

From the
Premier Breeder
of British Registered
Soay Sheep



SOUTHERN OREGON SOAY SHEEP FARMS

Viewpoint

THIS MONTH'S FEATURE

Winter Care, Part 2

by Kathie Miller

As hard as it may be to believe when you are buried in snow and dealing with broken water pipes, there can be a silver lining to freezing weather.

Back in the days of my flapping, blue-walled barn with its sagging roof, I could only store a few months supply of hay at a time. By mid-winter I always had to replenish my stock. I prayed for freezing weather because the only way my hay man could get to the stable was across frozen ground. The mucky quagmire between the gate and the barn was impassible, and if he tried when it was not frozen he'd be stuck until spring.

Another good thing about freezing weather is that it is a great natural control for intestinal parasites. Their eggs, shed in the sheep's manure, simply cannot survive on frozen ground, and worms generally aren't the problem they are in the spring and summer.

But back to the mud and muck. Foot scald, also

known as benign foot rot, is a potential problem with sheep when conditions are wet and temperatures are between 40°F/4°C and 70°F/21°C. It is something to watch for in late winter in areas where bedding is damp and pastures are especially wet, forcing animals to stand in or constantly walk through mud. Soay seem to be resistant to the more serious condition of virulent foot rot, but they do occasionally suffer from scald.

The first sign is a limping animal, usually the front feet. A sheep may hold its foot off the ground, be reluctant to walk, or graze on its knees. Scald is an interdigital inflammation; the tissues between the toes appear raw,

moist, blanched white or red and swollen, and very sensitive to the touch. The hoof itself is not involved, an important distinction between scald and virulent foot rot. If you trim the hoof it will look normal. Overgrown nails will predispose an animal to this condition, so it is important to regularly trim hooves.

Because the hooves pick up the moisture in wet soils and dry as the ground dries out, they are easier to trim in the winter. Trimming at this time also



Trimming hooves

gives you an opportunity to check for other problems.

Many times, simply removing animals to a drier area will solve the problem. But if it does not, they need

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A Book Review

by Kathie Miller

"Storey's Guide to Raising Miniature Livestock" by Sue Weaver.

Sue Weaver is a contributing editor to *Hobby Farms* magazine. In this guide, she has created a library in one volume. She covers a wide variety of animals and discusses everything from "Before You Begin" to fencing, facilities and feeding. A section on routine medical care is indispensable for every farmer.

The author divides miniatures into three categories: "naturally diminutive [like the Soay, which is featured], small breeds that retained their original breed size when their parents were selected for greater size, and breeds which were deliberately miniaturized". There is a thorough overview of each breed, including which do well together.

A chapter on breeding strategies outlines the basic principles of linebreeding,

outcrossing and outbreeding, as well as how to use pedigrees.

"The Business End" has suggestions on marketing your miniature livestock.

This guide is full of practical information that is enhanced with photos, diagrams, charts, and illustrations.

While this book is geared to the beginner, it will be of value to experienced farmers as well.

I highly recommend it. 🐏

RESOURCES

Links

[Dr. Naylor® Hoof N' Heel®](#)

[Fiasco Farms hoof trimming](#). This is still the most descriptive site on how to trim hooves that I have seen.

[Hobby Farms magazine](#). A bimonthly magazine that is a wonderful resource no matter what farming enterprise you undertake.

[“Storey’s Guide to Raising Miniature Livestock”](#)

By Sue Weaver
452 pages, 16 pages of color photos; sketches and diagrams throughout. ISBN 978-1-60342-481-3, published 2010. Available in paperback online in the US and UK. About \$14/£8.50.

Some of my favorite catalogs:

[Jefferslivestock.com](#)

[Valleyvet.com](#)

[Pipestonvet.com](#)

[Quality Llama Products](#)

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All advice in this newsletter has been used successfully on our farm. It is important to remember that every animal and situation is different. Before you try any of our suggestions, we urge you to consult your veterinarian.

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to be treated. Clean and trim the affected foot and expose and remove all dead, loose tissue, and control any bleeding.

There are several treatment products available, but a convenient and readily available one in the US (but not the UK) is Dr. Naylor® Hoof n’ Heel®, a zinc sulfate solution that is applied topically. Squirt it slowly on the cleaned lesion and thoroughly saturate the surrounding area of the foot, letting it penetrate before you turn the animal loose. Affectionately known as “Dr. Naylor’s”, it is available in a number of sizes, but the 16 ounce squeeze bottle that is carried by most feed stores is easy to use and costs about \$6.00. In the UK, an antibiotic aerosol spray obtained through a vet is used for the same purpose (this is not available in the US). Keep the animal in a dry area and treat twice a

day until the condition clears up. If redness, irritation or swelling persists, call your vet.

While scald is not considered contagious, during the rainy season infected animals can contaminate the soil which can increase transmission to other animals. Failure to treat it may lead to virulent foot rot.

Winter can bring other problems besides those associated with feet. Sheep that are not kept outside, but housed in a closed barn, can suffer from problems related to lack of air circulation.



Yorkshire Boarding

Damp bedding and the moist, ammonia-filled air of a poorly ventilated barn can lead to respiratory problems—coughing, sinus infection, bronchitis, and

pneumonia. When one animal gets sick in a closed space, it is passed around.

“Yorkshire Boarding” is one solution to this problem that I have seen in the UK but not in the States. Even in areas with a lot of snow, wind, and rain, barns are built with slatted walls, some all the way around, some with just a single wall on the drier, less windy side of the building. A solid block wall is built up the first four or five feet, with boarding continuing from there to the roofline. The animals are protected from the wind and rain by the block, and the ventilation above them prevents the build-up of ammonia fumes from urine-soaked straw. 🐏



Dr. Naylor's



Aerosol antibiotic

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT FOR ALL UK BREEDERS

Electronic ear tags are required on all lambs as of this year. New information is developing about a lightweight tag that is coming on to the market which will be suitable for small breeds such as Soay and Boreray. Before you order your tags, contact [Christine Williams](#) for details and the most current information.

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

- ❑ It’s catalog season. You can sign-up online to receive catalogs in the mail. Sheep shows are a good way to discover new suppliers.
- ❑ Restock your supplies: syringes, needles, wormer, penicillin, LA 200, etc.
- ❑ Trim hooves if needed while they are soft.

TIP OF THE MONTH

Fill an old metal garbage can with water. The rams love to bash it and **they can't knock it over.**