

# Smallholders' News

Castle Veterinary  
Group



Smallholders'  
Club

Vets' Welcome

*Morning all, we have been so grateful for the long, warm summer but it would seem winter is finally here! All of a sudden the pile of hats and gloves going through the washing machine at the surgery has taken over! We hope you and your livestock are coping with the change of conditions. This issue of Smallholders' News picks up on the topic of one of our Frequently Asked Questions about lameness in sheep. For those of you with goats or cattle many similar principles apply so we hope there is something useful for everyone. Happy browsing - Amy and Kelly.*

Last issue's quick picture quiz  
Was an image of a ewe's foot  
With a Toe Granuloma!



## A Case review...

We recently meet an elderly ewe at the practice who had a chronic toe granuloma.

A toe granuloma, also known as 'Strawberry Foot' is a protruding piece of granulation tissue (proud flesh) that has grown out from the sole of the foot towards the toe. Toe granulomas most commonly occur as a result of injury or over-trimming. They can also occur following cases of chronic footrot.

Granulomas are tricky to deal with as they often bleed and regrow if they are simply cut off. One solution can be to tie them off at the base with suture material, constricting the blood supply. This should be done by a vet using local anaesthetic. Unfortunately this can also be hit and miss, usually affected sheep have to be sent to slaughter or dispatched by the fallen stock man because the toe never recovers or infection takes hold.

Our top techniques column addresses how to correctly trim feet as part of a lameness treatment. Traditionally farmers trimmed ewes' feet at regular intervals a few times a year, however recent research suggests they should only be trimmed if they are lame. This change is, in part, due to over-trimming leading to toe granulomas but is predominantly because trimming batches of ewes leads to the spread of infection between them on the surface of equipment.

## Legal Aspects of Keeping Livestock

### Fallen Stock

This is the term used for livestock that have died on farm including still-born animals and afterbirth. These animals cannot enter the food chain, and must not be buried or burnt on the holding due to risk of disease spread. Therefore fallen stock must be collected or taken to an approved incinerator, kennels or knacker -man.

Cattle over 48 months old must be tested for BSE.

You can join the National Fallen Stock Scheme which is a voluntary, non-profit farmer led organisation that allows livestock to be sent to an approved premises. Their website can be found at: <http://www.nfsc.co.uk/>



## Top Techniques Column

### Ewe foot trimming

There are many factors that contribute to the rate at which the hoof and sole of the foot grows. These include breed, genetics, soil moisture and nutrition. Feet may need trimming a little more often but they should certainly be done to correct a lameness.

Equipment wise, correct foot paring shears are required and a handling system that can restrain the animals is beneficial if trimming a group. When a handling system is not available sheep are tipped onto their rump (see issue 2 for how to tip your sheep).



Once the ewe is restrained, securely hold the leg of the sheep to inspect the hoof, remove any mud or small stones. Some feet may be particularly smelly... this can indicate footrot. After cleaning the hoof and visually inspecting the hoof you can start trimming.



Remove some of the overgrown hoof wall on the outside edge of each claw and at the toe. You are aiming to leave a 2mm overhang of horn which extends below the level of the sole. It is this outer hard hoof margin which provides the weight bearing aspect of the foot, not the sole. For the same reason do not trim the heel, making this shallower encourages the hard wall of the hoof to overgrow at the toe.

*Continued on the next page...*

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**Did you know??** Alpaca fiber is hypoallergenic! It is like sheep's wool but it is lacking in lanolin...this makes it hypoallergenic and allows it to be processed without the need for high temperatures and harsh chemical washing. It also comes in a range of tones from white to dark fawn so minimizes the need for intensive dyeing.

## Pig feeding

Pigs are omnivorous, so eat a variety of food from both plant and animal origin... Just like us! However, feeding household scraps is strictly prohibited. Adult pigs should be feed a diet of approximately 16% protein, with younger pigs requiring a high protein percentage. As a rule of thumb, pigs should be fed 1-2% of their body weight daily. Adult pigs can utilise fibre so grazing should be encouraged



(often choosing to eat roots instead of hay). If you have a sow that is rearing piglets, she should receive half the combined weight of their litter in feed. This should be built up slowly after farrowing and continued until weaning when the extra food should be stopped. All pigs should have access to clean, fresh water – an adult sow can require 4 litres of water and quadruple that during lactation! This is important to remember as pigs can suffer from 'salt poisoning' which is essentially water deprivation and controlled re-introduction of water must be monitored following this.

## Foot trimming technique continued

Avoid over trimming... stop at the first sign of pinkness! A pink colour indicates that you are getting close to the corium – the sole and hoof wall's blood supply.



Trimming the feet is stressful for the sheep so should be avoided in hot weather and during early and late pregnancy. A top tip for anyone lambing is to look at the feet of baby lambs (from about 3 days) as this gives you an ideal shape to aim for. Remember to address poor feet a little at time, giving the horn a chance to harden, to avoid Strawberry Foot!

## Up and coming events ...

**Lambing Live is back!!** On 28<sup>th</sup> January we will be hosting the event at Penny's farm at Boyton. We propose doing it later in the day to try and accommodate more people so please let us know when would suit you!!

The next issue is our 'Christmas Special' which will be covering...

Calf pneumonia and vaccines.

Camelid anatomy.

Antibiotic choices and why it matters.

Any questions?

Give us a ring: 01566 772371

## Quick Picture Quiz???



Any Idea what is causing this skin condition on the back end of an adult beef cow?

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