

# **The Cicerone Project Inc.**

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## **Footrot Trial update**

The Cicerone Footrot trail has been under way on our Big Ridge site for 16 weeks now.

Each Friday the sheep are inspected by RLPB rangers and given a footrot score for each claw. Please come along on 24<sup>th</sup> March to your last chance to see the field trial in place. We start at 9.00am, so if you want to learn more about the disease, please come.

On Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> March there will be close to 100 Year 11 and 12 students and their teachers coming to see the results of the trial.

Results so far indicate:

- Sheep in a paddock with a higher clover content are more susceptible to footrot than those in a lower clover paddock. This occurred across all the strains under test.
- Over the time sheep (white ear tags) with field high- grade virulent, gel test stable (ie virulent) became progressively worse to score 5 and infected clean sheep in the plot.
- Sheep (green ear tags) with field low- grade virulence: gel test stable (ie virulent) became worse but not as bad as the above group, indicating that there is a graduated scale of virulence
- Sheep (red ear tags) with field benign; gel test unstable (benign) did not develop worse symptoms of the disease, they improved and did not infect clean sheep.
- Sheep (Pink and blue eartags) with two types of field benign: gel test stable (ie virulent) did not show any indication of virulence in the field, they did not affect clean sheep and the foot scores remained on average below 3a. This indicates the field behaviour is not acting in the same way as we'd expect from the gel test result.
- The sheep (purple ear tags) which were field low grade virulence: gel test stable also behaved in the same way as the field benign sheep when brought to the Cicerone plots

Thus we have shown that in this area, some gel stable strains act in a benign manner.

We await with great interest the DNA results from Dr Brian Cheetham of UNE to see if he finds any correlation between strains with similar field behaviour.

The next step is to move these sheep to a different climatic area and we have applied for a follow up PIRDs to do this.

We are most grateful to the 1999 PIRDS funding and our WoolMark funds which have together allowed us to do this important work.

The graph below shows the comparison of the strains of footrot tested. Come along to the field day on 24<sup>th</sup> March to see the separate graphs in colour!!!

Photo shows Caroline Gaden collecting the foot score for each claw as called by Bruce Floyd, Paul Birder and Geoff Green of Armidale RLPB.

The following article was printed in the January 2000 research edition of the **National Business Bulletin**. It is reprinted here with the permission of the publisher Stephen Cottier. Their web site is at [www.nationalbusiness.com.au](http://www.nationalbusiness.com.au)

**The article may challenge your thinking!**

If each Australian family ate one more lamb meal each week, it would offset the costs of the tariffs placed on Australian lamb export.

Lamb is an excellent source of iron and also zinc which is so important for wound healing, the immune system and reproduction

We were saddened to hear of the death in January of member **Peter Byrnes** as a result of an accident. Our sympathy goes to his wife Suzanne, his two children Myles and Georgina and his colleagues at Forsyths.