

Lecture 5

SPREAD OF ANIMAL DISEASES

The main causes of disease

Dis.....ease= Not at ease or departure from state of well being.

Disease can be classified as acute or chronic. An acute disease starts quickly and lasts for a short period when the animal either recovers or dies. A chronic disease lasts for a long time and weakens the animal. Diseases are said to be infectious (will spread from one animal to another) or non-infectious (will not spread from one animal to another).

Non-infectious diseases can be caused by poor feed and the lack of minerals, salts and vitamins that the body needs. Non-infectious disease can also be caused by poisoning with chemicals or plants, by cuts, burns and broken bones. Some diseases pass from the parent to the young (hereditary).

Many non-infectious diseases are chronic but they can be acute. They can cause large losses of meat, milk and wool. Working (draught) animals do not work well and the rate of reproduction can be low with the young being born dead or dying before they are weaned. Chronic diseases are often thought to be "normal" but when the cause is known and eliminated, production can be greatly increased.

Infectious diseases are caused when the body is attacked by tiny living germs.

The spread of disease

- Infectious diseases can be spread by:
- Direct contact between animals.
- Germs in feed and water.
- By faeces and urine from sick animals.
- By flies, ticks, lice and fleas.
- By dirty housing or shelters.
- Young and old animals become infected more easily.

Preventing infectious diseases

- Animals, like humans, must be clean in order to be healthy. The animal must be provided with clean feed, water, bedding and shelter.
- Sick animals should be kept separate from the others.
- Some diseases can be cured by drugs.
- Vaccination can protect animals against some diseases.
- Dead animals and waste should be disposed off

Remember:

- The spread of disease can be avoided by good livestock management. Keeping animals together increases the chance of disease spreading by contact. New livestock should be kept separate from the others for two weeks so they can be checked for signs of disease.
- Avoid mixing herds. Try to keep herds separate at watering and feeding points.
- You should separate and isolate any animal which shows signs of disease.

Preventing non-infectious diseases

The chronic non-infectious disease may not be recognised as a disease. The affected animals may not die but will not produce as much milk, meat or wool, or work as well as could be expected.

If we continually look for ways of improving feed, water, mineral and vitamin supplies we will find the way to control the non-infectious diseases. This will lead to greater production of wool, meat and milk, draught animals will be stronger and more young will be produced. Poultry will produce more eggs and get fatter.

Dehorning calves, lambs and kids

Animals which have been dehorned are quiet and do not fight and cause injury to others.

The best time to remove the horns (disbudding) is when the animals are less than one week old.

Why do we remove the horns?

Removing the horns from the animal means that:

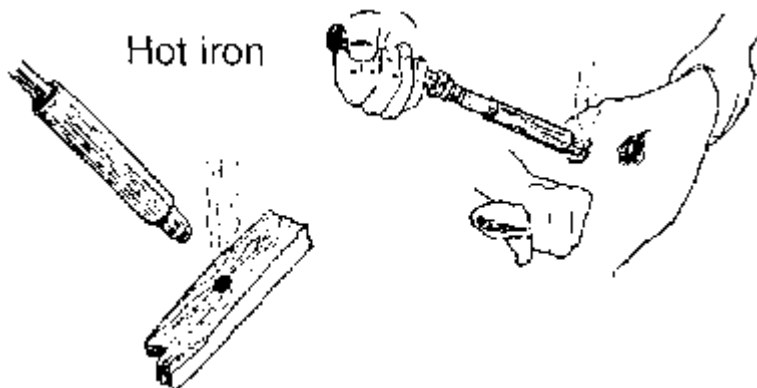
- There is less chance of it injuring other animals.
- There is less risk of injury to people.
- An animal without horns needs less space at the feeding troughs.

The horns are best removed when still buds (buttons) on the animal which is less than one week old. This is called disbudding.

The tools used to disbud animals

To dehorn an animal you will need a dehorning iron which can be heated by electricity or over a direct flame. The end of the iron is round and hollow and will fit over the bud of the horn. Using a hot iron is better than using caustic soda to remove the buds.

The tools used to disbud animals



You may have an iron, but if you do not, ask a blacksmith to make one for you. To test the iron, heat it until hot and then hold the end against a block of wood. A complete, even ring should be burned into the wood. You will need to test the iron each time you use it to make sure it is hot enough.

Disbudding

You will need someone to help you. Take care with the hot iron.

- Restrain the animal. Your helper must hold its head and pull the ear nearest the bud you are going to remove, down and away from the bud. He must hold the head very still.
- Cut the hair away from around the bud of the horn.
- Test the hot iron and when ready put the iron over the bud and twist it around for about 10 seconds. Continue until the bud feels loose, reheating the iron if necessary.
- Push the bud out by pressing with the iron.