

Your next steps following a footrot detection

Footrot is a notifiable disease (report only) in South Australia. This includes all forms of the disease from benign to virulent.

What is my farms current status?

Following initial detection of footrot through either saleyard detection, on farm investigation, definitive trace or vet report your flock will be assigned a **SUSPECT footrot** status until a thorough on property and laboratory diagnosis can be performed during a spread period (Spring).

During an on-property diagnosis inspection samples will be taken from sheep observed to have lesions consistent with footrot and will be submitted to the laboratory.

The samples will undergo 3 tests - smear, culture and elastase, in total these tests take approximately 2 to 4 weeks to get final virulence results. Your local PIRSA Animal Health Officer (AHO) will provide and explain these results to you as they are returned from the laboratory.

Once your flock has its final diagnosis, you will receive a letter from the CIS outlining your sheep movement obligations and the outcomes of the on-property and final laboratory diagnosis.

If footrot is confirmed, your flock will be assigned an **INFECTED footrot** status.

Where can I sell stock if I have suspect or infected footrot status?

As of January 2025, all sheep flocks with a suspected or confirmed footrot status can be moved and sold directly to another property, provided **prior** notification of their footrot status is provided to the purchaser.

Mandatory notification of Footrot status

Sellers must disclose the Footrot status of sheep prior to movement, using one of the following methods:

- National Sheep Health Declaration, in section B Question 3 and 4 (suspect properties must declare virulent footrot)
- Private sales agreement between vendor and purchaser
- Declaration on an online livestock selling platform

Restrictions on movement

Sheep from infected and suspect properties are not permitted to move through a saleyard, transit or spelling facility, or any other interim property except those approved by the Chief Inspector to receive sheep from infected or suspect properties.

Approved saleyards

The Naracoorte Regional Livestock Exchange and the Mount Gambier and District Sale Yards are the only saleyards in SA approved to receive and sell sheep from properties known or suspected to have footrot, provided they erect signage and stamp all National Sheep Health Declarations with a warning statement alerting purchasers to the potential presence of sheep infected with footrot at the saleyard. You are permitted to sell sheep through these saleyards provided they meet "Fit to Load" standards and consigned with an accurately completed NSHD.

Legal Obligations

The following additional requirements will continue to apply:

- If a person knows or has reason to suspect that livestock owned by or under his or her control are affected with footrot, the person must take all reasonable measures to control or eradicate the disease.

- A person must not do an act intending that, or being recklessly indifferent as to whether, livestock become affected or further affected with footrot
- A person must not, without the approval of the Chief Inspector of Stock, bring footrot into the State or cause footrot to be brought into the State

How to limit spread of disease on your property

- Keep potential sources of infection such as new purchases separated from other sheep.
- When moving sheep avoid crossing paths of known infected mobs.
- Spell yards and paddocks for 14 days between mobs.
- Inspect rams for footrot prior to joining.
- Secure fencing to prevent straying and identify strays to PIRSA for inspection.

Treatment and eradication

Following a footrot diagnosis, your local AHO will offer to meet with you to discuss a suitable treatment or eradication plan for your situation.

Treatment Plans are aimed at lowering level of disease but will not remove disease from property.

Eradication Plans are more involved and are aimed to eliminate disease from the property. Eradication activities take place over the summer when spread of disease is at its lowest.

Eradication plans include:

1. Inspect and treat - infected animals are retained and treated to allow for retaining stock numbers.
2. Inspect and cull - infected animals are culled, lowering the number of inspections required.
3. Voluntary destocking - footrot is eradicated by selling all sheep and 14 days after de-stocking, re-stocking with a reliable source of uninfected sheep can occur.

Options 1 and 2 require multiple flock inspections of all sheep with hoof paring and foot bathing and/or vaccination. Subsequent inspections take place 4 to 6 weeks apart.

Property Disease Management Plan (PDMP)

If you elect to run a treatment or eradication control program, your local AHO or chosen private vet will use information provided by you as well as from the on-property and laboratory diagnosis to formulate a written PDMP, which will be provided to you. They will also provide you with contact details for local footrot contractors, who can be engaged to assist with inspections and hoof paring during the program.

Equipment requirements

Completing successful footrot inspections requires yards with an effective lead up race, experienced footrot contractor or skilled personal, sheep handler, hoof trimmers & grinders and footbaths with Zinc Sulphate for treatment. [See the South Australian Footrot Guide for further information.](#)

Clearance protocols

Following completion of a summer eradication program with no infection found at the final inspection, a clearance inspection can be conducted the following spring in the spread period.

The clearance inspection must be completed by PIRSA and no control measures (footbathing, antibiotic treatment etc.) may occur in the 6 weeks beforehand and no footvax vaccination treatment 6 months prior clearance inspection.

The clearance inspection involves inspecting a select portion of your flock and if no footrot lesions are detected in any sheep your property assigned an **ASSESSED NEGATIVE** status for footrot.