

Scald is the most common cause of lameness of lambs and can lead to foot-rot

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Q What is scald?

Scald in sheep is a perpetual threat to sheep flock lameness levels, health and welfare and ultimately productivity.

It is the most common cause of lameness in lambs, and is not uncommon in adult sheep.

Q What causes scald?

It is caused by opportunistic bacteria that damage the soft tissue between the toes.

Risk factors include high stocking density, grazing long grass, moist conditions (either at housing or at grazing) and common collecting points such as increased time around gates, trees or feed stations.

Q What are the symptoms?

Scald often presents in lambs with very sudden-onset lameness. When examined, animals have inflamed tissue between the toes and a distinctive smell in a similar way to foot-rot. It can be very difficult to differentiate this from early footrot.

Pain and inflammation associated with scald sometimes renders sheep non-weight bearing, which will increase lying time, thus reducing daily liveweight gains.

Q How can you treat it?

While scald in its most simple



Animals with scald have inflamed tissue between the toes and a distinctive smell.

How to manage and control scald in sheep

form is easily treated with antibiotic oxytetracycline spray, it is now recognised that it is a predisposing presentation for foot-rot, caused by *Dichelobacter nodosus*.

Although unresolved, the suggestion is that some cases of scald go on to become foot-rot when left untreated. This happens when a particularly virulent strain of *D nodosus* is the cause, or when

individual animals are susceptible. Therefore, scald management and reduction is an essential part of whole-flock lameness reduction.

Q How can scald be prevented?

Scald can affect up to 40% of animals in a group, so controls are often needed for the whole management group. Foot-bathing can be an effective method of whole-group treatment, but its efficacy depends on:

(a) Identifying the risk factor(s) so they can be reduced or avoided after foot-bathing and

(b) Foot-bathing in an effective manner (see "Ensure foot-bathing is effective").

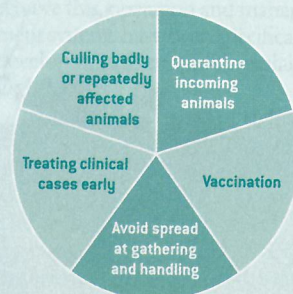
Ideally animals should be moved on to clean grazing after foot-bathing. This is pasture that has been free from sheep for two to three weeks to reduce re-exposure to foot-rot. It should also, if possible, be away from long grass.

Collecting points can be treated with topical products such as powdered lime. Alternatively, feeders should be moved more regularly to avoid the build-up of pathogens. fwlivestock@rbi.co.uk

FIVE-POINT PLAN

* The Farm Animal Welfare Council's objective is to reduce national lameness level to less than 2% by 2021.

The golden rules of footrot management apply to scald control using the five-point plan (see www.fwi.co.uk/sheep-lameness)



The areas outlined in the five-point plan are designed to address the three building blocks for controlling lameness: building resilience, reducing disease challenge and establishing immunity.

ENSURE FOOT-BATHING IS EFFECTIVE

The manner in which sheep are foot-bathed is incredibly important for efficacy.

- * The foot-bath should be sited somewhere dry, ideally with concrete before entry and after exit.
- * Ensure the chemical is at the correct dilution rate.
- * The foot-bath should not become contaminated by dirty feet. Run sheep through a water foot-bath before the bath with active ingredient, or hose feet off.
- * Ensure animals are in it for long enough (read the product guidelines).
- * Stand sheep on concrete after bathing for about 20 minutes until the product dries.
- * Foot-bathing without inspection may also mean animals needing antibiotics – for example, those with foot-rot – may be missed. This will enable them to propagate foot-rot to other animals. With foot-rot, a break occurs at the skin-horn junction. Infection then spreads under the horn tissue, so the wall of the hoof becomes separated and the sole underrun.