

Book and CD-ROM Reviews

Lameness in sheep

A Winter (2004). Published by The Crowood Press, Ramsbury, Wiltshire SN8 2HR, UK. 160 pp Hardback (ISBN 1 86126 721 5). Price £16.99.

Lameness is without doubt one of the most challenging welfare issues the sheep farmer has to address and some form of the condition occurs in some sheep on most farms much of the time. It may cause acute pain for prolonged periods and chronic pain and distress for months or even years. Yet it is often neglected and is therefore one of the most common reasons for prosecutions for cruelty.

Many farmers spend hours of backbreaking work attempting to gain some degree of control over the many disease conditions that may cause sheep to become lame. Unfortunately, in many cases - often because of a lack of knowledge or expertise - these labours are frequently less than successful and occasionally even more damaging than the original condition. It is welcome, therefore, to see a text especially for those having to deal with the problem in their flocks, written by a veterinarian who is an acknowledged expert in the field and who has had experience of dealing with the problem in her own flock as well as in those of her clients.

Dr Winter points out the serious welfare issue that is lameness and explains why lame animals should be dealt with promptly and effectively to minimise the severity and duration of the pain involved. Sadly, because of economic pressures, many farmers do not consult their veterinary surgeon for advice on lameness so Dr Winter's advice on how to diagnose, treat and control lameness is therefore particularly helpful. She gives a detailed description of those diseases most likely to affect different age groups of sheep and points out the importance of appreciating that many conditions - such a footrot - are flock problems and not just problems of individual animals and must therefore be dealt with accordingly. The importance of flock bio-security and quarantine measures, so vital in keeping flocks free of infectious forms of lameness, is explained.

The most common infectious conditions such as scald and footrot and the relatively recently diagnosed condition of contagious ovine digital dermatitis (CODD) are dealt with in some detail as befits their importance. Some of the less common but nevertheless distressing conditions that may affect individual sheep - such as pedal joint abscess and granuloma - have short chapters on their own. Dr Winter points out the serious and frequently permanent damage that may be done to sheep by the over-vigorous paring of feet - probably one of the most common and totally avoidable causes of lameness and illustrates techniques with a series of black & white and colour photographs. There is a chapter detailing methods of minimising lameness in the flock - prevention being better than cure. A useful flow chart provides an aid to diagnosis and another diagram shows the steps necessary when attempting to eradicate footrot from

those 'closed' flocks most likely to be successful in this very worthwhile venture.

The text is well illustrated with diagrams that are simple and helpful. Clinical conditions generally benefit from colour photography, which of course is expensive, but some of the colour plates in this book would have been adequate in black and white - such as those showing trimmed feet - and a number of the black and white photographs would have been better in colour or else omitted altogether as they are unhelpful. It is a pity that the pictures in the colour section - many of which are excellent - were not numbered and referred to in the text.

However, these are minor criticisms of what is an excellent and highly practical book that should be on the bookshelf of every sheep farmer, however young or however experienced.

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BSAVA Manual of Canine and Feline Endocrinology, 3rd edition

Edited by CT Mooney and ME Peterson (2004). Published by BSAVA Publications, Quedgeley, Gloucester GL2 2AB, UK. 248 pp Hardback (ISBN 0 905 214 722). Price £49.00 (Members), £75 (Non-members).

Despite sounding like notes on companion animal endocrinology for preclinical Veterinary students, this book is clearly very clinical in content and has the stated aims of having been written with vet students, nurses, general clinicians and specialists all in mind. It is the third edition in this BSAVA series and, since it follows its predecessor by six years, there is much new information available on diagnostics and therapeutics. It may seem a tall order to be able to satisfy the needs of such a diverse readership and also be bang up to date on technical detail, but the secret seems to be in the book's organisation. It contains some twenty - five chapters. In the first section, three chapters cover hormone assay theory - typical concentrations, conversions and generalised test procedures, while the next section has six chapters, which each recommend approaches to veterinary investigation of a common abnormality such as polyuria and hypokalaemia. In the next section each of the chapters explores a common endocrinopathy or syndrome associated with a particular hormone system, for example hypercorticism or hypothyroidism, while each of the chapters in the last section describes an uncommon endocrine disorder, such as dwarfism, or one of emerging importance. I found the book to be beautifully presented in an accessible, easily digested format with much of the key information and diagnostic processes highlighted separately from the main text. Despite a large list of contributing authors, which help give it an international appeal, the book has been well edited and there is good consistency of style between chapters. Thus,