

PROCEDURE – BC & MS DIVISION

Ref: 05/925-INT05/4592



**NSW DEPARTMENT OF
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES**

BIOSECURITY, COMPLIANCE & MINE SAFETY
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Title:	TRACING FOR FOOTROT		
Procedure no:	BC&MS PROCEDURE 2005/014	Effective date:	25/10/2005
Authorised by:	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BIOSECURITY, COMPLIANCE & MINE SAFETY	Authorisation date:	25/10/2005

1. OVERVIEW

This procedure document provides guidance for tracing to and from footrot infected flocks.

2. BACKGROUND

The NSW Footrot Strategic Plan was launched in 1988 with the objective of improving the productivity and welfare of sheep and goats by the progressive eradication of virulent footrot. Since that time there has been significant progress with footrot eradication throughout the state such that over 85% of NSW is now gazetted as a Protected Area for footrot.

3. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all Senior Regional Animal Health Managers, District Veterinarians and Inspectors.

4. POLICY

This procedure document should be read in conjunction with the Tracing for Footrot Policy document (O-002).x Inspectors should also refer to the Stock Diseases Act Detention and Quarantine Procedures Circular (AI 2002/58) and the Footrot Eradication Policy and Procedure (AI Circular 2003/22-23) plus the Footrot Diagnostic Policy and Procedure (Circular AI 2002/103-104).

5. PROCEDURE

5.1 IDENTIFYING TRACES TO FOLLOW UP

5.1.1 Epidemiological investigation: As soon as footrot is newly diagnosed on a property, an epidemiological investigation should be undertaken to determine the likely source of the infection and its duration. This investigation should identify and consider the risk presented by all movements (or potential movements) onto the property including those from neighbouring flocks. In recently infected flocks it may be possible to limit the problem to certain mobs or parts of the property, particularly where it is made up of a number of separate holdings. Where a source cannot be identified, the District Veterinarian (DV) will still be able to allocate a likelihood to each movement as being the possible source(s).

5.1.2 Where the source is identified: In flocks where the source and time of infection is able to be confirmed, a list of sheep and goat dispersals (trace-forwards) from the date of infection along with their destination must be compiled. The source property is the only trace back required.

5.1.3 Where the source cannot be identified: In flocks where the source of infection cannot be determined, the Inspector should obtain a list of introductions and dispersals of sheep and goats for the past two years. Neighbours should also be identified.

5.1.4 Owner records: Unless the DV is satisfied with the owner's records of these stock movements, arrangements need to be made to inspect the records of the owner's agent(s) to ensure that all movements are identified and there is sufficient detail for them to be followed up easily at the other end. Minimum details of movements include a date, the number and a description of the sheep involved, and the name and address of a person who sold or received the sheep. Obtaining information from agents will be necessary for movements through saleyards where the owner does not have copies of vendor declarations for purchased sheep.

5.1.5 Neighbours: A neighbour is any land that adjoins an infected property and includes land which meets at a corner (i.e. the two properties share a strainer post). It includes land separated by a double fenced road and the road. Users of the road are therefore neighbours. For infected properties, a list of neighbours and a map showing their relationship to the infected property should also be prepared. Those running sheep or goats should be identified. The map provides a check to ensure that all neighbours are identified.

5.1.6 Prioritising risk from movements: Sheep movements are to be assessed by the DV for their potential - either as a source of footrot or a risk of spread to another flock. Based on consideration of the factors listed below, the DV should allocate a priority of High, Medium, Low or nil to each movement. These categories correspond to the following:

High: This traced flock has a very high probability of being the source of infection or has almost certainly been exposed to infection by the movement of sheep to it. It follows that for trace backs, there will only be one (or in unusual circumstances two) flocks identified as high priority. There may be multiple high priority trace forward flocks.

Medium: This traced flock is possibly the source of infection or may have been exposed to infected sheep.

Low: This flock is considered to have a low probability of being the source of the infection, or there is little chance that the sheep which have gone to it have been exposed to the disease. It does not mean there is no risk.

5.1.7 Recording: The information from 1.1 to 1.6 is recorded on (or attached to) the Footrot Tracing Summary Report (Appendix 1). This document will provide the basis of the advice of traces to DVs in other districts. It is therefore important that it contains as much of the relevant history as possible to assist any investigation in another district.

5.1.8 SRAHM consultation: Before final signing off on this stage of the tracing process, the DV should discuss the completed Appendix 1 with the Senior Regional Animal Health Manager (SRAHM). The purpose of this joint discussion is to review the process that was followed, to consider all aspects of the investigation, to determine that all the relevant epidemiological information has been captured and to discuss the logic behind the allocation of the priorities. This should provide a higher level of consistency between Boards, at least at the regional level. If agreement is unable to be reached, the Contact Officer for this document will decide.

5.1.9 Advising DVs/Western District Regional Animal Health Leaders (RAHL) in other districts: The tracing notification form (Appendix 4) is forwarded to the DV for the district from / to which there is a trace. The follow-up of high priority traces should not be delayed while the Appendix 1 is being completed or reviewed. The completed Appendix 1 form may be provided to the appropriate DV in due course if required. DVs in other districts should be advised promptly of the outcomes of investigations (when conclusive) so further tracing can be put on hold.

5.1.10 Refusal to divulge tracing information: Cases where full tracing information is not made available by the owner/manager should be referred to the SRAHM.

5.2. ACTION FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF ADVICE OF TRACED SHEEP

The following action should be taken upon receipt of the tracing notification (or the signing off of the tracing summary report by the SRAHM for traces within the same district).

5.2.1 Traceback movements

- The traced owner should be notified by letter that there is an association between his/her flock and the infected flock (Appendix 2a, 2b or 2c). The traced owner should confirm (or at least not deny) that the movement occurred.
- Arrangements should be made for a property visit to collect information from the owner and to inspect the sheep in the case of high and medium risk traces. This visit should occur within 2 weeks for high risk traces and within 4 weeks for medium risk traces. Low risk traces may be investigated within the next 12 months as part of the targeted/randomly selected surveillance program within a district. This priority may change where advice is subsequently received from the original DV that no other source of infection has been identified. In this case an inspection should occur soon after receiving that advice.
- In the case of high risk traces, it is the owner's responsibility to have a property visit within 2 weeks. If this does not occur the flock is quarantined with a S. 8 quarantine order. If the inspection of high risk flocks is going to be delayed beyond this 2 week period, this should be discussed with the SRAHM. Quarantine is not routinely applied to medium or low risk flocks, but the obligation to notify disease must be emphasised to those owners. They are also told that this warning must be taken into consideration when recommending action should a failure to notify occur. Where investigations indicate that a medium risk flock is the most likely source of infection, it is appropriate to quarantine if an inspection is not undertaken within 4 weeks. This action should first be discussed with the SRAHM.
- The flock history should consider:
 - Management – is the flock closed/self replacing or is there sheep trading activity?
 - Proximity to other known infected flocks within the previous 2 years?
 - Are cohorts of the trace-back sheep still on the property?
 - Have there been other dispersals which may have led to infection in other flocks?
 - Have suppressive footrot treatments been used on the property?
 - Environmental considerations?This is interpreted in the context of the information provided in the tracing notification form and the tracing summary if provided. Information is used to plan how to undertake the inspection.
- Property inspections in accordance with the diagnostic policy must be undertaken in high and medium risk flocks. It may involve a paddock assessment of all mobs to identify those mobs that should be brought in for examination. Priority should be given to trace or cohort sheep if present. It will involve the turning and examination of a minimum of 100 sheep in suspect mobs with foot scores recorded. Laboratory culture can be considered if lesions are detected. A paddock assessment of an appropriate number of mobs with examination of any lame sheep is appropriate for low risk flocks during or following a suitable footrot spread period.
- Where footrot is detected, action proceeds in accordance with the Footrot Eradication Policy and Procedures circulars.
- Where footrot is not confirmed, it may be that the DV believes that footrot is not present in the flock, or that environmental conditions do not favour the expression of footrot and that a repeat inspection is required.

- Before the DV can classify a high risk trace as negative, they must discuss the history and results of the investigation with their SRAHM and agree that such action is appropriate. This SRAHM consultation is not required for the DV to classify medium or low risk traces as negative.
- The DV must report the results of all trace investigations to the DV who originated the trace.

5.2.2 Trace-forward movements:

- Similar actions to Trace-back investigations should be taken.
- A specific consideration of the flock history is: are any trace forward sheep still present?
- Arrangements should be made for a property visit to collect information from the owner and to inspect the sheep in the case of high and medium risk traces. This visit should occur within 2 weeks for high risk traces and within 4 weeks for medium risk traces. Flocks identified as low risk traces may be investigated within the next 12 months as part of the targeted/randomly selected flock paddock inspection program within a district.
- Again, before a high risk trace can be dismissed, SRAHM endorsement for that action is required.

5.3. ACTION IN NEIGHBOURING FLOCKS

- An assessment should be made of the risk of sheep straying from or to neighbours as potential sources of infection.
- Risk assessment should allocate neighbours as high, medium or low with follow up investigations in accordance with policy as outlined above for traced sheep.
- Form letters for notifying neighbours of the imposition and release of quarantine are attached in Appendix 3.

5.4. LETTERS TO OWNERS

The attached letters are provided as a guide. They contain essential information to be conveyed to neighbours or owners of traced sheep in certain circumstances. DVs are able to vary the wording of these letters or add things to meet local needs. However, the essential messages must still be expressed clearly in modified letters.

5.5. REPORTING AND RECORDING

- The DV must record all traces on an owner file for each quarantined property.
- The DV who originates a trace must keep a record of all traces that have been finalised. Finalised traces should be recorded as positive (source of footrot identified or infection confirmed in traceforward sheep), or negative (no evidence of footrot in traceforward or traceback sheep). This includes both traces within a Board and traces to other Boards.
- The DV who receives a trace should report the outcome to the DV who originated the trace within two weeks of the visit. The tracing notification form can be used.
- Should the epidemiological picture on the property change as a result of these further investigations, relevant information must be passed on to DVs with unresolved traces.

- Where no action appears to have been taken to finalise high and medium risk traces after a reasonable time, the DV is to refer the problem to their SRAHM for them to follow up with their appropriate counterpart to get information from the DV in the other district.
- Boards are to include a summary of the outcomes of traceforward/traceback investigations in their Annual Footrot Return. The likely source of infection should be stated for each infected flock in the Annual Footrot Return

6. DEFINITIONS

Cohort: group of animals sharing common land and facilities.

7. RELATED LEGISLATION

Stock Diseases Act 1923

Stock Diseases Regulation 2004

8. RELATED PROCEDURES

- AI 2002/104 FOOTROT DIAGNOSTIC PROCEDURE
- AI 2003/23 FOOTROT ERADICATION PROCEDURE
- AI 2003/24 FOOTROT NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

9. RELATED DELEGATIONS

None.

10. RELATED DOCUMENTS

None.

11. REVISION HISTORY

None.

12. DATE OF NEXT REVIEW

As required.

13. CONTACT OFFICER

Issues Leader, Flock Health. Telephone (02) 6391 3248

Attachments

Footrot Tracing Summary Report (Appendix 1)

Property Tracing Advice forms (Appendices 2a, 2b and 2c)

Neighbour Quarantine Advice/Release letters (Appendices 3a and 3b)

Tracing Notification Form (Appendix 4)

Appendix 1

Footrot Tracing Summary Report (RLPB name)

Owner's Name

Property Address

P I C:..... Date of detection... ..

Name of owner's Agent(s).....

Epidemiological considerations:

Description of virulence, duration of infection, flock history etc.

.....

Introductions - last 2 years (sheep, goats)

Date	No	Description	Source	RLPB	Priority	Comment

Dispersals – last 2 years or since confirmed source identified

Date	No	Description	Destination	RLPB	Priority	Comment

Neighbours – property map with neighbours attached

Name	Property	Sheep	No.	Priority	Comment

District Veterinarian.....

SRAHM:.....

Date.....

Date:

Appendix 2a

PROPERTY TRACING ADVICE FORM

LETTER TO OWNERS OF PROPERTIES WHICH HAVE SOLD HIGH RISK STOCK TO OR RECEIVED HIGH RISK STOCK FROM A FOOTROT INFECTED PROPERTY.

Dear

You are advised that

.....

(Name and Address of Property)

has been quarantined on account of footrot and I have been advised that you sold the following stock to/received stock from* this property.

Date: Number: Description of stock:

If you do not believe this movement occurred please advise me as a matter of urgency

The movement has been assessed as being high risk meaning that your flock has a very high probability of being the source of infection or has almost certainly been exposed to infection by the movement of sheep to it.*

This information should be treated as confidential to (the owner of property.....). This information cannot be passed on to other people, made public or used for any other purpose, other than to assess your own flock disease risk.

This notice is given to you so that you may take such steps as may be necessary to prevent the spread of disease within or from* your flock.

It is suggested that you check your stock immediately and report any lameness or foot abnormalities to this office. You are reminded that footrot is a notifiable disease and if you do suspect there is footrot in the flock, then you should advise an Inspector as soon as practicable.

You are requested to cooperate with an Inspector to have your sheep examined for footrot within the next 2 weeks. If you do not cooperate to have your sheep inspected within this time, policy requires quarantine to be imposed until it is established that footrot is not present in your flock.

Sheep should not be moved off the property until this inspection has taken place.

In the meantime please do not undertake treatment of any sheep, particularly by footbathing as in some cases this may mask existing footrot, thereby delaying proper diagnosis and allowing spread within the flock.

For further information and assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned at the Rural Lands Protection Board.

Yours faithfully

District Veterinarian
Enc: Leaflet(s) on footrot.

* delete according to whether trace forward or trace back.

PROPERTY TRACING ADVICE FORM

LETTER TO OWNERS OF PROPERTIES WHICH HAVE SOLD MEDIUM RISK STOCK TO OR RECEIVED MEDIUM RISK STOCK FROM A FOOTROT INFECTED PROPERTY.

Dear

You are advised that

.....

(Name and Address of Property)

has been quarantined on account of footrot and I have been advised that you sold the following stock to/received stock from* this property.

Date: Number: Description of stock:

If you do not believe this movement occurred please advise me as a matter of urgency

The movement has been assessed as being *medium* risk meaning that your flock is possibly the source of infection or may have been exposed to infected sheep*.

This information should be treated as confidential to (the owner of the property). This information cannot be passed on to other people, made public or used for any other purpose, other than for you to assess your own flock disease risk.

It is suggested that you check your stock immediately and report any lameness or foot abnormalities to this office.

Quarantine will not be imposed at this stage. However, you need to be aware that footrot is a notifiable disease under the *Stock Diseases Act 1923* and if footrot is found as a result of an inspection that is not initiated by you, then regulatory action including the possibility of prosecution may result. This is why you are encouraged to check your stock for lameness or foot abnormalities and report it to an Inspector. Failure to follow this advice will not be viewed favourably if footrot is detected at an inspection initiated by an Inspector.

An Inspector will contact you to arrange the inspection of your flock within the next 4 weeks. In the meantime please do not undertake treatment of any sheep, particularly footbathing as this may mask existing footrot, thereby delaying proper diagnosis and allowing spread within the flock.

For further information and assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned at the Rural Lands Protection Board.

Yours faithfully

District Veterinarian
Enc: Leaflet(s) on footrot.

* delete according to whether trace forward or trace back.

PROPERTY TRACING ADVICE FORM

LETTER TO OWNERS OF PROPERTIES WHICH HAVE SOLD LOW RISK STOCK TO OR RECEIVED LOW RISK STOCK FROM A FOOTROT INFECTED PROPERTY.

Dear

You are advised that

.....

(Name and Address of Property)

has been quarantined on account of footrot and I have been advised that you sold the following stock to/received stock from* this property.

Date: Number: Description of stock:

If you do not believe this movement occurred please advise me as a matter of urgency

The movement has been assessed as being *low risk* meaning that your flock is considered to have a low probability of being the source of infection or that there is little chance that the sheep which have gone to it have been exposed to the disease. There is however, some risk and you should act on this advice.

This information should be treated as confidential to (quarantined owner.....). You cannot pass this information on to other people, make it public or use it for any other purpose, other than to assess your own flock disease risk.

It is suggested that you check your stock immediately and report any lameness or foot abnormalities to this office.

Quarantine will not be imposed at this stage. However, you need to be aware that footrot is a notifiable disease under the *Stock Diseases Act 1923* and if footrot is found as a result of an inspection that is not initiated by you, then regulatory action including the possibility of prosecution may result. This is why you are encouraged to check your stock for lameness or foot abnormalities and report it to an inspector. Failure to follow this advice will not be viewed favourably if footrot is detected at an inspection initiated by an inspector.

An Inspector may contact you to arrange the inspection of your flock sometime in the future as part of the routine surveillance for footrot within the Board.

For further information and assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned at the Rural Lands Protection Board.

Yours faithfully

District Veterinarian
Enc: Leaflet(s) on footrot.

* delete according to whether trace forward or trace back.

Appendix 3a

NEIGHBOUR QUARANTINE ADVICE LETTER

(Note that this letter does not provide for the possibility that the neighbour is the source)

To (Name and Address of Neighbour)

ADVICE OF SCHEDULED DISEASE TO ADJOINING OWNERS

This letter is to advise you that footrot in sheep and goats, a proclaimed disease under the Stock Diseases Act 1923 is present or suspected of being present on the land described below which has been placed under quarantine.

It is understood that you occupy land adjoining the affected area. This advice is given to you so that you may take steps to prevent the spread of disease to ensure that stock on your land do not become affected. **This information should be treated as confidential to the owners of the Holding described below. This information cannot be passed on to other people, made public or used for any other purpose, other than for assessing and minimising your own flock disease risk.**

DESCRIPTION OF LAND

Affected Holding

(Signed)

Inspector, Stock Diseases Act, 1923

Date

The following comments and suggestions are offered for you to consider.

- . **CHECK YOUR STOCK IMMEDIATELY.** Sheep and goats are susceptible stock.
- . **Keep Footrot Out** - check boundary fences shared with the quarantined property. If necessary remove susceptible stock from paddocks at risk from straying of potentially infected animals.
- . **Maintain Surveillance** - Carefully and continuously monitor your stock for any sign of lameness. Check your stock again during a suitable footrot challenge period (i.e. when it is warm and moist underfoot) which is the first time that footrot may become apparent. Notify your RLP District Veterinarian of any sign of lameness.
- Footrot is a notifiable disease under the Stock Diseases Act 1923 in New South Wales. If footrot is found at an inspection that is not initiated by you, then regulatory action including the possibility of prosecution may result. If footrot is detected and you have not reported a problem, this advice to check your stock and report any foot abnormalities or lameness would be taken into consideration when recommending any appropriate penalty.
- Based on an assessment of the risk the adjoining property presents to your flock, the Rural Lands Protection Board may contact you in the near future to inspect your sheep for footrot.
- Please do not throw any stray sheep back over the fence to your neighbour. Please notify the owner if you have his/her sheep so he/she can come and pick them up.

For further information or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact your local Rural Lands Protection Board.

Appendix 3b

NEIGHBOUR QUARANTINE RELEASE LETTER

(Neighbours should be subsequently informed when adjoining property is released from quarantine.)

To: (Name and address of neighbour)

This is to advise that (.....) which was quarantined on account of footrot in sheep or goats, has now been released from quarantine.

Signed
Inspector, Stock Diseases Act, 1923
Date

Appendix 4

Footrot Tracing Notification

Footrot has been detected on the following property

Owner's Name
Property Address:
.....
Date of detection.....

The following tracing information applies to the RLPB

Trace Back/Forward*

Priority :
Owners Name :
Property :
Date of movement : Number of stock :
Description :
Comments :

District Veterinarian..... RLPB

Date.....

To be returned to (fax number):.....

Result of Tracing

Footrot was/was not* detected on the traced property.

Date of inspection

District Veterinarian..... RLPB

Date.....

* Delete which is not applicable



NSW DEPARTMENT OF
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

WRITTEN INSTRUMENT



BC&MS PROCEDURE: 2005/014
Ref: INT05/4592

SC Ref: 05/-/WI
DV Ref: -/86/-

TRACING FOR FOOTROT

The attached document is a **WRITTEN INSTRUMENT** issued with the concurrence of the Director-General of NSW Department of Primary Industries under Clause 8.3 of Memorandum of understanding between the Director-General of NSW Primary Industries and State Council of Rural Lands Protection Boards.

[APPROVED]

[APPROVED]

for B D BUFFIER
DIRECTOR-GENERAL
NSW DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY
INDUSTRIES
Date: 10/10/2005

S ORR
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
STATE COUNCIL
RURAL LANDS PROTECTION BOARDS
Date: 25/10/2005