

## Treatment and control of lame sheep – top tips

There are various conditions that make sheep lame, so getting an accurate diagnosis will improve the success of any treatment. If in doubt get advice from an experienced sheep vet.

**Treat promptly** – with foot rot, studies on several UK sheep farms have shown that treatment with an injection of antibiotics and a topical antibiotic spray within 3 days of lameness (however slight) occurring will cure symptoms and reduce the incidence of foot rot in the flock. Later treatment will usually cure the individual but not improve the flock as a whole. It can be difficult to treat animals very promptly but this is one of the most important points.

**Consider lameness as an infectious disease** unless diagnosis shows otherwise (e.g. shelly hoof, abscess) so avoid, or limit, gathering and standing sheep together.

**Separate lame sheep from the sound flock.** Assess and re treat regularly. Only return to the rest of the flock once sound and footbath before return.

**Cull recurrent offenders** (Have your own rule and stick to it – e.g. if you treat a ewe more than twice then cull). These sheep are a constant source of infection to the flock. Do not keep offspring of lame sheep for breeding.

**Consider vaccination for foot rot**

**Feed sheep on hard standing or move feeders regularly** to avoid poaching and contamination of ground. Housing should be kept dry at all times with regular fresh straw.



**Footbath before moving to fresh grazing** that has not had sheep for two weeks, or to housing – IF you have suitable facilities.

**Footbath needs clean dry (concrete) area for gathering and for standing after bathing.** Feet should be clean before the bath – ideally a water wash bath before the treatment one.

**Ensure correct dilution of chemicals** – 2.5 to 3% formalin or 10% zinc sulphate. Lame sheep are unlikely to put affected feet into the bath!