

Treat footrot

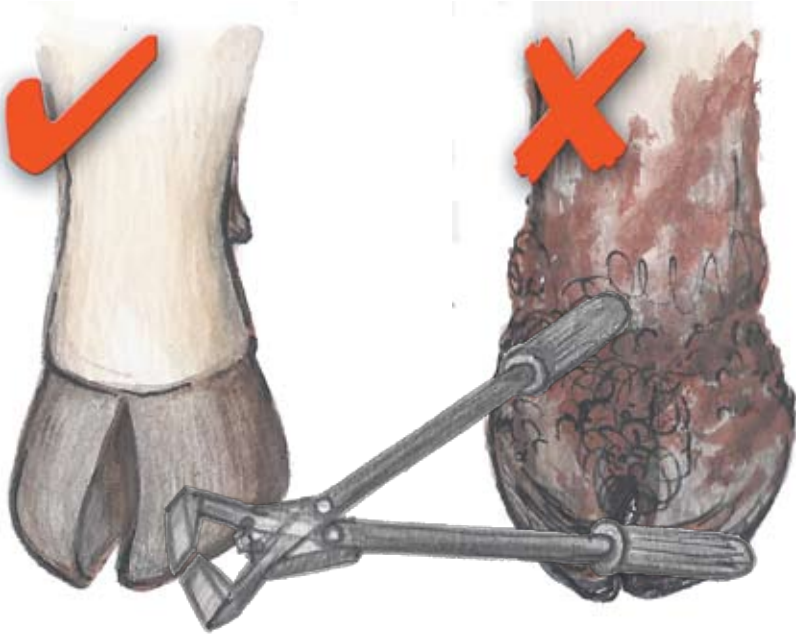
Cloven-hoofed animals, such as cattle, sheep and goats have footrot when the soft tissue of their toes has infection. During rainy seasons, the kraals where animals sleep are often wet and muddy. This is an ideal place for the footrot bacteria to grow. If animals spend a lot of time with their hooves covered in mud, they can easily get the disease.

What bacteria are involved?

You find a bacterium called *Fusobacterium necrophorum* in soil, manure, etc. This bacterium settles in the soft tissue between the toes. A second bacterium (*Bacterioides nodosus*) then enters this tissue. Both bacteria have to be present to cause footrot. The bacteria need moisture, warmth and a place without oxygen (anaerobic state) to live. Footrot bacteria can live in the cracks on animals' feet for a long time. This means that an animal can be a footrot carrier and not show symptoms.



effectively



You can often confuse foot abscesses and foot scald with footrot. When sharp things stick into animals' hoofs, they can cause abscesses. Foot scald is not always related to footrot, but can lead to footrot developing.

The sources of footrot are:

- Introducing a new animal with footrot to the herd/flock
- Carrier animals that have a relapse
- Infected premises.

How do you treat footrot?

There are many ways to treat footrot. These products have helped a lot to fight footrot:

- zinc sulphate
- footrot vaccines
- portable handling equipment.



The footrot organism does not like oxygen. If you bring oxygen into their surroundings, it will help get rid of the problem. It is important to keep the animal's feet trimmed and to remove overgrown hoof tissue. Less mud and manure will then get stuck between the hooves.

Always separate the animals with footrot from those without symptoms. Be careful, you can spread footrot through:

- hoof trimmers
- pocketknives
- other equipment.

Footbaths that contain 10% zinc sulphate will help a lot. It is important to clean the affected area as often as possible. You can use an antiseptic solution, such as Savlon. The following antibiotics can help fight footrot:

- Hitet 120 (Reg. No G1316 Act 36/1947 / Namibia: NSR 168),
- Hitet 200LA (Reg. No G3039 Act 36/1947), and
- Hitet 300LA (Reg. No G2372 Act 36/1947 / Namibia: NSR 911)

Supona aerosol (Reg. No G411 Act 36/1947 /Namibia: NSR 740) is the perfect topical treatment after you have cleaned the infected area. It keeps the flies away and kills the bacteria that may have survived.

Footrot vaccines may help take away the problem. You can get the vaccines, upon request, from Onderstepoort Biological Products. It is expensive and takes a lot of time to make the vaccines. The community must therefore need enough doses before they make the vaccine.

How to prevent footrot

The least expensive method to control footrot is to keep infected animals away from clean flocks. The most common reason for footrot on farms is because farmers buy new animals that are infected. When you buy new animals, keep them away from the rest of your flock. It is safest to treat the new animals as if they have footrot.



For more information, contact Dr Pumzile Qwalela from Bayer Animal Health at 011 921 5870. **UM**

