



## **NSW State Footrot Report January – June 2010**

NSW was declared a Protected Zone for Footrot in August 2009. However continued vigilance is required to ensure that this status is maintained.

This report is compiled from data submitted by Livestock Health and Pest Authorities on a six-monthly basis.

### **SEASONAL CONDITIONS IDEAL FOR FOOTROT SPREAD**

Widespread rain and lush pasture growth across many parts of NSW have created ideal conditions for the expression and spread of footrot. This has created a good opportunity to find any remaining pockets of the disease and take steps to eradicate it. The season will also favour other foot conditions of sheep especially as the weather warms up.

Field staff have been requested to be vigilant for lame sheep in public places such as saleyards and travelling stock routes. Media releases have been aimed at raising producer awareness of footrot and encouraging them to get a veterinary diagnosis for lame sheep.

### **INVESTIGATIONS & SURVEILLANCE**

#### **Laboratory Investigations**

A review of laboratory submissions to the EMAI laboratory showed there were 15 sample submissions for footrot investigations made in the period from January to 30 July. Three of these were both gel stable and IntA positive and based on field investigations were diagnosed as virulent. These flocks were placed under quarantine and will undertake eradication programs.

#### **Field Surveillance**

Saleyard inspections are carried out in conjunction with work for other programs such as NLIS compliance, as well as responding to detections of or reports of lame sheep in sale pens.

142 saleyard inspections were undertaken for the half year, resulting in 4 detentions/orders in Hume LHPA, and 3 in New England LHPA.

#### **Property investigations**

LHPA livestock health staff respond to producer reports of lame sheep, and also conduct tracing activities from suspect cases detected in saleyards etc.

There were 98 on-farm investigations of lameness in sheep for the period, and various conditions were diagnosed. Of the total, 65 required further investigation (field +/- laboratory) to rule out virulent footrot.

#### **Footrot surveys**

Surveys are undertaken by LHPAs to maintain their claim to protected status. Since January there have been 281 surveys undertaken, with 191 completed in the Lachlan LHPA region. Good activity has been reported from across the state, with New England and Tablelands LHPAs also completing a high number of surveys.

## **LONG TERM QUARANTINES**

The number of properties under long term quarantine has dropped from five to three in the last six months.

- **New England LHPA**

One of two long term quarantines has been inspected and released; the final long term quarantine is awaiting a release inspection once conditions are appropriate. This should occur in spring 2010.

- **Tablelands LHPA**

Public quarantine had to be imposed on three Central Tablelands properties when the owner had failed to take action to eradicate footrot from his flock for a number of years. LHPA staff are to be congratulated for the significant effort put in to manage and resolve this case.

Goulburn district has one long term quarantine. This property is progressively de-stocking and this should be completed by late spring 2010.

- **Central North LHPA**

Plan to inspect their single long term quarantine during spring 2010.

## **NEW QUARANTINES**

Inspectors are investigating lame sheep detected at saleyards and producers are reporting lameness detected in purchased sheep. The majority of investigations are negative for virulent footrot but with the wet conditions there have been some more severe cases of benign footrot, which will remain under surveillance to ensure they resolve as expected.

- **Tablelands LHPA**

One new quarantine was reported. The source of the infection was not able to be identified. This property will be inspected with a view to releasing from quarantine in Nov-Dec 2010.

- **Lachlan LHPA**

One new quarantine was reported for the period – covering three properties. These properties had been quarantined for footrot in the past, being released in 2004. A new eradication program is underway under strict supervision by Inspectors.

- **Hume LHPA**

There was only one true new quarantine reported for the period.

This property is a long standing low grade infection which had previously escaped detection. The other 2 extra infected and quarantined properties in this report are the result of one large infected property being split between three family members. All are undertaking eradication programs.

## **CURRENT QUARANTINES**

Tablelands LHPA expects to undertake release inspections of 5 of its 6 current quarantines in Nov-Dec 2010. The sixth property should have completely de-stocked all sheep by November 2010.

New England LHPA are continuing to work with their single medium term quarantine flock.

Hume LHPA are actively working with all current quarantines, collaborating with private contractors and a private veterinarian one of the larger flocks. One flock is progressively de-stocking and other may be released after spring. The remainder are committed to longer term eradication programs and subject to frequent monitoring.

## **APPROVED VENDOR DECLARATION FOR FOOTROT**

The National Sheep Health Statement (NSHS) has been approved as an owner/vendor declaration for footrot in NSW.

Sheep entering NSW are required to be accompanied by a completed owner/vendor declaration form for footrot, as described in the NSW Stock Diseases Act 1923, Proclamation of 15 September 2000.

The NSHS is the preferred owner/vendor declaration for footrot as it also contains other relevant health information, and is mandatory for the movement of all re-stocker sheep within NSW.

The NSHS is no longer approved as a transported stock statement (TSS) because it is now available directly from the web and is not individually numbered. To satisfy movement requirements, producers must use a properly completed LPA NVD or other document such as a TSS or movement permit from their LHPA.

## **ISSUES**

Western Division reports that conditions are not wet enough, and pasture coverage not dense enough to allow development and spread of footrot as was seen in the late 1980s, however this could change if rains continue into the coming summer and autumn seasons. Rangers have been advised to be watchful for lame sheep.

Movement of store sheep from Control/Residual areas such as Victoria into NSW via saleyards and private sales is an ongoing biosecurity risk to manage into the future.

Media releases on the current footrot risks have been produced by Biosecurity staff in LHPA and I&I and these have been well received. The Australian

Livestock and Property Agents Association (ALPA) assisted by circulating updated footrot information to their members to help raise awareness of the risks, and the regulatory requirements when buying sheep.

Promoting awareness of general biosecurity measures to producers is the only viable means to reduce the risk of footrot being re-introduced to NSW. This must be an ongoing initiative, as it has wide reaching benefits to all primary producers.

With the low prevalence of footrot in many districts in recent years, and the retirement of some experienced field staff, we have reached a critical point in the fight against footrot. It is vital that diagnostic skills are maintained as new staff move into the system.

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