

MANAGEMENT OF LAMENESS

Figure 1: A holistic approach to managing lameness.

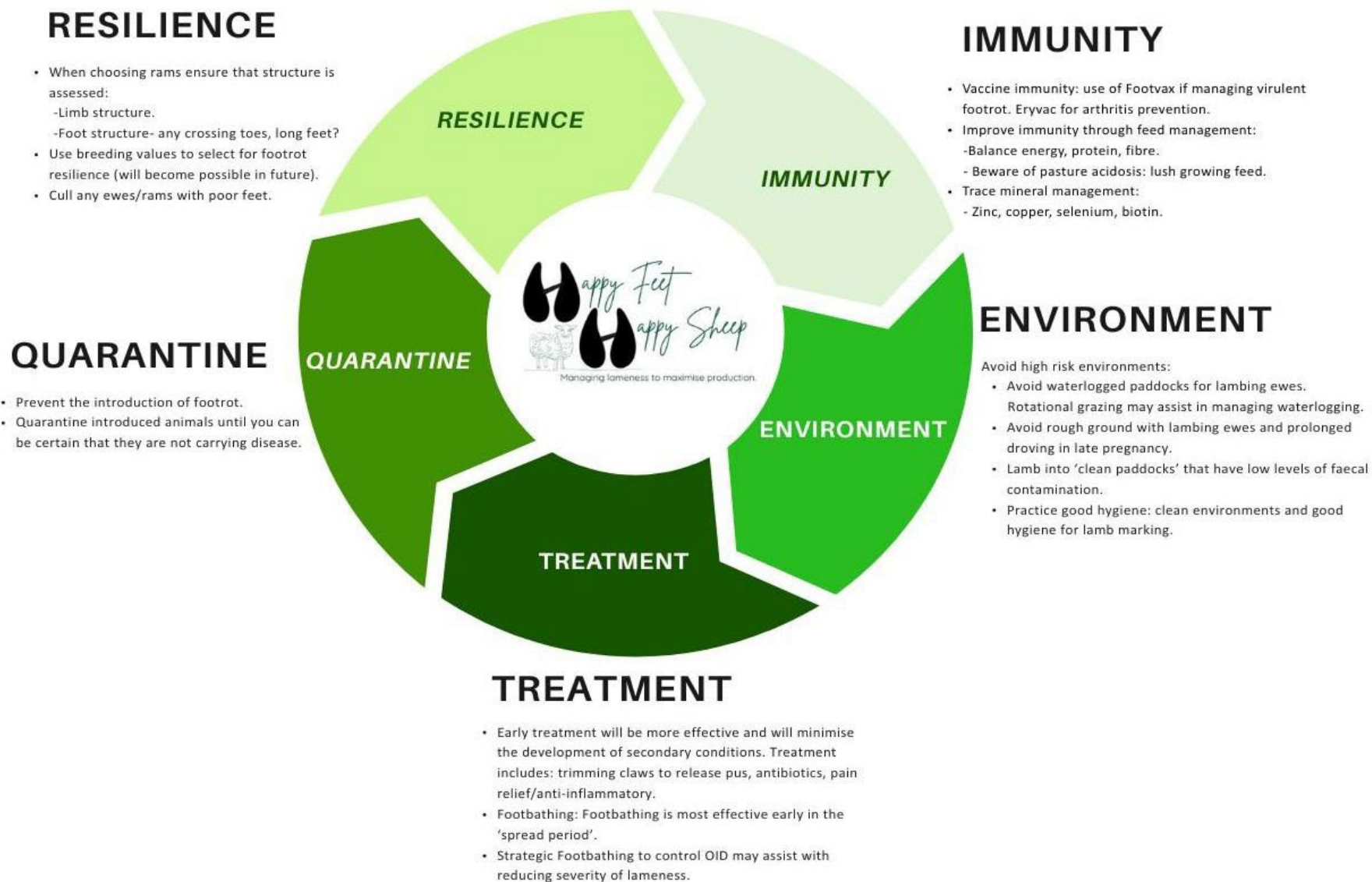


Figure 2: Treatment and control of non-footrot lameness.

CONDITION	APPEARANCE/SIGNS	CAUSE	TREATMENT/PREVENTION
Foot abscess 	Sudden onset lameness. Minimal weight bearing on affected foot. Swelling. May see pus draining from the hairline.	Damage to interdigital skin: -Maceration from wet, muddy conditions. -Mechanical abrasion from stones, stubble, sharp vegetable matter. Heavy sheep more susceptible (common in pregnant ewes)	Treatment: antibiotics. Prevention: Rough ground: Minimise walking heavy, late pregnant ewes on rough ground. Water logging: Avoid grazing late pregnant ewes on waterlogged paddocks. High clover content: high clover content pastures will predispose to foot abscess. May be related to high protein or prolonged wetting of feet. Control of OID: footbathing to control OID may assist.
Toe Abscess 	Sudden onset lameness. Pain when toe is tapped or squeezed.	Infection enters through crack in hoof (often at white line or sole). Infection is confined to the sensitive laminae, not joint (like foot abscess). Overgrown feet predispose to toe abscess. Shelly hoof common cause of toe abscess.	Treatment: paring of sole or hoof wall to allow drainage. Antibiotics following drainage. Prevention: Prevent overgrown feet-foot trimming, genetic selection/culling.
Shelly hoof (white line disease) 	Separation of hoof wall from sensitive tissue underneath the wall. Cavity: resulting cavity packs with dirt. Can lead to toe abscess. May or may not be lame.	Complex, multi-factorial condition. Genetics: has a significant genetic component. Laminitis: laminitis episodes may predispose to WLD (grain feeding or lush pastures). Damage to foot through rough ground or wet conditions. Footrot will often cause shelly hoof due to under-run of the sole and damage to the integrity of the foot.	Treatment: paring the outer wall to remove impacted material and prevent further impaction. Avoid laminitis episodes through management of grain feeding and high performance pastures. Optimise trace element intakes: Selenium, Copper, Zinc, Biotin. Control/eliminate footrot bacteria.
Ovine interdigital dermatitis (OID) 	Interdigital skin becomes hairless, red and moist. Thickening of interdigital skin. Colloquially referred to as 'Scald' but best not used as it is a confusing name. NO UNDER-RUN.	Infection of the interdigital skin with <i>Fusobacterium necrophorum</i> and other environmental organisms. Wet conditions: occurs following prolonged exposure to wet pasture.	Beware: this can look identical to the early stages of benign or virulent footrot. Footbathing: responds well to footbathing in 10% zinc sulphate. Remove sheep from wet pastures.

Arthritis



Lambs: commonly affects lambs 2 days to 4 months.
Often 1-2 weeks after marking.
Lameness: one or more limbs.
Joint swelling: may be subtle initially and then become obvious.

Fibrinous arthritis: Causative agents are *Erysipelothrix* or *Chlamydia*
Suppurative arthritis: Caused by numerous organisms found in the environment or faeces.
Bacteria enter blood stream through umbilicus at birth or following injury to the skin at marking and shearing.

Treatment: Antibiotics- oxytetracycline, early treatment more successful.
Prevention:
Avoid **faecal contamination:** avoid lambing at high stocking rates or in areas where faecal loading is high.
Hygiene at marking. Avoid muddy or dusty conditions.
Minimise handling: Avoid handling lambs for 3-4 weeks after marking
Fly control: Use effective fly control.
Topical antiseptics such as Tri-Solfen recommended when mulesing.
Tail docking: ensure docking at 3rd intercoccygeal joint (leaving the tail butt long enough to protect the vulva in ewe lambs).
Vaccination: Eryvac-vaccinate ewes to provide passive immunity to lambs. Can vaccinate lambs also. Only use if diagnosis of Erysipelas arthritis is made.

Laminitis



Multiple limb: often affects multiple limbs.
Feet may be hot.
No obvious swelling/lesions on the feet.
Kneeling position also occurs with footrot.

High carbohydrate diet: either concentrate feeding or rapidly growing pasture (pasture acidosis).

Treatment: anti-inflammatories.
Adjust diet
Prevention:
Correct induction onto highly fermentable feeds.
Roughage.
Rumen buffers may assist in preventing the development of acidosis.
Lucerne management- graze in 3-5 day rotation with grass pasture or ensure ad lib hay/straw available when lucerne is lush.

Strawberry Footrot



Scabs on the legs, located between the coronary band and knee/hock.
Scabs break open to reveal red, bleeding tissue.
Often no lameness.

Caused by *Dermatophilus congolensis* (same bacteria that causes lumpy wool).
Common in humid, wet conditions.

Antibiotics: oxytetracycline.
Keep sheep dry
Avoid yarding sheep in wet conditions as this encourages disease spread.

Orf (Scabby mouth)



Scabs on the feet, just above coronary band.
Often sheep in the mob with typical scabby mouth lesions also.

Viral disease.
Young sheep commonly affected.
Grazing stubbles or pastures which cause abrasions and allows viral infection.
Prolonged wetting of the feet.

Spontaneous recovery: most animals will recover spontaneously over 3-4 weeks.
Vaccination if a recurrent problem



Foot and Mouth Disease



Often causes mild symptoms in sheep
Lameness
Erosions/ulcers in the mouth, most commonly on the dental pad and tongue.
Inflammation of the coronary band or interdigital skin.

Viral Disease
Spread by infected animals.
Can also be transmitted in meat and dairy products, soil, bones, untreated hides, vehicles and equipment.
Highly contagious
Currently **exotic. Notifiable.**
People returning from overseas are a risk. Ensure you consider this in your biosecurity plan.

Emergency Disease Hotline 1800 675 888

Have a biosecurity plan in place.

Don't feed swill to pigs. Prevent wild pigs from accessing waste.
Ensure livestock coming onto the property have a National Sheep/Cattle Health Declaration.
Recognise the signs and investigate as soon as possible if recognised.

Bluetongue



Reddening and small haemorrhages on the coronary band.
Pain and reluctance to move.
Drooling
Swelling of lips, tongue and face
Ulcers on gums, cheeks and tongue
Death

Arthropod borne viral disease: spread by *Culicoides* midges.
Clinical cases of the disease have been reported in sheep in NSW and Queensland.
Notifiable

Emergency Disease Hotline 1800 675 888

Recognise the signs and investigate as soon as possible if recognised.