

DAMORY LODGE EDWARD STREET BLANDFORD FORUM DORSET DT11 7QT
TEL : 01258 452 626 FAX : 01258 453 548 www.damoryvets.co.uk

Health Plan for the Prevention and Treatment of Lameness in Sheep

Regular prevention:

1. Inspection of all sheep twice a day
2. Prompt examination and treatment of lame animals. If in doubt call the vet for telephone advice or a visit to inspect the animal. Most lame animals, however, can be treated by a trained stockperson.
3. Foot trimming only in cases of lameness or visibly overgrown feet. Too “keen” trimming can do more harm than good.

Main causes of lameness

1. Arthritis

Chronic, mainly in older sheep.

Signs: No foot lesions, sometimes you feel “rough” joints

Prevention: None

Treatment: Painkillers can relieve the pain in mild cases. The animal should be euthanased in severe cases.

2. Soil Balling

Signs: Soil between claws, mechanical irritation, may lead to scald (see below)

Prevention: Keep animals away from wet and muddy pasture

Treatment: Clean interdigital space, spray with Terramycin if raw.

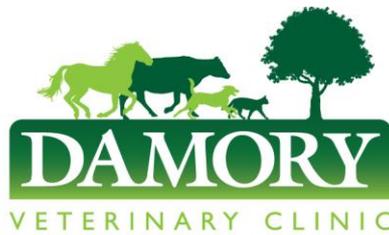
3. Scald

Scald is caused by a bacterium which is everywhere in the environment. It can not be eradicated, but controlled

Signs: Inflamed skin between the toes, initially no separation of horn

Prevention: As soil balling, avoid wet muddy fields. Damp grass can also lead to scald, and it can not always be prevented.

Treatment: Individual animals should be sprayed with Terramycin.
It should be allowed to dry before the animal is going back to pasture.
In a severe outbreak a footbath (2-3 % formalin or 10% zinc sulphate) should be considered (see below).



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4. Footrot

Footrot is an infectious disease. The main bacterium can survive away from the sheep (e.g. on pasture) for only two weeks. Therefore, its introduction can be prevented and it can be controlled and eradicated if present in the flock.

Signs: Separation of claw horn, starting from the inner wall. Limited area or the whole claw can be separated. Foul smell.

Prevention: Closed flock. If free, examine, spray (Terramycin) and isolate all incoming animals for three weeks before mixing with the flock.

Treatment: In a small number of milder cases, careful trimming of separated horn (not to the point of bleeding), followed by daily spraying with Terramycin spray (allow to dry) is sufficient. As these animals are infectious to others, keep them separate.

In more severe cases, injectable antibiotics (long acting oxytetracycline) should be used, followed by careful trimming when the lesions have dried up. This should be followed by a zinc sulphate footbath (10 % solution, once a week for three weeks, see below). Cured animals should go on pastures not grazed by sheep or goats for at least two weeks.

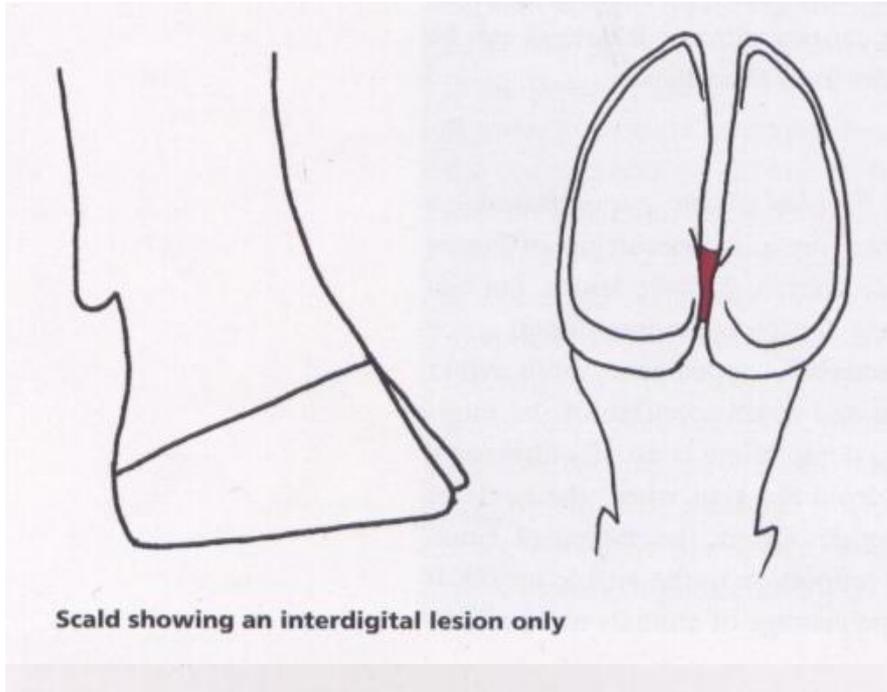
Animals not responding to treatment should be culled in order to end their suffering and to prevent the spread to healthy animals.

5. Abscess/infection

Signs: Severe lameness, often suddenly, individual animal. Often found in the white line. Caused by build up of dirt in the white line or puncture (thorns). Foot hot and swollen. May break through the wall or the coronet band.

Prevention: None.

Treatment: Careful paring, tracking of infection. If the lesion can not be found, poulticing the foot in a wet bandage should be tried and another attempt done after one or two days. If an abscess can not be found and the foot is hot and swollen, an antibiotic injection (penicillin) should be given.



Scald (interdigital dermatitis)

