lameness Plan for Sheep

Lameness in sheep is a serious welfare concern and is of high economic importance to the sheep industry. Research has estimated that foot rot alone costs an 'average' farmer about £10 per ewe. The cause of lameness in sheep flocks is often predominantly infectious (scald, footrot, and CODD) making it tricky and time consuming to get on top of.

The '5 Point Plan' is a tool to help vets and farmers to develop a farm level multifaceted approach to controlling this complex disease.



Avoid spreading infection at gathering and handling...

- Investing in mobile handling units
- Improving cleanliness and drainage of handling area
- Placing gravel in areas of high footfall to reduce poaching
- Liming areas around water troughs

Quarantine incoming animals

- Keep bought-in stock separate from the main herd for 3-4 weeks
- If possible, run new stock through a footbath and monitor lameness
- Buy from a source with a strict lameness protocol

Treat clinical cases promptly

- Ideally treat within 3 days
- Treatment will vary depending on the cause of the lameness so check with your vet for the most current advice.
- Isolate infected animals A.S.A.P

Cull badly or repeatedly affected animals

- Ewes with foot rot more than once in a season should be marked for culling.
- Repeat lameness causes chronic changes in the foot making the individual more likely to become lame again.
- Genetics also causes some sheep to be more susceptible to becoming lame. Breeding from lame sheep often results in lambs that are more likely to suffer with lameness

Vaccinate to stimulate immunity

- Speak to your vet about how vaccinating might help reduce lameness in your flock.
- As always, vaccinating is the cherry on top of the cake and in order to see the most benefit, all 5 points of the lameness plan should be used simultaneously.

If you have any more questions about identifying, treating or controlling lameness in your flock, please don't hesitate to get in touch. One of our vets would be happy to help.