

Footrot in sheep

KATHRYN LAWSON

The wet summer has caused an increase in footrot in sheep. Muddy pastures, lanes and yards are the main causes of the spread of disease which can survive away from the foot for up to 7 days in favourable conditions. In dry conditions the bacteria die rapidly. Each incidence costs up to £8.38 per ewe and so prevention will save money. Keep foot trimming of footrot infected feet to a minimum to prevent any more damage and pain to the animal. Prevention can take the form of foot bathing with Golden Hoof or formalin or vaccinating with Footvax.



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Focused on Farming



DECEMBER 2012 ISSUE

All that glistens isn't gold (it's iron this year)

PETER HARLAND

We think that forage mineral and vitamin levels will be changed in silage crops this year. The high rainfall means that forage mineral levels will be altered for some minerals. Also, due to wet ground conditions, soil contamination of forages is greater than previous years. This will mean that previous years mineral supplementation will need to be re-examined.

Selenium is one mineral that will be reduced in silages this year. Selenium availability to plants depends on rainfall; areas with high rainfall have lower forage selenium content. This is coupled with the problem that selenium can be leached from the topsoil in areas of high rainfall. Also, high rainfall leading to leached soils, can result in low sulphur swards.

Forage mineral analysis is showing that the wet season has resulted in forages that are higher in potassium, phosphorus and magnesium content, so perhaps savings on supplementing these minerals could be achieved. Also, sodium and iodine are carried by rainfall therefore regions with high rainfall contain more of these elements. Where fields have been flooded, grass growth is slowed, which increases herbage calcium concentrations. Again savings could be made here.

High iron values are attributable to soil contamination which on some farms has been unavoidable this year and shows up on silage analysis as ash greater than 10%. In addition, herbage iron is also high in soils that are prone to water logging. Both iron and molybdenum levels increase with rainfall; these can influence copper and selenium status. Contamination of silage with soil iron and molybdenum should be taken into account when assessing their value as copper sources. In these cases cattle are likely to benefit from inclusion of a source of protected copper and selenium. Iron-rich soils are also likely to provide insufficient phosphorus, so even though phosphorus levels may be higher due to the wet year, interactions with iron may mean phosphorus is in short supply. Where animals are grazing, they cannot avoid ingesting excess iron in the soil and so they too may require mineral supplementation.

A mineral analysis will tell you the status of all minerals in your forage. If it is necessary you can then feed a suitable mineral supplement or ask us to design a special mineral and vitamin based on your forage and other ingredients in the diet.

Ask your rep to find out more.

Christmas & New Year Closures



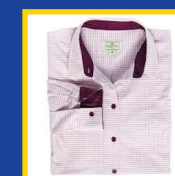
Please organise your deliveries around Christmas. We will be closed on the following days: -

Tuesday, 25th December,
Wednesday 26th

December, Tuesday 1st January

Monthly Offers

Blair shirt, by Hoggs of Fife
£19.00.



Knuckle bone
£11.50 for a pack of 10.



Shires Grooming kit
£5.00 (was £7.99)



We are also stocking a range of motoring accessories such as snow shovels, jump leads, windscreen protectors, de-icer & torches. Don't get caught out this winter.

Dear Dr Ruth...

I'm writing to complain about the state of the grass silage. It's a good job I've got good teeth, 'cos I'm sieving soil through 'em.

At the minute I've got both front feet in the water trough trying to cool 'em down - I'm burning up. Mind you I'm enjoying the goldfish nibbling at my toes, it's a fish pedicure. You humans pay good money for this.

I can see the silage clamp from here. His Lordship is complaining about it heating up. All I know is the food goes off in the troughs and tastes horrid.

And another thing, as you know I'm on the cull list (whatever that is) for cell count. I heard His Lordship say I'd be getting "a ride out" if it didn't get better. Last January, a few of us mooks had problems with cell count. Is there anything we can do 'cos I don't like the idea of a trip to Otley mart!

All the best, Mook 210.

Dear Mook210...

I've had a look at the silage analysis and ash levels are over 10%, so I'm not surprised there's a lot of soil in it. You sound like you're under the weather. I think you might have a problem with mycotoxins in the silage; you're not on your own there's other mooks suffering like you. Apart from sore feet, you may have noticed His Lordship moaning about the bulk tank not being full and him sticking those straws into you at all too regular intervals. Some of you girls may have squity bottoms, not eating or generally feeling unsettled. I'll ask His Lordship to use a silage additive for next year, but for now he'll need to get rid of spoiled feed and clean out leftovers from feeding troughs. Also, he'll need to put his hand in his pocket and buy a mycotoxin binder to put into your rations.

Try not to worry about your cell count. Even though vitamin E was at good levels in silage this year, it disappears in January so that's why your cell count suffers. The chaps at Jamesons put lots of vitamin E in your yummy dairy cake so you won't be taking a trip to Otley market any time soon.

Have a very merry Christmas and make sure Her Indoors keeps off the cooking sherry.

Love Dr Ruth x

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Fencing Contractors, A and S Corner, Easingwold. Call Andrew for a competitive quote: 01347 823645.

Cattle freeze-branding, North Yorkshire. Tel Steve Johnson 07940 064991 or 01347 810980.

Fencing Contractors David Robinson Leyburn 07762 317201

For Sale & Wanted

FOR SALE 2011 June hay, small bales, good order. Offers. Would deliver. Ripon area 07974 695774

FOR SALE 6000 litres Dari Kool bulk milk tank. Excellent working order. Easingwold 01347 821673

FOR SALE Silage block cutter. Forage box. Bale trailer. Greensit 01765 635318

WANTED Part time help required 2/3 days per week on beef fattening unit contact Nigel 07974 740868.

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Knocked up in the cow shed DR RUTH LAWSON

The most common reason why cows don't get pregnant is because they are in negative energy balance. Generally low body condition at this time can result in delayed ovarian activity, infrequent LH pulses and reduced follicular function. Feeding a glucogenic diet can lead to improved egg and embryo quality. Diets are needed that include glucogenic ingredients to help to get the early lactation cow into positive energy balance. Care must be taken to ensure that cows in low body condition are due to energy deficit and are not protein depleted. Firing more energy at cows that are protein depleted will exasperate the problem.

If retained foetal membranes are an issue, supplementation with selenium will help to create a healthy uterus for the embryo to implant. Iodine will also help to prevent retained foetal membranes, abnormal oestrus & early embryonic death. Also correct copper levels will help cows show bulling behaviour and prevent both early and late embryo death.

Protein level *per se* will not affect fertility, but an imbalance of rumen N and rumen energy can delay the first ovulation, increase days open and decrease conception rate. Correct diet formulation will help alleviate these issues.

N3 fatty acids can result in stronger bulling activity, and an increase in conception rate to first service. N3 fatty acids are high in Spring grass, but low in winter rations. Diets containing maize and whole crop silages contribute very little carotene which is needed for cows to show bulling behaviour. Where mycotoxin problems are suspected these can have a direct effect on bulling expression.



Promote fertility in your herd by including: -

- High glucogenic ingredients, these can include high levels of protected starch including rolled maize.
- Protein is balanced in the rumen to minimize effects on egg and embryo development associated with ammonia toxicity.
- Supplementation with n3 fatty acids and/or carotene.
- Mycotoxin binders if there is a problem on farm.
- Copper, selenium and iodine are balanced in the diet.

See our website for more information: -
<http://www.wejameson.co.uk/nutrition-and-fertility/>

Silage analysis – the good, the bad & the ugly DAVID LEWIS

It goes without saying that this year some pretty rosey silages have been made. The constant wet weather and lack of sunshine have given us all some difficulties. But how has the silage analysis been affected and how do you stop it affecting productivity?



Farmers will need to monitor dung and cow health for signs of acidosis. While diets should be formulated to try to maximize rumen stability, sometimes with the feeds available on-farm this is difficult, some rations will benefit from buffers such

as sodium bicarb. Also some silages have struggled for energy and so will need complementing with high energy cakes and blends.

There have also been analyses where oil levels are over 6%. If oil is too high in the rumen, the bugs can't work so well and may reduce their contribution of microbial protein to metabolizable protein total. Effects will be seen on milk fat content too. When looking at ingredients to complement these silages avoid oily feeds such as brewers' grains etc.

Even in the clamp we think silages will continue to change in some cases. Where ammonia-N levels are greater than 15% and pH is over 4.5, the silage can be considered unstable. Unstable fermentations will lead to clamps and consequently TMRs heating, resulting in cows rejecting feed offered to them. Heating silage also leads to nutrient losses; around 50% of sugar may be lost. In a year where sugar levels are low to start with, this isn't good.

Speak to me or your local rep to mitigate these problems.

Silage pH of less than 3.6 indicates that it is very acidic which can result in lower intakes by cows, try to improve palatability by mixing with drier silages or chopped straw and by not over mixing. You could also consider using a buffer to reduce acid levels. Also, wet silages will need dry ingredients added to them to get the DM up to 45%, also avoid moist feeds where silage DM is low.

We have seen some silages with high levels of soil contamination, indicated by ash contents over 10%. Again, effects on palatability may occur, but the greatest threat could come from mycotoxins. This coupled with a wet season means mycotoxin problems will be on the horizon for some farmers. If your cows are not quite performing at the levels you'd like, have a word with us about mycotoxin binders.

We are also seeing some high potential acid load (PAL) figures, and although NDF levels look OK, this may not be structural fibre. High PAL and poor NDF figures will result in poor rumen stability and increased risk of acidosis.

Eating for two or three or four... DR RUTH LAWSON

With feed prices as they are, it's tempting to economize on feeding in late pregnancy. But have a think back to last spring's lambing.

If you had a good lambing with healthy ewes and vigorous lambs, do you really want to take a backward step? If things didn't go so well, maybe you suffered with twin lamb disease or lost lambs because they were weak with no will to live. Perhaps ewes just didn't milk and colostrum was thin and poor quality. It makes economic sense to feed ewes well in late pregnancy. Ewes need correct nutrients for:-

- maintaining and growing the unborn lambs
- developing the udder and milk production
- producing good quality colostrum
- avoiding metabolic disorders, such as twin lamb disease.

At this time, the ewe's energy and protein requirements increase

rapidly; more than doubling for those carrying twins. However, as the lambs grow and take up more room inside, ewe appetite reduces by about 30%. At this time, good quality ingredients should be used to achieve this with no reliance on low energy products. Trough space is also important at this time to ensure all ewes have access to feed including ewe lambs and older ewes.

Meet the rapid increase in ewe energy and protein requirements in the final eight weeks of pregnancy through careful nutritional management, appreciating that mortality is invariably highest in lambs with a low birth weight and/or born to ewes in poor body condition. Ewes underfed in late pregnancy produce lambs with low reserves of brown fat used specifically for protection against hypothermia. Ensure a good supply of vitamin E during pregnancy increases lamb vigour.

Twin lamb disease is down to inadequate levels of available energy and is preventable. Ensure that all ewes are at optimum body condition, this includes making sure wormers

are up to date so that fluke infestations for example can't pull the ewe's body condition down. Keep stress to a minimum, take care if using dogs and avoid changes to feed or environment. Be sure that there's enough trough space so that all sheep are getting their share of concentrates, young ewes and old ewes may need to be kept in a separate group. Try to divide ewes into groups depending on the number of lambs they are carrying and feed accordingly.

Colostrum is formed in the last 4-6 weeks of pregnancy. Thin, pale fore-milk indicates poor pre-lambing feeding whilst thick, yellow colostrum suggests the ewes have been well-fed. Surprisingly, better feeding can boost antibody levels by 25%, resulting in fewer losses from disease. Good nutrition will also ensure the ewe stays fit around lambing as well, with strong healthy ewes more likely to survive a difficult lambing.

Ask your Jameson rep about the benefits of using our Ewedale range of sheep pencils and rolls.

Make sure you have all you need for lambing, ask Kathryn at the trade counter for a lambing checklist.

See our website for more information: -
<http://www.wejameson.co.uk/ewes-in-late-pregnancy/>

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