



# August is Animal Health Action Month

**Dave Robertson BVSc BSc – VETERINARY CENTRE Oamaru**



The planning is (mostly) done, now its time to get the tasks done before lambs start appearing.

A core role of our Veterinary Centre team is to ensure you've got the right animal health products when you need them. We work really hard to provide a great service when we know you are under pressure to get things done.

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Preparations are well underway on the farm for Spring  
 Top Left to Bottom Right: Chris Chave, Paul Rae, John Lee, Sam Radford, Annabelle Subtil, and Dave Robertson

## Products of the Month



**EACH \$2.40**

**Smartrace Adult Sheep Bolus 48g**  
 \*SOLD as EACH Dose (Pack of 50 Doses Shown)



**EACH 60c**

**Refugia Ear Tags**

\*SOLD as EACH Tag (Gang of 4 Shown)

## FREE Faecal Egg Count

If you purchase your Long Acting Drench Injection or Drench Capsules from any of our Veterinary practices, you automatically receive a FREE Egg Pack to check efficacy of the product 60-80 days after use.



# Minimising Wastage in Red Hind Reproduction

Ella Swann BVSc – VETERINARY CENTRE Oamaru



What is the ideal? A hind producing a single calf through to weaning each year from the age of 2 to 10 years old. However, realistically this is not possible.

So what is an achievable goal? Based on the top 10% of mobs in NZ a KPI to aim for is a weaning rate (calf surviving to 3mths of age) of 94-95% for mature hinds, and 92-93% for R2 hinds.

The 5 main sources of wastage:

## 1. Poor conception rates in R2 hinds (i.e. below 70%)

The onset of puberty is controlled by both photoperiod (day length), and live weight. If nutritionally constrained puberty can be delayed until a hinds 3rd or 4th autumn. Aim for a puberty target of 90% MA live weight to maximize R2 reproductive performance.

## 2. Poor conception rates in MA hinds

In MA hinds a BCS >2 is generally permissive to ovulation, however the timing of ovulation can differ by up to 12 days resulting in later fawning. Nutritional intervention pre-rut can result in a large increase in BCS, up to 0.5-1 BCS unit in a 2 week period.

## 3. Late conception date in MA hinds

The aim is to have a tight and early fawning spread, this will depend on BCS at the time of mating as well as nutrition during the last 1/3 of gestation. A hind has the ability to hold a pregnancy until the fawn reaches a standard birth weight. Under nutrition will retard foetal development resulting in a longer pregnancy by up to 10days.

## 4. Perinatal fawn mortality

The national average for perinatal fawn mortality is reported to be 5-6%. Causes include; starvation/dehydration, dystocia and misadventure. Most of these causes are linked to hind stress during the fawning period and often associated with finding/competition for an appropriate birthing site.

## 5. Fetal loss

Abortion rates in a typical NZ herd is <2%, with 2/3 of monitored farms having a 0% incidence. Double scanning would be a tool to monitor this, if of concern.



# Pre lamb Clostridial Boosters

Dave Robertson BVSc BSc – VETERINARY CENTRE Oamaru



Which vaccine? We stock clostridial vaccine that has been rigorously tested, reliable and has good science and technical support behind it. Results:

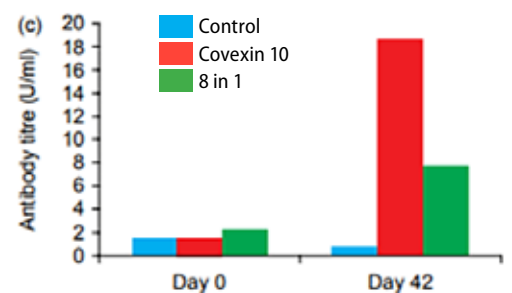
**Multine 5 in 1** works. It has Prefringens D that is the main cause of pulpy kidney (plus tetanus and 3 others) It has been shown to have a higher antibody peak than other 5 in 1 vaccine. We take the view that more antibodies are better and covers variables of lambing date from vaccination and amount of colostrum ingested by lambs. It also comes with B12 and Selenised.

**Covexin 10 in 1** is favoured when the clostridial risk is greater and for stud stock. The risk is higher for ewes and lambs when grazing legume dominant or high sugar feeds. For example lucerne and fodder beet. Covexin 10 has been shown to have excellent antibody levels and superior to other 8 in 1 vaccines.

**Optimal time for clostridial booster is 2-4 weeks pre-lamb**, that is when the udder is obviously developing.

**Nilvax** is a clostridial vaccine with levamisole drench which can be given earlier than 4 weeks.

Veterinary Record | April 30, 2011



Graph of antibody levels to *C perfringens* type D 6 weeks after booster vaccination

## Waimate & Hyde Pre-Lamb Road Show 2021



Waihao Forks Hotel



Hyde Hall

Good attendance at the recent pre-lamb roadshow events in Waimate and Hyde.

Lively discussion was had around the power of protein supplement pre-lamb; bigger capsules and when primer drenches are appropriate; getting comfortable with refugia and monitoring; dog nutrition and health; beef cow fertility. If you missed out in attending please contact your nearest Veterinary Centre if you'd like notes on these topics.

# NEWTRITION

## Fully feeding multiples

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

With scanning ticked off on most places, it's time to start thinking about prioritising feeding your multiple bearing ewes as they approach late pregnancy.

During the last trimester, the energy demand of the growing lambs increases rapidly. If ewes are not fed well over this period, several negative effects can occur. Colostrum quality and total milk yield will suffer, milk let down can be delayed, and lamb vigour and survival will be reduced.

### About 7 weeks out from lambing:

- Ewes should be offered **1.7 – 2.4 kg DM/day**
- Avoid grazing below **900 kg DM/ha** (~2cm)

### In the last 2 -3 weeks of pregnancy (i.e. from set-stocking):

- Offer **3 – 4 kg DM/day**, with the aim of them getting 2.5 – 3 kg down the throat
- Avoid bulky feeds such as hay, and bulb crops (which contain lots of water)
- Aim not to graze below **1200 kg DM/ha** (~3.5 – 4cm)

### Triplets:

- **If you can offer post-grazing residuals of 1200 kg DM/ha, there's no benefit to separating twins and triplets** – the ewes can't physically eat more
- However, if you can't offer all multiples that allowance, prioritise your triplet bearing ewes so that they are on higher covers

### Body condition score:

- Poorer conditioned ewes will produce up to **a litre less milk per day** than heavier ewes – this won't necessarily matter if she just has one lamb, but will have a big impact on twins or triplets
- The good news is, if ewes are fully fed at the end of pregnancy, milk yields will be high regardless of body condition score – a win for lamb survival.



# Abortions in NZ Sheep

**Jasper Meek BVSc – VETERINARY CENTRE** Oamaru

Over the last 5 years there has been a decrease in the prevalence of abortions in sheep, which likely relates to increasing vaccination against *Toxoplasma*, *Campylobacter*, and *Salmonella*. Regardless of vaccination, these remain the three most common causes of abortion/fetal loss in New Zealand Sheep, followed by *Listeriosis*.

Features of the four main causes of abortion:

### Campylobacter

- Late-term abortions and still-births
- Infection by ingestion of faecal contaminated feed, water or access to aborted material
- 25% of aborted feti will have **grossly visible liver lesions**
- Outbreaks usually in **naive/young ewes**

### Toxoplasma

- Mid-term mummification or late-term abortion
- Cats shed protozoa in faeces and contaminate pasture or supplementary feed.
- Often **mummified foetus**

### Salmonella Brandenburg

- Late-term abortions and still-births
- Infection by ingestion of aborted material or faecal contamination of pasture or crops, as ewes can remain carriers for up to six months
- **Sick ewes** - approximately 50% will die
- Aborted fetus usually **poorly preserved and smelly**
- **Zoonotic** – Wear PPE when disposing of lambs and placentas

### Listeriosis

- Late-term abortions and still-births
- Usually associated with feeding of **poor-quality silage** or excessive soil ingestion e.g. break-fed crops in cold, wet, muddy conditions

Diagnosis generally requires submission of samples to the lab. If dropping lambs into the clinic for testing, it is important they arrive ASAP (chilled if possible) to maximise our chances of getting a diagnosis.



# Metabolic Disease in Ewes

**Daley Watson-Krawitz BVSc – VETERINARY CENTRE** Waimate

Metabolic diseases are a common occurrence each year around lambing. By far the two most common are Pregnancy Toxaemia (also known as sleepy sickness, or twin lamb disease) and Milk Fever.

Milk fever is a lack of calcium which can occur in multiple bearing ewes in the last few days before lambing. At this point the demand for calcium from the growing foetus is significantly more than what the ewe can gain from its diet and mobilise from her own stores. This often arises due to a period of reduced feed intake. This can be from sudden feed check, a change of feed, excessive mustering or holding in yards for too long. Feeds low in calcium (maize silage, green feed oats, fodder beet bulbs) can also increase the risk of milk fever. Affected ewes begin as twitchy, staggering, quickly progressing to being dull, may have a snotty nose, and go down followed by coma and death. Lambs are often born dead or weak.

Pregnancy Toxaemia also occurs in late pregnancy due to a lack of energy resulting in a mobilisation of large quantities of fat tissue. During the last 2

months of pregnancy a multiple bearing ewe's energy requirements nearly double as this is when 70% of the foetuses' growth occurs. A 70kg ewe with twins will need 2kg of high quality feed (11+ MJME/kgDM), this is a large volume – about 2 shopping bags full! It becomes quite easy for these ewes to be underfed if they do not have access to sufficient high quality feed. These typically begin as well conditioned multiple bearing ewes which lag behind, but as the disease progresses they too become dull, stagger, may appear blind, and go down followed by coma and death. Their wool may also pluck out quite readily.

### There are 2 syndromes:

-Underfeeding over an extended period in the last trimester of pregnancy

-A sudden stress event restricting access to feed such as a severe storm or extended yarding

As both of these diseases can present in a similar fashion (a down ewe close to lambing) they can be difficult to distinguish. Also milk fever often progresses to sleepy sickness, particularly in twin bearing ewes. As such it is best to treat for both

diseases, the goal is to get them up and begin eating high quality feed as soon as possible. If it is uncomplicated milk fever a rapid response within an hour is expected, pregnancy toxaemia can be hard to treat in its late stages and may take longer to respond. Treatment consists of giving calcium as either Glucalpos or Calpro375 (100ml slowly in the vein if possible or under the skin) and a form of energy (e.g. 100 - 120ml Ketol or Calstart orally) twice per day.

Getting onto these cases as soon as possible is key to a good outcome. If they remain down and unresponsive several hours following treatment and show no interest in food their prognosis is poor as brain and kidney damage has often occurred.

If you have any questions then feel free get in contact with one of us at your closest Blue Cross clinic.



**Veterinary  
Centre  
Team**  
wishing you all  
the very best  
for a great spring!



## SHEEP MEASLES Dog worming protocol

**Eleanor Barton BVMedSci BVM BVS (Oamaru) –  
VETERINARY CENTRE Oamaru**



Since farm dogs are such an important part of your working staff it is important to regularly worm them to ensure that they are getting maximum nutritional benefit from their feed and able to work optimally.

The secondary benefit of worming them is prevention of Sheep Measles. This tapeworm, *Taenia ovis*, infects dogs and grows in their intestines and the egg containing segments of the worm are shed via faeces onto your land. The sheep ingest this and their meat can become affected by *Cysticercus ovis* which is the intermediate stage of that same parasite. The appearance of the lesions in the sheep's muscle gives this phenomenon the name Sheep Measles.

Worming all of your dogs every 30 days ensures that the tapeworms in the intestine are killed before reaching egg releasing maturity. It is important that the wormer used contains the active ingredient Praziquantel so we recommend using Drontal every 3 months and Droncit for the monthly dose in between. Drontal should be used at the normal label dose to ensure both tapeworm and other intestinal worms are killed. Droncit however can be used at half the labelled dose to control *Taenia ovis* so a 10kg tablet size can be used to treat a 20kg dog.

All new dogs should be dosed at least 48 hours before coming onto the property or dosed and quarantined for 4 days without entering sheep paddocks. This is a reliable and cheap method of preventing sheep from picking up the parasite and controlling sheep measles.

**RuralSupport**

0800 787 254  
(0800 RURAL HELP)

[www.rural-support.org.nz](http://www.rural-support.org.nz)



**Reach out if you are finding  
things tough on the farm!**

## Pre-Lamb Refugia Plan



**Dave Robertson BVSc BSc –  
VETERINARY CENTRE Oamaru**

Protect your farming future with a refugia plan for your ewe flock.

Pre-lamb refugia planning becoming a mainstream concept. It will prolong the effectiveness of our drenches.

### How do you do it?

- 1 Don't drench some ewes.**  
Often decided on BCS/multiples etc
- 2 Tag them with a "refugia" tag.**
  - 5 – 10 ewes/capsule bag.  
(Ask for 10 tags in a bag of capsules)
  - Can opt to tag 1st ewe of every race
- 3 Give refugia ewes a mineral drench/injection OR bolus**
  - LSD oral
  - 2mL Smartshot long acting B12 and long acting Se.  
Similar amount of mineral as what a capsule delivers
  - All trace bolus (I, Se Co)
- 4 Monitor results:**
  - FEC 60 -80 days post capsule insertion (tailing). Can monitor refugia FEC also.
  - BCS and dag score refugia ewes at tailing and weaning. Compare to treated ewes.
- 5 Use refugia ewes to run with lambs post weaning**  
e.g. 50 ewes per 1000 lambs.  
They will supply susceptible parasites (but not too many) to the lamb finishing system and improve condition for tupping.

