April 2023

Veterinary Centre
EwesNews

UPDATE
Beef Pregnancy Testing

Dave Robertson BVSc BSc – VETERINARY CENTRE Oamaru

We are getting through the herds now and it has been great to catch up with beef producers. Conditions have been from 30oC sunshine to <100C and rain. As a general trend in-calf rates are good. The November – December flush in of grass in certain regions seems to have favoured cow conception rates. It is interesting that some herds have yo-yoed more with cow condition. The herds that we condition score before mating have since lost weight during the dry Jan to March period but still had very low empty rates.

Now that weaning is done and the district is experiencing good Autumn growth there is an opportunity to build some condition back in to cows before winter.

Bull soundness (or lack thereof) is likely to be one of the main contributors to poorer performance this season. Service testing bulls can be done from now on, especially if you have insured or suspect bulls. A sobering stat is that 45% of unsound bulls go out for another season… if you are not service testing. It is recommended to get lame bulls tipped over and feet sorted also, so by bull sale time you will know if they are going to be sound or not.

I do often get asked about **AI in commercial beef** herds and what to expect. The list below is some of our results. There were bull effects on some farms with a swing of up to 15%. Generally better condition cows are chosen, but when poorer BCS cows were inseminated their conception rates could be down to 33%. It is interesting that the AI conception rates achieved on a farm generally mirror the 1st service conception rates of naturally mated cows. Some different synchronisation programmes were trialled this year, with generally good results achieved with both programmes. AI does not reduce the need for service bulls. When > 65% conception rates are achieved the calving spread really condenses and the empty rates for 3 cycles are generally very low (0-5%). It does drive the genetic direction of the replacements and this is the main reason to look at it. A 3- 5 year genetic plan for your AI program will help justify the time and investment.

Beef cow Veterinary Centre AI conception rates 2022-2023

	MA beef cow		2nd calvers (some 3rd)	
	17/20	85%	34/56	61%
	26/31	84%	22/43	51%
	17/23	74%	7/13	54%
	22/30	73%	22/38	57%
	33/45	73%	31/57	54%
	16/22	72%	36/59	61%
	72/100	72%	20/44	45%
	29/45	64%	9/14	64%
	13/21	62%	27/39	69%
	21/34	62%	29/58	50%
	22/36	61%	55/80	69%
	22/38	58%		
	26/46	57%		
	21/46	46%		
Overall	**354/537**	**66%**	**237/421**	**56%**

A top AI result with mixed aged cows at the Hummock Run this year.
Charis Blackwell (shepherd),
Jenny Newth (Veterinary Centre tech assistant),
Lindsay Dempster (owner) and Matt Hutcheson (shepherd general)

IN THIS ISSUE

Pub Talk

Add to your calendar!

"I hear there are no capsules this year – what do I do?"

Listen to Dave Robertson outline a strategy for on farm parasite control and management this season with Bionic Plus capsules not available.

RSVP to **events@vet111.co.nz**

Tue 11 April – 7pm
Waipiata Country Hotel

Wed 12 April – 7pm
Strath Taieri Hotel (Middlemarch)

Weaner Beef Animal Health

Luke Smyth BVSc
VETERINARY CENTRE Oamaru

With the recent showers of rain freshening up the dry land and kicking the winter crops along the idea of buying in beef weaners seems a whole lot more attractive than it was only a few weeks ago.

This requires a wee bit of thinking and working out.

1 What is the quality and quantity of my feed like?

To achieve daily growth rates of 0.5kg/day a 220-250kg weaner is going to need to be fed 6-8kg/DM/day.

Bear the following point in mind.

- Well-fed calves are better able to cope with worms.
- The higher the post grazing residual the less exposure to worms, as the bulk of the infective parasite larvae are in the bottom inch of the sward. Hard grazing behind a wire forces weaners to eat the most infective larvae.
- While it is cheaper to buy small calves these are going to need a lot more feeding and drenching.

2 What drench should I be using?

An oral triple combination drench is the ideal first drench for weaned beef calves if you can manage it. Consider leaving some of the biggest calves in the mob un drenched for refugia purposes.

A combination drench containing at least both a "mectin" and levamisole is important for this age group to manage Cooperia, which is invariably resistant to single active 'mectins.

3 Should I be vaccinating?

Covexin 10 in 1 vaccine provides the ultimate protection. It requires a 2ml sensitiser followed by a 2ml booster 4-6 weeks later. Full protection is not achieved until after the booster vaccination is given.

The risk of clostridial deaths is always higher for weaners grazing fodder beet, this is due to a combination of factors but high "sugar" levels in the crop and a high soil intake create the ideal conditions for clostridial bacteria to flourish in the gut.

4 Should I be giving them anything else?

Trace elements in particular Copper and Selenium are the most important here. Copper levels will tend to be lowest in the late winter/early spring period.

Copper 2ml Coppermax or Copaject injection or a 20g Copper bullet.

Selenium Selovin LA 1ml/50kg
Selovin 5 1-2ml/150kg

Turbo Advance ACVM A011714
Alliance ACVM A010249
Converge ACVM A010119
Covexin 10 ACVM A009028
CopperMax ACVM A009469
Copaject ACVM A011573
CopaCaps 20g ACVM A004945
Selovin 5 ACVM A006139
Selovin LA ACVM A009509

Ewe Wastage

Anna Macfarlane BVSc
VETERINARY CENTRE Oamaru

The most unproductive animal in a sheep farming system is a dead one. It's inevitable to have some ewes die but a recent study has put some more figures to the amount of ewe wastage in NZ. The study by Massey University followed 13,142 ewes across a variety of NZ farms. Of the ewe hoggets which began the study, 50% were culled prematurely, 40% died on farm and only 10% reached 6 years old.

A skinny ewe at mating is much more likely to become a dead ewe over winter, losing the value of the ewe along with the potential lambs she could've reared. Another study found that of ewes below BCS 2 at the beginning of winter, 83% were not present at weaning.

Drafting light ewes off after weaning and preferentially feeding them to reach a minimum BCS 3/5 premating, is a great way to set the ewe up to cope with winter, lambing and have good lambs at foot come weaning.

Growing your replacements hoggets well prepares them to have a more productive lifespan and be more valuable to the farm. Hogget wastage was primarily due to culling based on being dry at scanning or losing the lamb by tailing. If breeding hoggets and basing culling decisions around performance, ensure good growth rates premating to reach targets of 65% mature weight.

With increased ewe wastage, more replacements are needed to keep the flock self-replacing hence limiting the opportunity to apply selection pressure to replacements to chase desirable traits.

Take home messages:

- BCS at key times aiming for BCS 3+/5 and having a management plan for lighter ewes to increase their longevity. If after some TLC, these ewes don't pick up it could be time to talk to a vet about investigating the issue further.
- Good hogget growth rates will set ewes up to have a more productive lifespan
- Collect information (timing of deaths, scanned dries, wet dries) to understand and manage ewe wastage on your farm.

Anna Macfarlane scanning beef at Rob and Jane McClure's farm, Mole Hill Downs

NEWETRITION

Lucy Cameron BVSc BSc – **VETERINARY CENTRE** Waimate

Winter Feed Budget

It was a challenging dry summer for many places, and while some areas are now dealing with feed quality issues others will still be short looking ahead to winter. Autumn is the time to start planning for spring and do a winter feed budget. All this means is working out what your potential feed supply is, and then allocating it to your animal demand from all the stock classes on farm. The end goal is to maximise productivity in spring – ewes and cows in good condition at lambing and calving will produce good quality colostrum, giving their lambs and calves the best start, and adequate pasture covers of good quality feed will help with lactation and youngstock growth rates.

Your winter feed budget may involve the whole farm and every stock class, or just the lambing platform – for example you may aim to have a cover of 1400-1500kg DM/ha on this at set-stocking.

It can be as simple or complicated as you like. Don't get bogged down in the nitty gritty, being 5-10% off is far less concerning than having no idea at all what your situation is.

If you're not keen on a full feed budget the key areas to focus on would be:

- How much feed is required at set-stocking? How many ha and what cover – and work back from there
- Have a rough idea of how much silage etc you have available, and what the quality is like?
- Yield your winter crops (especially fodder beet) so they can be accurately allocated
- Plan to body condition score your ewes at scanning time – and scanning early/lates – to help with further allocating feed at this time if necessary
- Remember that it's 3x more energy efficient to keep condition on stock than to take it off and put it back on again!

Ewes mustered in to the yards - Rocklands Station

At the Maniototo Show – from left. Thea Huddleston, Tate Clouston, Demi Huddleston

Jenny Newth, LAVT from Vet Centre Ranfurly.

An Interesting Case
Thiamine deficiency in lambs

Luke Smyth BVSc – **VETERINARY CENTRE** Oamaru

A mob of 650 fattening lambs had been grazing on a summer crop of rape and red clover. The client had found about 10-12 lambs dead and a few down on their sides.

Animal health was great. The lambs had been drenched every 4-5 weeks with Matrix and fully vaccinated for Clostridial disease with 2 shots of Multine-B12 6 weeks apart.

Post-mortem of dead lambs showed the brain to be swollen and pale with areas of necrosis. Submission of tissue samples to the lab for histology revealed degenerative changes in the brain consistent with polioencephalomalacia (PEM).

PEM is caused by a deficiency of Thiamine (Vitamin B1).

Thiamine is essential for brain function. In ruminants Thiamine is produced by microbes in the rumen. Younger animals initially get Thiamine from their mother's milk and when weaned their rumen bacteria will begin to produce Thiamine.

All ages of sheep are susceptible to PEM, but the incidence is highest in well fed growing lambs in late summer. The condition is usually associated with a feed change to a diet of improved pasture containing less roughage. This favours the multiplication of thiaminase producing bacteria in the rumen. These bacteria produce enzymes which break down and destroy Thiamine produced by the rumen.

Without Thiamine the brain starts to swell causing neurological signs. Lambs appear drunk and stumble around aimlessly, this quickly progress to blindness as brain swelling affects the optic nerve, eventually the animal goes down and lies flat out on its side often with the head thrown back 'star gazing', the animal may convulse and show rapid eye flickering eye movements.

Affected sheep slip into a coma and die unless treated.

If sheep are treated early in the course of the disease with Duoject-B (a combination of Vitamin B1 + Vitamin B12) before irreversible brain damage has occurred complete recovery is possible

The first shot of Duoject-B is given intravenously and then followed up by twice daily intramuscular injections until the symptoms resolve. Within 24 hours recovery may occur although sight may take longer to return.

Product of the Month

Nitrate Test Kit

- For checking nitrate toxicity in crop or pasture.
- The kit provides for on farm analysis of nitrate levels in at risk crops.

RISKS

- Slowed plant growth caused by cold and cloudy weather.
- Excess Nitrogen uptake in crops following fertiliser application going into winter.

PRICE

Full Kit

$198.40 incl GST

(25 tests = $7.94 per test).

Testing Strip Refill only

$129.50 incl GST per Pk/25

Eraser Triple Active

Combination Oral Drench for Sheep

We would like to inform you that due to supply issues, Troika triple combination drench will no longer be available from 1 April. However, we are pleased to announce that it will be replaced by Eraser triple combination drench, which contains the same active ingredients and is equally effective in treating internal parasites in your animals.

We apologize for any inconvenience this change may cause and assure you that we are committed to providing you with the best possible products for your animals. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this change, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for your continued trust and support.

Eraser – ACVM A011945

Actives:

- Abamectin
- Albendazole
- Levamisole

Dose Rate

1ml/5kg

Includes Cobalt, Zinc, Selenium, Copper and Iodine

Arthrodesis Surgeries

Sarah Boys BVSc – VETERINARY CENTRE Oamaru

Damage to the ligaments of the carpal & tarsal joints (wrists and ankles) are frequent injuries that we see in our working dogs. These most commonly occur after a fall from a height or after getting a foot caught in a fence or the back of a bike.

In some cases, the ligaments can be repaired but with more serious ligament injuries there are often no options to save the function of a joint and an arthrodesis is required. Arthrodesis means the surgical fusion of a joint. In other words, the bones forming the joint are permanently joined together so that there is no movement in this part of the limb.

Despite the joint no longer functioning, most working dogs do remarkably well following arthrodesis surgeries. A study of NZ working dogs that underwent a pancarpal arthrodesis (complete wrist fusion) found that 9/12 dogs continued to perform all or most of their previous duties and 10/12 dog owners were satisfied or very satisfied with the dog's post-surgical mobility and work performance.

Boots and Bob are two working dogs that have had an arthrodesis surgery performed by our Oamaru Veterinarian, Sarah Boys. Boots has had his entire wrist fused & has made a full recovery, while Bob has more recently had the lower part of his ankle fused and is currently in the process of returning to work.

Boots

Bob

Mat O'Connell at the Strath Taieri dog trials

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EXTRA

A Wormy Autumn and the Reality of Drench Resistance Emergence

Dave Robertson BVSc BSc
VETERINARY CENTRE Oamaru

With rain, dew, mild temperatures and extra pasture thatch there are greater opportunities for parasite larvae to mature, to be consumed, to proliferate in sheep and ultimately cost you feed, time, growth rate and profit margin if not addressed.

Well fed ewes in good condition can handle larval challenge and there is probably little advantage in drenching adult stock if they are up to weight for mating. Ewes also play a vital role in being net removers of pasture larvae and providing worm population turn-over that has not been exposed to a drench. They are essential part of lamb finishing rotation. The more cases of drench resistance I see the more important I realise undrenched ewes are for slowing the emergence of drench resistance parasites accumulated in lambs.

Current drench resistance reports are somewhat alarming. Many 10-day post-drench FECs are not clean. Triple drench failure is arguably the biggest animal health issue facing New Zealand sheep farmers and threatens the viability of many lamb finishing operations. The trade in drench resistant worms in store lambs is widespread and is not duly considered by many. Store lamb properties have a responsibility to know their drench status. Finishers need to regularly do post-drench checks (FEC10) before they start "squirting and dying" 3 weeks after arrival. I know it is a bit of messing around getting dung samples out of sheep, but FECs are very valuable information at this time of year. It is going to be hard to keep larval challenge levels low this autumn, and even harder if your drenches are failing.

3 different examples of recent drench checks. Each case tells a story:

Mob: ½ breed black face	
Last drenched:	Product: Matrix Date: 13.3.23
Days since drench:	10days
Sample ID	**Strongyle** (eggs / gram)
1	0
2	0
3	0
4	0
5	0
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	
Average	**0**

Mob: Hoggets not doing well	
Last drenched:	Product: Triple Date: 9.3.23
Days since drench:	**12 DAYS**
Sample ID	**Strongyle** (eggs / gram)
1	850
2	900
3	50
4	0
5	350
6	800
7	400
8	250
9	750
10	0
Average	**435**

Mob: MOXI-Check mob	
Last drenched:	Product: Cydectin Date: 27.2.23
Days since drench:	10 days
Sample ID	**Strongyle** (eggs / gram)
1	700
2	200
3	500
4	700
5	200
6	750
7	1500
8	50
9	100
10	850
Average	**555 epg**

D A Robertson, Palmerston FEC recording ram hoggets this autumn.

It is pretty good result to get 10 zeros these days. The follow-up conversation is "how do we maintain this efficacy?". A lot of poor performance in lambs is due to lack of worm control. This cost of it is considerable, not just in wasted time and drench but "it takes a fair bit to turn those lambs around again". The MOXI-CHECK initiative has been insightful. I would recommend to any farmer considering investing in LA injection instead of capsules to do one. We have drawn off small lots of cydectin injection for farmers to test on lambs this month to work out if it is going to work on your worm population in ewes pre-lamb.

Drench resistance is not the end and is not absolute. Once diagnosed in a season the current hot larval challenge need addressing with novel drench use, undrenched ewes then cattle clean-up or cultivation. The follow up is a 2- 3 year process to resuscitate drench efficacy. It involves

- More monitoring with FECs (pre and post drench)
- Alternating novel drench use and tentative triple drench use in the 2nd year.
- More undrenched ewes with and behind lambs with pre-lamb refugia plan.
- Selling lambs store or killing more off mothers, trading freezer ewes instead of lambs are also ways of keeping the sheep business going whilst not exacerbating the problem.
- Avoiding larval challenge with specialist finishing forage.
- Not contaminating young grass and baleage aftermath paddocks with resistant larvae
- Commitment to refugia concepts in lamb mobs.

All drench retailers are finding challenges with supplying product this April. We will do our best to source effective, reputable brands. I would suggest ordering product well in advance for the next few months.

Kurow Junior Cricket

Proudly wearing their new tops sponsored by the Veterinary Centre

Kurow Junior Cricket – Primary Team –

Kurow Junior Cricket – Intermediate A Team –

Kurow Junior Cricket – Intermediate B Team –

Teaser Rams

Vanessa Love BVSc
VETERINARY CENTRE Ranfurly

It is nearly time for mating to begin for another season. We are tidying up the last of our ram palpating jobs and getting well through the ram teaser surgeries.

Rams should be checked ideally 6-12 weeks before mating. This gives you time to treat any issues you find and they have time to recover.

When checking your rams remember the four T's: Teeth, Toes, Tackle & Testes, (plus Torso according to the Aussies which means condition score).

For those who haven't used a teaser ram, they are rams who have been vasectomised so they are sterile but still produce testosterone. They still have normal libido and will mate ewes.

Teasers are used to synchronise ewes and hoggets that are already cycling, and stimulate non-cycling ewes and hoggets to cycle earlier. They may also improve ovulation rate so the number of twins is higher. The ideal teaser ram is healthy, has passed the four T's test and preferably isn't a ram lamb.

Teasers are ideally cut 6 weeks minimum before mating so they have time to heal and any viable sperm in the tubes is gone.

Ewes should be isolated from all rams and teasers for 21 days, then the teasers can be introduced 17 days before mating. This should stimulate the ewes to have a silent heat if they aren't cycling, so they are in their second and more fertile heat when the rams are joined.

Some people recommend using teasers at the normal ram ratio (1:50-1:100), other suggest 1:300 for hoggets and 1:500 for MA ewes. A New Zealand study concluded that when using teasers for hoggets ratios of up to 1:197 can increase the percentage of hoggets bred in the first cycle by at least 16.4% so 1:200 is what we normally recommend for both hoggets and MA ewes.

Teased hoggets have larger ovarian follicles and heavier hoggets (>36kg) have the best response to teasers as they are more likely to already have started cycling.

Give your local clinic a call if you'd like to book in any last minute ram vasectomies for the upcoming mating season.

Veterinary Centre

Oamaru	Ph 03 434 5666
Waimate	Ph 03 689 7213
Ranfurly	Ph 03 444 1020
Palmerston	Ph 03 465 1291
Kurow	Ph 03 436 0567
Omarama	Ph 03 438 9868
Glenavy	Ph 03 689 8118

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