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# A SIMPLE AID TO FOOTROT CONTROL

By J. A. MALLETT

**T**WO bags of superphosphate—suitably placed to form a combined seat and sheep-holding cradle—have enabled a Bridgetown farmer to carry out extensive footrot control work with only a fraction of the physical strain which this task usually demands.

The drastic paring and careful examination of every foot of every sheep in the flock is an essential feature of any footrot control measures.

This entails man-handling each sheep into position followed by lengthy sessions of bending and stooping which make severe demands upon the stamina of the operator.

After some hours of foot-paring, even the most conscientious worker is apt to lose much of his efficiency, for his tired feet and aching back are liable to distract his attention from the search for footrot symptoms.

Realising this, manufacturers have designed and marketed several sheep-holding cradles of different types but the cost of some of these models puts them beyond the consideration of small flockowners.

While visiting the property of Mr. W. S. Bagshaw at Bridgetown recently, Mr. Bagshaw mentioned that, after various "trial and error" methods aimed at making the task of foot-paring easier, he had found that two bags of superphosphate leaning at a slight angle against a wall, or against a stack of filled bags, gave excellent results.

The superphosphate was used as it was already in the shed and convenient—bags filled with sand, earth or even sawdust would probably be equally effective.

The bags are placed about ten inches apart as shown in the photograph. A sheep, upended and with its back supported by the bags, will remain in position without struggling, even when it is not held. The operator can sit on one of the bags and pare either the fore or hind feet with a minimum of strain and exertion.



Fig. 1.—Two bags of superphosphate (left) hold the sheep in position for foot examination (right).





Fig. 2.—Stock Inspector J. R. Blackburn demonstrates how the paring of fore or hind feet may be carried out with the operator sitting, relaxed and comfortable, on one of the bags.

Stock inspectors with a wide experience of foot-paring, tell me that this simple device makes the footrot control work at least 100 per cent. easier than the old method of handling the sheep on the shearing floor.

Realising that the avoidance of undue fatigue can play an important part in contributing to the success of the campaign against footrot, we commend this simple device to other farmers who are tackling the disease.

### FOOTROT IN SHEEP

The Chief Veterinary Surgeon (Mr. C. R. Toop), reports that farm to farm surveys for the detection of footrot in sheep are continuing, but the work has been greatly retarded by the extremely wet seasonal conditions earlier in the year which, in many cases, made it impracticable to muster and handle sheep for examination.

Seasonal conditions have been extremely favourable towards the spread of footrot, but reports so far received are most encouraging and indicate that a very large proportion of the flocks from which footrot was eradicated in recent years have remained free from infection. Mr. Toop considers that the prospects for the ultimate eradication of footrot from this State are reasonably good.

An inspection of the Geraldton district during September, revealed that 38 out of 40 flocks had been freed from footrot since the eradication campaign commenced four years ago and it was expected that the two remaining flocks would be released from quarantine before the end of December, thus effecting a complete eradication of the disease from an area extending from Mingenew to Northampton and including the Greenough Flats. Although lameness resulting from foot abscess and doublegee penetration was present in many flocks no evidence of infectious footrot could be detected.

The new quarantine yards at Midland Junction have now been completed and came into use on November 7.

All sheep forwarded to Midland Junction under quarantine permit, to be sold for slaughter must now be delivered to these yards, and road vehicles delivering such sheep will be required to be cleansed under supervision, at the washing bay provided.



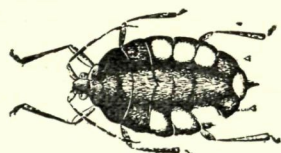


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