

**Goats & Feet (& Laminitis)**  
**ALTERNATIVE VETERINARY MEDICINE CENTRE**

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**GOATS & FEET (& LAMINITIS)**

(a clue to a better understanding)

I hope readers will pardon the pun in the sub-title and yet take its meaning to heart. I am quoted in Newsletter No. 23 (July 1992) as saying that goats are basically eaters and milkers. It therefore follows that udder and liver problems will be prevalent. How is it then that feet can often be of great concern? Firstly, to every rule there is an exception and secondly, the foot problems we so often meet in our goats can sometimes be secondary to liver trouble and to [dietary](#) factors.

**Homeopathic treatment**

The shape and make-up of a goat's feet are often a very good clue to her constitution in homeopathic terms. They should always, therefore, be part of the intelligent prescriber's examination routine. I shall list a few characteristics which are, of necessity, too general to be absolutely diagnostic of a constitutional remedy but, along with other conformational and behavioural characteristics, they can form a valuable *clue* to [homeopathic](#) prescribing:-

<b>Remedy</b>	<b>Symptoms &amp; Signs</b>
<i>Calc. carb.</i>	Large claws, heavy joints, bulky appearance.
<i>Calc. fluor.</i>	Enlarged joints, hardening of feet, cracks in interdigital spaces.
<i>Calc. phos.</i>	Small, tidy feet, tendency to stiffness of lower limbs, cold feet.
<i>Causticum</i>	Intertrigo of interdigital folds, contracture of tendons (upright feet), rheumatic stiffness.
<i>Fluoric acid</i>	Rapidly growing feet, tendency to deep abscessation, smelly, crumbling feet, oedema of feet.
<i>Graphites</i>	Deformed feet, thickened, brittle feet, cracks in interdigital spaces oozing clear fluid, offensive odour.
<i>Kreosotum</i>	Foul-smelling ulceration of interdigital space, pustules, ecchymoses (blood streaks).

<i>Nux vom.</i>	Congestion of feet, heat in feet, redness of skin of feet, feet dry, cracking of joints.
<i>Pulsatilla</i>	Small feet but easily ‘splayed’, loose-jointed, shifting lameness, redness and inflammation of skin.
<i>Sepia</i>	Slack ligaments and tendons lead to dropped pasterns, feet cold, bad odour, scaling of skin between digits.
<i>Silica</i>	Tendency to infection, breakdown of structure of hoof, white line abscessation, cold feet, chronic inflammation of corium, distorted hooves, cracked hooves.

When it comes to treating foot problems many other remedies may be required, according to signs and symptoms shown in each case, but I consider the constitutional approach very valid when dealing with any chronic problem or tendency.

**Specific Foot Problems: (therapeutic guide)**

Injury to feet	<i>Arnica, Ledum, Hepar sulphuris, Silica, Hypericum.</i>
Abscessation	<i>Hepar sulphuris, Silica.</i>
Laminitis	<i>Belladonna, Aconitum, Nux vomica, Pulsatilla, Graphites, Hypericum, Flor de piedra, Taraxacum.</i>
Cracks	<i>Graphites, Calc. fluor., Silica.</i>
Crumbling	<i>Silica, Fluoric acid, Hekla lava.</i>
Deformation	<i>Calc. fluor., Graphites, Silica, Antimonium crudum.</i>
Foot Rot	<i>Kreosotum.</i>
Inflammation of Corium	<i>Nux vomica, Pulsatilla, Natrum sulph., Hepar sulph.</i>
Interdigital problems	<i>Graphites, Calc. fluor., Kreosotum, Sepia, Hepar sulph., Nux vomica.</i>
Hardening	<i>Calc. fluor., Lapis albus, Hecla lava.</i>

Specific thoughts on **laminitis**, since it was that condition which prompted the request for an article in the first place, are worth mentioning.

1. It is a disease principally of metabolic origin in the goat. It is different, in many cases, in Cattle and Horses. I find a goat's liver is often the primary problem.
2. It reflects a constitutional weakness.
3. Over-feeding, especially of concentrate feed (hard feed – provender), can cause it, exacerbate it or prevent its cure.

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4. It may be necessary to forget milk yields for a while, if trying to cure laminitis.
5. In addition to the above-mentioned remedies, I shall mention constitutional prescribing (which I always use in laminitis), deeper miasmatic influences such as the Tuberculous miasm, specific liver remedies (organotropic remedies) and a range of remedies I have made up myself from key proteins in the aetiology in some past cases. It seems that the stressed liver is unable to handle some of the proteins and the great fatty acid load, represented by feeds of concentrates. It may often need the help of specific remedies in this direction. Diet is important. What is fed to the goat bears little relationship to what the liver meets, since the rumen flora get at the food first. It is the products of their metabolism which the liver meets and can fail to handle.

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