
GOATS

PREVENTING AND TREATING LAMENESS

CALU DEMO FARM

FACTSHEET

January 2010



On the 20th of January 2010 Gary Yeomans hosted a CALU workshop at his farm near Abergavenny. This factsheet is based on what was discussed at that workshop.

There are infectious and non-infectious causes to lameness in goats. Non-infectious causes can often lead on to infection. Both types can be prevented and treated. Infectious causes include: Scold, Foot rot lesion, and mange. Non-infectious causes include: lesions from handling, toe granuloma, Shelly foot, overgrown foot, abrasion and abscesses

Prevention

One of the main causes of lameness can start with the overzealous foot trimmer. If the foot is over-trimmed, the corium, which is the horn producing tissue, can be damaged. If this tissue is damaged, the foot is left vulnerable to infection. When trimming feet, try and preserve heel height. You don't want a flat foot; this puts too much weight on the sole of the foot.

Bacterial infectious are acquired through a combination of exposure to moisture and mechanical trauma. Where possible, limit trauma to the feet. If you have dairy goats, rubber mats can be put down in the milking parlour to reduce the trauma on the feet when the animals are turning to be milked.

The frequency of foot trimming depends on your farm; Gary Yeomans foot trims once every 6 months. Don't trim feet in the kidding pens as this can spread infections throughout the herd.

Selecting animals for resistance to lameness is a very successful prevention method; keep records for all your animals that have been affected and that way you will know if certain animals are prone to conditions. When you buy in new animals to the farm remember to segregate them for at least three weeks. Take a good look at the animal's feet before you buy. Also, look at the health of the other animals it has been with.

Vaccinations used on sheep to prevent foot-rot do not work the same in goats as a goat's immune system is very different to that of a sheep's. Gary feeds his goats all year round with Biotin, this feed claims to strengthen the feet making them more resistant to foot rot etc.

Treatment

If you have large numbers of goats anti-bacterial foot bathing can effectively treat early lesions and reduce infections if used properly. Footbaths need to be clean and the solution needs to be mixed in proportion, goats also need to walk out of the bath onto hard standing.

Once a bacterial infection has taken hold it is important to treat as soon as possible, if left the infection could damage the horn producing tissue. Once identified the animal should be treated with pain killers and kept in isolation to avoid spreading the infection through the herd. The animal can be treated through foot trimming and antibiotic injections.



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