

# Contagious Ovine Digital Dermatitis (CODD)

This is a relatively new lameness condition of sheep, first reported in the UK in 1997. It is an infectious disease that can spread rapidly through a naïve flock. It is severe and painful and a serious welfare and economic problem to affected flocks.

The cause is not fully understood but spirochaete bacteria, similar to those of bovine digital dermatitis are involved, hence cattle with digital dermatitis can be a disease risk for sheep.

CODD starts at the coronary band (hoof –hair junction) and unlike footrot does not involve the interdigital space.

Infection spreads down the foot separating the horn from the underlying sensitive structures; ultimately the whole hoof capsule may fall off.



*An early case of CODD*



*Loose horn has been carefully trimmed to show the lesion, this is not recommended*

*Some photos have been kindly provided by Professor Laura Green, University of Warwick*

## Treatment

Treatment and control protocols for footrot are not effective for CODD.

Consult your vet and establish a treatment plan for your flock.

This may include:

- Topical antibiotics by spray in individual cases, or footbath of the group. None are currently licensed for use in sheep; they can be prescribed by your vet and carry a standard 28 day meat withdrawal.
- Injectable antibiotics to affected individuals. These are licensed for use in sheep, one (Timlicosin) may only be administered by a vet due to human safety issues.
- PROMPT TREATMENT
- Isolation of affected animals

Vaccination for footrot is not licensed to control CODD and was thought to be ineffective. However recent work has shown this may not be the case. CODD and footrot may both be present in flocks and studies have shown the presence of *Dichelobacter nodosus* (the bacteria responsible for footrot) in the majority of feet with CODD.

## Prevention

- Isolate all bought in animals (including your own sheep returning from grazing away) and footbath straight off the lorry
- Observe for lameness over two weeks
- Catch and examine any lame sheep
- Examine all, if feasible, before joining the main flock
- If in doubt, keep separate
- Avoid co grazing with cattle if any are lame or the herd have a history of bovine digital dermatitis.

## Summary

**CODD is not the same as footrot**

**Get a diagnosis**

**Prepare a treatment and control plan with your veterinary surgeon**

**Treat promptly**

**Isolate affected sheep from sound ones**

**Biosecurity – do not (re)introduce**