

# Contrasting views on control of sheep scab

THERE were contrasting views on future sheep scab control. While experts on the disease suggested farmers should learn to manage and live with the disease, vet and farmer, Joe Henry, painted a more optimistic view of how to get on top of and get rid of it.

Professor Richard Wall, from Bristol University, said since scab was reintroduced into the UK in the early 1970s, very little of what had been done to combat the problem had made any difference.

"Eradication is not going to be realistic. We are never going to get everyone acting together, particularly when we are dealing with a devolved Government.

"Scab is not going to go away and approaches to scab need to adapt accordingly."

Prof Wall said vets needed to work proactively with farmers for a future of 'scab management'.

Peter Bates, independent parasitologist, agreed and said: "The chance of eradication has gone.

"Any effort to control scab should start at farm level. Then we can maybe start to control it and find the flocks which were not doing anything about the problem."

## Resistance

Both Dr Bates and Prof Wall highlighted the small number of products available for the control of scab and said these must be used wisely to prevent the development of resistance.

Mr Henry, however, said from his experiences with farmers at his practice, Alnorthumbria Veterinary Group in Northumberland, he was 'more optimistic' about control and eradication of scab.

He explained his practice encouraged farmers to work together when dealing with the problem.