

FOOTROT PREVENTION & BIOSECURITY



With relaxed trading restrictions and an increased ability to sell sheep with footrot, now is the time for producers to stay 'on the front foot' and develop an on-farm footrot prevention plan.

Following adoption of a new SA footrot program producers have an increased ability to trade sheep affected by footrot. Under the current program producers can trade sheep with footrot to other producers within the state providing they provide prior notification of footrot status. This can be done by one of the following methods:

- National Sheep Health Declaration, in section B Question 3 and 4 (suspect properties must declare virulent footrot).
- Private sales agreement between vendor and purchaser.
- Declaration on an online livestock selling platform.

Considering these changes, it is essential that producers take responsibility and develop sound biosecurity programs to reduce the risk of footrot coming onto their property. It is advised that every producer develops an on-farm biosecurity program to reduce the risk of diseases and pests entering their property (including emerging animal diseases). This document will focus on the preventative measures used to prevent the introduction of footrot.

NATIONAL SHEEP HEALTH DECLARATION

July 2019

Property Identification Code (PIC) of this property

This MUST be the PIC of the property that the stock is being moved from

Attached to accompanying NVD/Waybill No.

SECTION A – Biosecurity Information

1. All consigned sheep are from a Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) accredited property? ☐ Y ☐ N

2. The number of different sources of sheep that have been introduced onto the consignment property in the last 5 years is:

0 (closed flock) ☐ 1-5 ☐ 6+ ☐ Rams Only ☐

SECTION B – Animal Health Information

3. All consigned sheep are from a flock that is free of virulent footrot? ☐ Y ☐ N

4. All consigned sheep are from a flock that is free of benign footrot or scald? ☐ Y ☐ N
If (N) please provide further information below

5. All consigned sheep are from a flock that is free of lice? ☐ Y ☐ N

6. All consigned sheep are from a flock in an ovine brucellosis accreditation scheme? ☐ Y ☐ N

If Yes, Flock Accreditation No. (except Qld) _____ Expiry Date ____/____/____

7. All consigned sheep are Johne's disease (JD) Approved Vaccinates? ☐ Y ☐ N

If Yes, I have been continuously vaccinating all retained lambs in the consignment flock against JD for _____ years. (Vendor-bred sheep only)

8. All consigned sheep are from a SheepMAP flock? ☐ Y ☐ N

If yes, Status _____ Year commenced _____ Certificate Number _____

*See explanatory notes on back page for further information



Introduced sheep may be harbouring bacteria. Just because they are not lame it doesn't mean that they are not carrying footrot.

Epidemiological factors to consider:

As footrot can survive for prolonged periods in the feet of infected sheep, the introduction of sheep onto a property (either purchased or as strays) is the most common route of footrot bacteria entering a property.

The following points should be considered when developing a footrot prevention plan:

- Footrot bacteria can survive for prolonged periods in the claw and interdigital skin (2+ years).
- Footrot bacteria may lay dormant in the hoof for extended periods, with disease expressing upon exposure to favourable conditions. (e.g. sheep purchased from the mid-North showing minimal lameness. Following arrival in the Southeast disease becomes apparent).
- Footrot bacteria do not survive for long in the environment (1-2 weeks).
- Other cloven hooved species can carry and transmit the bacteria including cattle, deer and goats.
- Although less common, it is possible for footrot bacteria to be transmitted on fomites including stock crates, shoes, car wheels etc.
- Footbathing will reduce the spread and establishment of disease but **will not cure** all infected animals. Therefore, footbathing sheep on introduction will not prevent footrot from coming on farm.



Managing lameness to maximise production.



Keeping footrot off the property.

6-point plan to stay footrot free

QUARANTINE

- Buy animals with a National Sheep Health Declaration. Read declaration prior to purchase. **Beware:** Declarations of scald may be early footrot.
- Ideally have sheep pre-inspected for footrot prior to purchase or inspect on arrival.
- Quarantine any new animals until they have been through a spread period, usually the following spring.
- If any lameness is detected investigate as soon as possible.



FENCES

- Ensure fences are secure (both internal and boundary fences).
- Straying sheep (both on to and off of your property) are a significant risk to footrot introduction.
- Efforts need to be made to maintain good fencing which is **both sheep and cattle proof**.



STRAYS

- Sheep that have strayed off your property need to either be quarantined or culled.
- Communicate with neighbours and encourage them to inform you if strays are found. Discourage them from just returning them over the fence!
- If sheep have strayed onto your property a risk assessment should be performed and appropriate measures taken. Straying sheep should have their feet examined and the mob monitored closely for lameness.
- Footbathing mobs that have come in contact with strays may be considered.
- Consider lambing ewes down away from boundaries as lambs are higher risk of getting through fences.



VECTORS

- Beware of cattle, deer and goats in the transmission of disease.



DISINFECT

- Introduced sheep can be footbathed on arrival. Footbathing will **remove** bacterial contamination from feet acquired during transit but will have no effect on chronic lesions.
- Bootwash stations should be available and used for visitors to disinfect footwear prior to entry.
- Visitors should be discouraged from driving personal vehicles around the farm. Clean tires if considered a high risk (recently on other sheep properties) or encourage the use of an on-farm vehicle.



SURVEILLANCE

- If you don't look, you won't find!
- Regular monitoring of all mobs especially introduced sheep or boundary mobs is imperative in detecting early disease.
- Investigate lameness as soon as you notice it.
- Early detection will give you the best chance of isolating the disease and preventing spread.

