



EWES NEWS

Beef Cow Pregnancy Testing



Dave Robertson
BVSc, BSc

After getting through over 100,000 dairy cow pregnancy tests in the practice in the last 2 months, it is nice for us vets to get out and do some

“beefies”. With the development of aged pregnancy testing for dairy cows it is a skill that can have many uses for beef cow fertility monitoring also. Most of the stud bull producers use aged pregnancy



testing now to estimate calving dates and check bull performance. Getting an instant calculation of 1st, 2nd and 3rd cycle conception rates really does reflect the level of inherent fertility and management in a herd.

With our beef fertility monitoring package, the Veterinary Centre is providing the most up-to-date

and relevant information about your herd. The days of just putting a bit of paint on the empties and driving away are reducing - as nice as these



jobs are. We can provide so much more information about your herd now that will describe some of the subtleties of what is going on.

We are involved with three beef cow research projects this year. We look

forward to discussing some of these findings and concepts with you down the cat-walk of your yards this autumn. Book in preg testing as soon as you've finished reading this to get the time and date that suits you.



Free BVD Screening with Beef Pregnancy Testing

In previous seasons the Veterinary Centre has been able to secure funding to cover the lab fee component of BVD screening of beef cattle herds. This year this initiative has been extended so that during pregnancy testing visits our vets are now able to take a set of samples from the herd and have them screened for BVD at no charge to the farmer. This gives our practice the unique opportunity of effectively mapping our entire district for prevalence of BVD in practically all the beef herds in our district. This information will be invaluable in guiding our veterinarians and farmers in the make up of BVD control plans. If you have any questions just talk to one of our beef pregnancy testing team. There is nothing required from the farmer except to give permission to take the samples, our team will take care of the entire process and provide you with the results for your herd.





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Autumn issues

Soft green grass, regular rains, dewy mornings do make for some specific animal health considerations.

EWE CONDITION LEADING UP TO MATING

Ewes can put on a maximum of 100-150g/day with more than 8cm of green-leafy, quality grass. If your target weight for a cross-bred ewe is 70 kg and mating April 5, then realistically they could put on 3-5kg in a month (~1BCS). If you're not into BCS monitoring and feed budgeting, then regular shifts is a way to ensure they are "lifting" prior to tupping, especially with big mobs in big blocks.

EWE HOGGET TARGET WEIGHTS

Enquiries about hogget mating have begun. It has been very profitable for farmers in the last two seasons, especially when well managed. March is the time to make the "go or no go" call. Abortion prevention with Toxovax and Campyvax are essential for the generally naïve hogget, so too is worm control and B12, Selenium and Iodine supplementation. Designing yourself an animal health and weight target program will help keep you on track with building the all-important frame size up to the 1st of July. For example:

Month	Target min wt	Animal health
March 5	35kg	Toxo and 1st Campy Ester C or SeCo Jr (or matrix monthly)
April 10	38kg	2nd Campy + Flexidine Teaser (April 19)
May 5	42kg	Rams out 1:50-100 (25-35days)
June 1	46kg	
July 1	50kg	

Teasers will help concentrate more pregnancies in the 1st cycle of hogget mating

B12/COBALT

Smartshot (long acting B12) for keeper hoggets and winter lambs is a sure way to sustain adequate B12 levels through the autumn. It seems to be later autumn when B12 liver reserves run-out of young stock. B12 supplementation can provide an extra ~2kg/month with lambs in the autumn, which more than justifies the investment. Short acting B12 injection each month or SeCo Jnr/Bionic capsules are the other alternatives.

There can be merit in supplementing ewes with B12 prior to mating also. Optigrow monitoring of stock sent to the works is a convenient way of getting some data on B12 requirements. Just ring the clinic when the stock are being transported to the processing plant to request an Optigrow.

FOOTROT MANAGEMENT

If you have put the time into removing footrot infection from your flock this summer, don't let the hard work be undone. The "clean mob" will need re-checking prior to winter. Left unchecked in these conditions <1% footrot can again become >10%. Troughing every week will keep a lid on transmission.

Do I Footvax? Sensitisation can begin in the autumn in preparation for a spring booster to give protection over lambing. Those farmers investing in Footvax do so to safeguard against a wet season blowing feet out. Footvax will at least halve footrot rate and reduce severity through periods when not much else can be done (mating and lambing).

Worm Control Options this Autumn



OUT TO 5 WEEKS+. If the worm burden has ramped up very quickly and pastures are heavily contaminated then persistent acting drenches can get your lambs out of a parasite rut. Trimox oral, Exodus/Cydectin LA injection or capsules are options. For fine wool lamb traders, a long acting injectable drench is very appealing to keep them going well through the autumn.

After a rain event it can take a couple of weeks for the sugars to re-establish in grass and it is also an opportunity for parasite larvae to re-emerge and have a chance to complete their life-cycle. With a synchronised hatch of parasites and rapid development to infective stage, worm control in lambs/hoggets, 2 tooth and lighter mixed age ewes is beneficial. For the most part an **effective combination oral drench** is sufficient. For lambs drench interval needs to be every 28 days. **DON'T LET YOUR DRENCH INTERVAL SNEAK**

Exit drenching: Using a novel active drench on lambs/hoggets at some stage through March - May, is recommended to clean out any resistant parasites that have accumulated. Zolvix Plus and Startect are the two options. On farms where certain drench resistance has been diagnosed, targeted use of novels on ewes pre-tup is advised (e.g. Startect to 2 tooth, light ewes). In these conditions using adult cattle behind lambs or ewes behind calves is a very good way of maintaining lower levels of parasite burdens through a "wormy autumn".

Sustainable Drenching - Free Drench Check

Drenching and parasite control is a key aspect of maximising growth rates in young stock. With every 20L of Matrix (triple combination) purchased in March, the Veterinary Centre is offering a free Drench Check. Drench checks are a valuable, quick and easy diagnostic test to check that your drench is doing what is intended. This is particularly important with the growing emergence of anthelmintic resistance.

To undertake the drench check collect dung from ten animals in the mob, ten days after drenching. The detection of eggs can result from one of two options; the drench product is not completely effective at removing worm burdens as worms have reduced susceptibility (resistance) to the active ingredient in



the drench or there are complications with drenching methods. Whether this

be as a result of animals receiving incorrect dose rates, issues regarding drench administration or not all animals being drenched.

Well Done Luke

As we finish this edition of Ewes News we congratulate our own Luke Smyth who completed the inaugural, 301km Alps to Ocean ultra marathon. Not to be satisfied with just getting over the finish line Luke came in 9th overall and 4th in his category from 122 starters. Considering this was Luke's first effort at an ultra this is an even more outstanding achievement. That said there is no rest for the wicked and Luke is back at work this week.



7 Facts about Ram Vasectomies



Brooke Ramsay
BVSc

1. Vasectomised (teaser) rams are used as a way to synchronise ewes and therefore increase the number of early lambing ewes and condensing the lambing period.

2. The hormonal response to a teaser ram means that there are two chances to mate in a cycle. A proportion of ewes/hoggets will ovulate within the first 24 hours of the teaser ram being introduced. Others may have a silent

heat and will ovulate 6-8 days later. This is called the "ram effect".

3. In order to maximise the ram effect ewes should be kept separate from rams for at least three weeks prior to use. They should also be flushed to maximise ovulation.

4. Vasectomies should be done at least four weeks prior to use as semen can remain after surgery.

5. Teaser rams should be put out for one cycle (17 days) prior to the planned start of mating.

6. The ram effect is effective in mixed aged ewes as well as in hoggets. Ratios of 1:100 are sufficient.

7. Mature rams make better teasers and Dorset rams have been shown to be more effective than Romney rams.



Situation Vacant

Veterinary Centre Oamaru and Veterinary Centre Waimate.

Position: Part of Teatsealing team.

Duration: late April to early July.

Experience: stockmanship an advantage.

Contact: Neil 03-4345666 for more information.

Feeding Fodder Beet

Sheep and beef farmers are now utilizing fodder beet to improve efficiency in winter feeding and as a holding crop for finishing lambs. As we know fodder beet has the potential to be a high yielding crop with a low feed cost; as little as 10c/kgDM with good yields. It has a high ME value, around 12MJ/kgDM, and unlike brassicas' goitrogens, which disrupt iodine uptake and thyroid function, are not an issue.

Fundamentals -

- It is vital that high fibre pasture silage be provided to balance the high sugar levels and supplement the low protein levels of fodder beet.
- Breaks that consume the leaf and bulb as you go are best for crop utilisation.

- Remember clostridial diseases are a risk at any time when a feed change occurs. All animals should be vaccinated at least a month before going on the crop.

Sheep have a lower risk of rumen acidosis compared to cattle so transitioning sheep onto fodder beet can be done over a shorter period.

Sheep transition -

- Run them onto fodder beet for a few hours.
- Make sure they are full from grazing pasture first.
- Doing this for 5-10 days will allow time for the animal to become accustomed to the new diet, after which you can leave them on with supplements available.

- When finishing lambs on fodder beet, ensure there is a 50:50 allocation of fodder beet and lucerne or grass silage to provide sufficient protein.

Cattle transition -

- Mixed age Cattle 2kg DM/Animal/Day, gradually increase allowance.
- R2 heifers & steers 1 kg DM/Animal/Day per animal, and gradually increase allowance.
- R1 heifers & steers - Transition timing for R1 heifers and steers is the same (14-21 days), however feed quantities are halved. Start by allocating 0.5 kg DM/animal/day on day 1, and then increase by 0.5 kg DM every 2 days until the desired allocation is reached.

Show Round up

It has been great for our teams to get around the A & P shows again this year. Not even Cyclone Gita could keep people away! Well done to all of the organising committees of these events in the various parts of our district. We hope you enjoy a bit of a break before planning starts for next year.



New faces in the Valley



**Euan Tait,
Veterinarian**

I have four and a half years of veterinary experience having worked in predominantly farm animal practice in South West Scotland. We had a great mix of dairy, beef and sheep work and I hope to utilise my experience in these areas in helping you grow your business.

Whilst enjoying all aspects of beef and sheep work, I have a keen interest in the fertility side, often routinely fertility testing both bulls and rams back home. In some flocks as many as 10% of rams would be infertile or sub-fertile. To utilize this experience in the Waitaki Valley I intend to offer a fertility testing service to make sure your bulls and rams are working to the best of their ability.

I have experience in management of lameness and in particular footrot - which is a bug bear of farmers all over the world. Back in Scotland, we had a lot of flocks with issues and we managed to get these under control and reduce footrot to a manageable level by implementing a stringent plan. If you would like to arrange a meeting with me to discuss a footrot plan further, please don't hesitate to get in touch.



**Rory Dean,
Veterinarian**

Another vet from Scotland, I will help in servicing the Kurow/Omarama district, with a particular focus on the Omarama branch. I have been practising in Waimate since April of last year, and thoroughly enjoy all large animal work. Prior to joining Waimate, I worked in farm animal only practice in the UK,

which has given me a broad range of skills and knowledge which can help you with your flock health.

I have a keen interest in farm animal nutrition, as well as preventative flock/herd medicine. Footrot is something I have battled with in the UK, and I am finding the challenge and different management strategies applied here interesting.

Outside of work, I play social rugby, squash, football and the odd game of cricket. When not playing sport, I'm generally fishing (not very successfully) or exploring beautiful New Zealand with my wee dog, Scrappy. If I've not met you yet, I look forward to meeting you soon!