Tonight I want to say a few words about Footrot. Recently farmers have become much more conscious of this disease and of the necessity of getting rid of it. The ~~Dept of Agric~~ is doing everything possible to help spread knowledge and awareness of the disease. These schools of instruction have visited ~~and are going to visit~~ Vasey Casterton, Edenhope, Macarthur and Penshurst.

We all know that the disease attacks a certain part of a sheeps hoof, we know that the germ is extremely virulent and that under conditions of warm moist pasture it can spread rapidly causing great damage to the flock. We know that the germ can live for a maximum of only two weeks in the paddocks under the most favourable conditions. If an area is emptied of sheep for that time it will be free of footrot. However the germ can lie dormant in a sheep's hoof for a very long time being ready to break out when the right conditions occur. It is the presence and detection of such carriers that makes absolute cure so difficult.

Footrot control has number one priority amongst ~~scientists~~ research scientists but it is unlikely that any easy cure will be found. Broad principals of control have been developed, the hoof must be pared and treated with disinfectant and once exposed the germ is easily killed, but the germ must be exposed and thats where hand work comes in. Secaturs used for paring should be cleaned between sheep which ~~should~~ should all be put through a foot bath of formalin or bluestone immediately after paring and affected sheep periodically thereafter. Infected sheep must be isolated. Where possible sheep that have been treated should be returned to clean paddocks.

Two types of sheep cradle have recently been put on the market. There is a single sheep unit for smaller properties and a larger windlass like machine that holds four sheep at a time where larger numbers are to be treated. Early in the year before feet have become hard it is possible for four men to treat 600 sheep a day with this last machine. This would be an impossible target for four men without the sheep cradle. The single sheep unit can be used at the end of any race. It cuts out all the hand physical work and makes it possible for one man to do one hundred and fifty sheep in an average day. This is again an impossible target by the old method of dragging sheep out of a catching pen.

Although the facts of footrot are common knowledge few of us realise the real cost that the disease causes the nation. Many people are content with periodic treatment when the disease is bad. Such treatment is a recurring expense, which while the disease remains will never end.

That the disease can be eradicated has been proved but it has only been done on those farms that have given the job of footrot cure number one priority. Such people have found that intense effort over shorter periods of time is cheaper and more beneficial than periodic attacks that serve only to control and not to cure.

There are many difficulties in footrot cure. Regular sheep work must be continued, shearing, haymaking, crutching and lambing all come at times when footrot measures may be required. These other jobs often make it impossible to get to a mob until many sheep have been affected making treatment and cure more difficult.

Farmers who are free of footrot are continually on the watch. Travelling sheep can leave the roads infected and since many farms extend on both sides of the roads sheep crossing them can pick up the germ. It has been suggested that footrot should be made a notifiable disease and although enforcement of such a rule would probably be impossible ~~some the recent footrot schools of instruction are~~ stir the man who has footrot into more intensive action, for while the disease remains active in any area there is a great danger of it being spread by travelling sheep. Footrot cure deserves our constant and undivided attention. While we are hoping for further help from our scientists the moment the only permanent cure comes as a result of hard work and care.