

A note on observations on foot disorders in sheep in Iraq

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A total of 353 clinical cases suffering from various disorders in sheep were examined for any foot disorders irrespective of their main clinical disorders and classified as per sex, age, limb involved and nature of disorders.

Foot abnormalities were 11.04% (39/ 353). Incidence was significantly higher in adult animals (7.92%) than younger ones (3.12%). Females were affected more (6.79%) than males (4.25%).

Different foot abnormalities occurred more often in both fore and hind limbs in same animals (4.5%) than only in fore-feet (3.12%) or hind feet (3.39%). The abnormalities were encountered more in lateral claws than the medial claw of either fore-or hind feet.

In this investigation, regular overgrown hoof accounted for 23.21% (11/39); followed by scissor's claw 20.51% (8/39); corkscrew claw 17.94% (7/39); broken hoof with transverse or longitudinal fissure 12.82% (5/39) and bulbar necrosis 10.26% (4/39). White line disease and arthritis of foot joints were seen in two animals each (5.12%).

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The overall incidence of various foot disorders was 11.04%. Such higher incidence of foot lameness in sheep has not been reported in the literature except for foot rot, foot abscess and interdigital dermatitis (Morghan *et al.*, 1972; Joop, *et al.*, 1984). The occurrence of foot abnormalities depends upon combinations of environmental, managemental and stress factors. The difference in the incidences observed may be due to variation in these factors.

The incidence was higher in adult female than in male animals. This could possibly be due to higher population of female than male animals. Sex distribution of foot abnormalities is in agreement with available reports in cattle (Gogoi *et al.* 1981). Limb distribution did not show any significant difference in the involvement of forefeet and hindfeet as various foot abnormalities were equally distributed in both fore and hind feet. This is in disagreement with the reports in bovine (Nigam and Singh, 1980; Gogoi *et al.*, 1982) where involvement of hind feet was observed more than the forefeet.

The lateral claws were affected more frequently with foot deformities than the

medial claws. This might be related to factors as gait, horn moisture and physical stress on the claw. Higher involvement of lateral claws confirms the observation of Gogoi *et al.* (1982) in cattle.

Regular overgrown hoof, scissor's claw (Fig.1), corkscrew claw and broken hoof with fissure were the most frequently observed foot deformities in this study. Other less commonly observed disorders included bulbar necrosis, white

line disease (Fig. 2) and arthritis. The irregular pressure on the hoof and lack of foot care are considered to be responsible for overgrown hoof (Littlejohn, 1961). Broken hoof with transverse or longitudinal fissure of hoof wall occurred generally due to loss of hoof elasticity. Several factors as excess dry climate with low humidity, high winds, sandy soils and trauma are thought to be responsible for the loss of hoof elasticity in the present case which results in fissure formation.



Fig. 1. Corkscrew claw and scissor's claw of fore feet.



Fig 2. White line disease of left forefoot.

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