



Controlling lameness

Need/issue: Precise solutions for different causes of lameness

Aim: To control lameness to improve flock welfare and profitability.

How to implement:

The 5 key points in controlling lameness are:



1. Treat – essential to correctly identify and quantify the cause and treat accordingly. Routine foot paring is not advised.
2. Separate lame sheep from the flock to prevent infection of healthy sheep.
3. Cull persistent offenders. Records and identification marks are important to identify repeat offenders and don't keep offspring from persistently lame ewes.
4. Quarantine all incoming sheep for 4 weeks to avoid the potential introduction of a new cause of lameness. Sheep should be examined thoroughly while in quarantine. Lame sheep should never be added to the flock.
5. Vaccinate for footrot if persistent issue effecting a considerable proportion of the flock and to help reduce antibiotic use on farm.

Description:

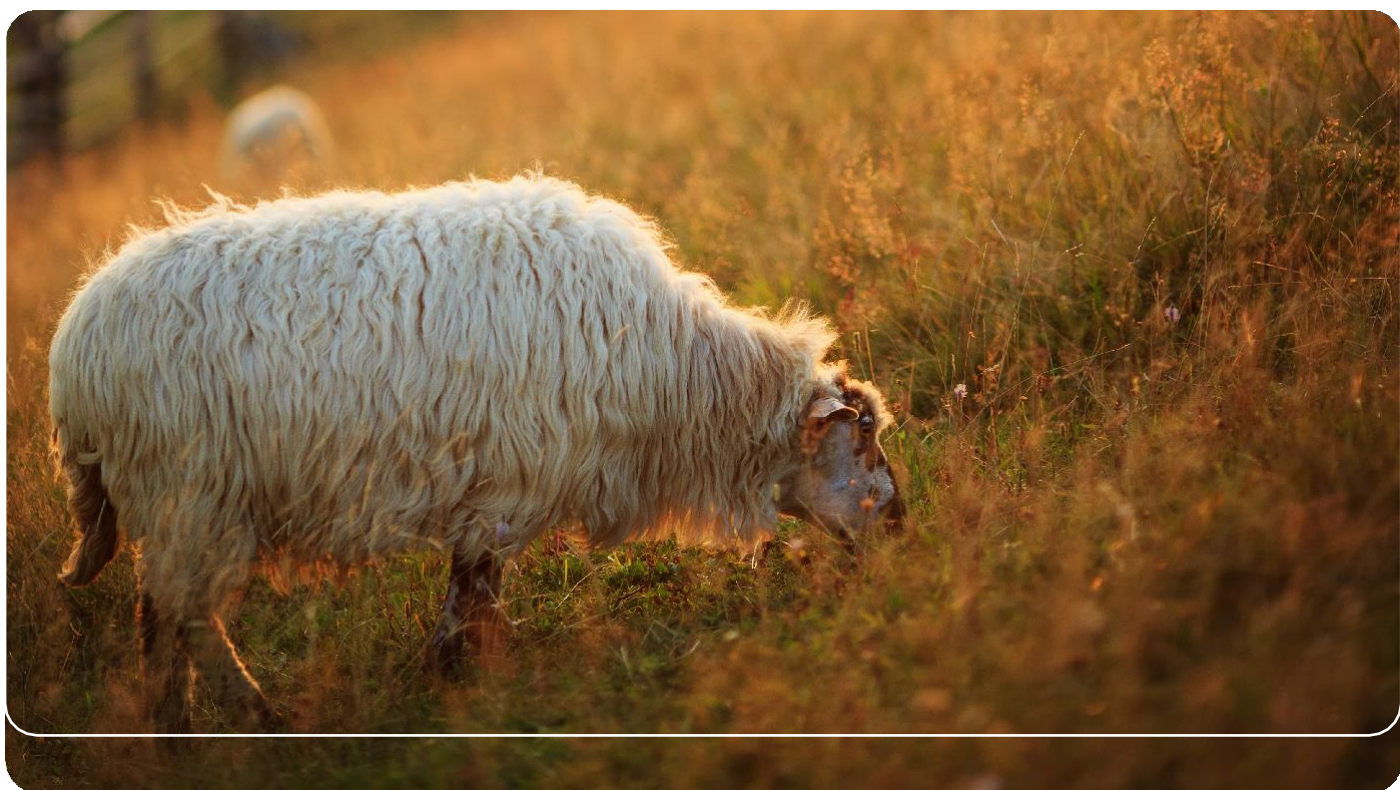
Lameness is a common cause of welfare and economic concerns in many flocks

Chronic lameness reduces ewe and lamb performance

The main causes of lameness are interdigital dermatitis (scald), footrot and contagious ovine digital dermatitis (CODD)

It is important to

- correctly identify the cause of lameness
- quantify how much of the flock is affected.
- set a target reduction level for your farm.



Expected Benefits:

Improvement in animal welfare and reduction in economic losses associated with lameness (body weight gain, body condition score, age at drafting for slaughter fertility etc.)

Prerequisites and/or limits:

- Need to be able to identify the cause of lameness and correct treatment.
- A footbath is required if treating large numbers of animals.
- Good sheep handling facilities required especially if using a footbath.
- A dry clean area/yard (concrete/gravel) is required to stand sheep after footbathing.

Country: Ireland

Meat sheep

Category of Animal: All

Topic:

- Health
- Nutrition
- Management

Level of solution:

- Knowledge
- Practical

Source of information:

- Identifying and treating lameness <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYNQkhX05I>
- Podcast footbath facilities <https://share.transistor.fm/s/Oc6ec23a>
- Podcast scald in lambs <https://share.transistor.fm/s/cfc36a30>
- Webinar <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUnmcRNUTEE>.

