

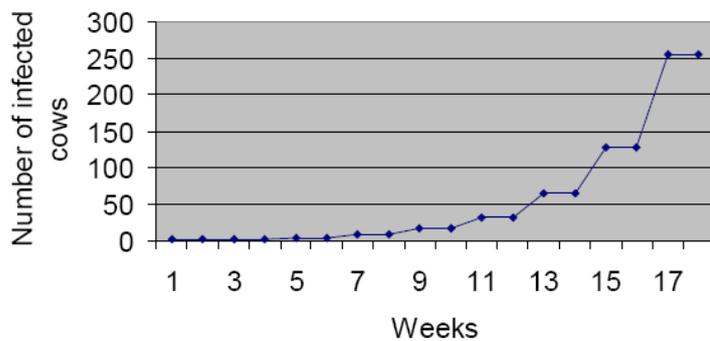


Digital dermatitis is an every increasing challenge to control in the modern dairy herd so this factsheet is designed to outline various options for control which have been tried, tested and proven.

The aims of footbathing are to keep feet clean, disinfected and hopefully disease free. It also helps harden horn to reduce white line disease and other diseases of the horn.

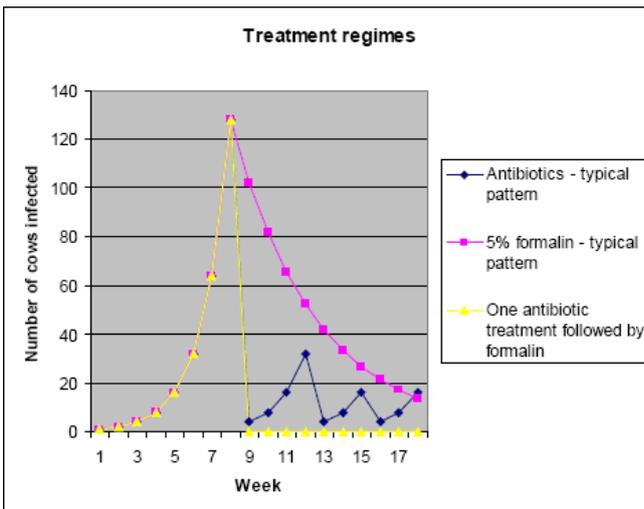
Digital dermatitis is a disease which spreads like wild fire, the graph opposite illustrates how rapid the infection rate can spread.

Rate of spread of infection if one animal infects another animal every 2 weeks



**What is the best treatment regime to follow and how often should I footbath?**

The graph opposite shows the various regimes used commonly on farm. The best proven regime to follow is one antibiotic treatment followed by control with 5% formalin every day (yellow line). This is not always practical on all farms so tailoring the formalin frequency to your problem and farm needs will help but may not offer maximum control.



Just using antibiotics alone (blue line) will lead to a constant flare up every 4-6 weeks as the antibiotics can only cover treatment around the days of foot bathing.

5% formalin alone on a daily basis can control dermatitis but the rate of improvement will be slower than the antibiotic and formalin regime.

### Which product do I use?

The following products have been tried and tested – scientifically proven products include:

- Antibiotics

Erythrocin soluble	Lincocin Soluble
Use at 500g in 200L water	Use at 150g in 200L water
Bath twice at a 24 hour interval	Bath twice daily for 3 days
Stable for 24 hours	Change after 200 cows have been through <b>and</b> between footbaths
Top up at 70g per 25L water	Top up at 20g in 25L water
Available in 1kg bags or 70g sachets	Available in 150g pots
Most cost effective footbath	

It should be remembered that antibiotic foot baths are an off – licence treatment for dairy cows therefore a 7 days milk withhold should be observed however, studies show an 8 hour milk withhold is suggested by CEVA (the manufacturers of Erythrocin)

- Formalin

- Use at 3-4% for a standard dilution (6-8L per 200L water) EVERY DAY
- Use at 5% for 2-5days per week
- Use at 10% for 1-2days per week (when using at 10% you need to grade it up to avoid aggravating raw digital dermatitis lesions)

- Copper Sulphate

- Use at 5-10%
- Dissolve in warm water to achieve maximum effect
- Mixing with FAM 30 can improve control
- Use 2-3 days per week

- Zinc Sulphate

- Use similarly to Copper Sulphate

- Hypochlorite

- Effective at washing feet before entering antibiotic footbaths.

- Glutaraldehyde (e.g. bootmaker)

- Very effective at cleaning feet but can be aggravate inter-digital growths by lifting off the crust and exposing raw dermatitis.

Some farmers rotate between chemical (not antibiotics) with good effect.

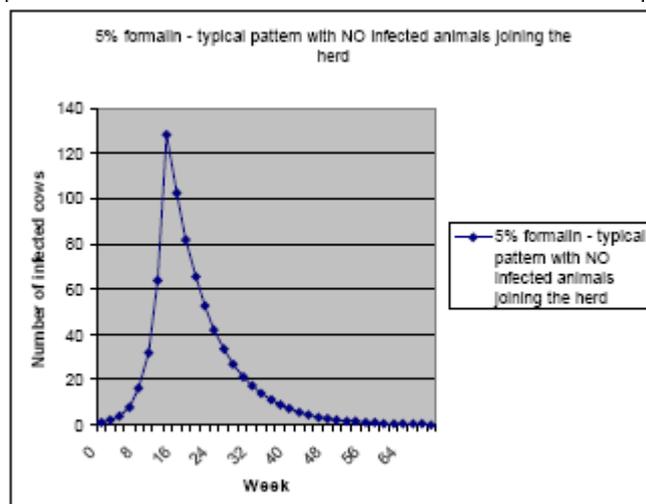
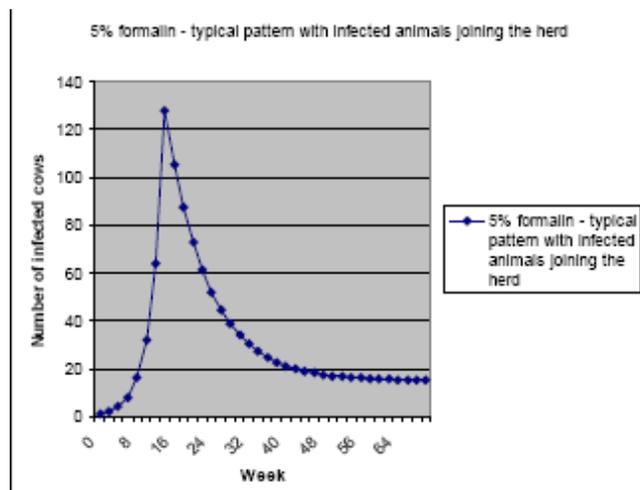
## What mustn't we forget?

- **Slurry management**

- THIS IS A CRITICAL AREA TO REDUCE CONTACT WITH THE DERMATITIS BUG
- Concentrate on feed areas, water troughs and bottlenecks with a hand scraper if necessary
- Scrape twice daily (if using automatic scrapers, set at a frequency so as to minimise tidal waves of slurry!)
- Scrape before cows walk back on the yards after milking

- **Dry cows / heifers**

- This is an important group as the graph shows if infected animals are constantly entering the herd, the control of dermatitis will be reduced, levels will not typically fall below 18-19% and the graph below shows dermatitis dropping to extremely low levels if animals are clean on herd entry.



- **Footbath in the summer as well**

Footbathing at least once in the summer, during the grazing season will result in greater control the following winter as the reservoir of infection is reduced at a time of lower challenge to the herd (drier feet, less reservoir of infection as there is less slurry contact).

This factsheet is designed to help you decide the best footbathing regime for you – if you have any specific questions relating to your farm, please don't hesitate to contact us at the surgery.

