



EWES NEWS

Merry Christmas from the Veterinary Centre administration staff ...



Sheep production- Weaning worm control

Dave Robertson BVSc BSc
Oamaru Veterinary Centre

The drench at weaning is the most important drench a lamb gets. Why is this?

- You have switched off the high protein milk supply.
- Whatever worm burden the lamb has, can check them significantly post weaning.
- The worm population in the lambs comes from the ewe parasite population. So the weaning drench needs to be fully effective to ensure resistance is not multiplied through the autumn.

What about refugia in a lamb system?

Lambs on clean feed do best. Young grass, or fresh feed that was previously grazed by cattle or cut for baleage is ideal. But how do we slow the resistance in areas with low parasite challenge where a higher proportion of worms are in the guts of sheep and cattle?

Drench all lambs at weaning. Refugia can come from:

- Ewes run with lambs. If you have tagged refugia/undrenched ewes pre-lamb then these are the best to run with lambs. Otherwise light 2 toothers are good. 20- 50 is enough.
- Run un-drenched ewes behind lambs to clean up 1-3 days is sufficient.
- 2nd and 3rd lamb drenches can mark and leave 5% undrenched.

What is an effective drench on your property?

- Triple drench (Matrix) has been the main stay for many years, and can still be >98% effective. But we cannot assume this. Do a 10 day FEC post weaning to ensure no worms are left behind. If you know from reduction tests or egg counts that triples are under pressure then use Zolvix Plus or Startect, especially if you have had capsule leakage in ewes.
- A reduction test gives you the best insight into what drenches work or not.



OUR CLINICS

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





Uddering Ewes

Daley Watson-Krawitz BVSc
Waimate Veterinary Centre

On average 5% of ewes in breeding flocks have defects in their udders or teats. The effects of these defects can be quite dramatic on the following year's production for that ewe.

Lambs born to ewes with defective udders were 3-4 times more likely to die and the ones which did survive were found to grow 25g/day slower. The combined effect of both of these is that **a ewe with a defective udder weaned on average 11kg less lamb** than their healthy flockmates.

Most often uddering ewes takes place at weaning as this is a convenient time to do it. However studies at Massey University have shown that **the number of ewes found with udder issues doubled 4-6 weeks after weaning**, and these defects persisted into the next season.

This increase is due to things such as post-weaning mastitis and also

the fact it is easier to find defects in a dry udder.

It is therefore recommended that the best time to udder ewes is 4-6 weeks after weaning.

Uddering ewes is a quick process once you get used to it, and can be done in the race. Things to look for are generalised hardness, lumps **within the udder tissue**, teat damage, missing teats or a 'pencil lead' feeling core within the teats. *(Lumps just in front or behind the udder do not appear to be an issue)

Uddering ewes 4-6 weeks after weaning is the best time to find defects and remove these ewes which are unlikely to be productive units next season. It is also a great time to check teeth and feet, allowing enough time to consolidate ewe numbers before mating. If you would like any further information or assistance when checking your ewes feel free to contact one of our Blue Cross vets.

“Newtrition”

Lucy Cameron BVSc BSc
Waimate Veterinary Centre



Parasites and Protein

Young growing lambs have a high demand for protein: for body maintenance, lean tissue and wool growth and a healthy immune system. Going into summer, worm burdens can place an additional protein demand on lambs, often coinciding with declining pasture quality, legumes making up a lower proportion of the sward, weaning, or a reduction in milk intake as ewe production drops.

A worm burden affects the lamb by:

- reducing appetite, limiting the total intake the lambs are achieving
- direct damage to the gut lining resulting in reduced protein uptake
- additional losses as the gut 'leaks' protein

If lambs are already on a marginally adequate diet (low protein, low available energy or overall lack of feed), then the effect of the parasite burden can **significantly reduce feed intake and growth rates** over this critical period. **Immunity will also suffer**, and lambs will be less able to resist a parasite burden or infection (e.g. pneumonia).

Smaller lambs have the highest protein demand, and will be most affected by a heavy parasite burden. Lambs under 35kg should be a priority group for access to any higher quality

feed available such as chicory, herbs or brassicas. These feeds have the added advantage of tending to have lower levels of larval contamination than grass dominant pasture. It is the daily ingestion and development of larvae within the lamb which cause the majority of production losses. In a 1982 study, it was shown that **undrenched lambs grazed on low contamination pastures grew faster** than lambs that were drenched regularly on high contamination pastures.



Lambs receiving a pre-weaning drench

With the season we are having, lambs may already be on the back foot as ewe's milk production drops and pasture that is available may not have adequate legume content. It is therefore important to maintain good parasite control as to not add additional stress to the growing lambs, and where possible, prioritise feeding cleaner higher quality feeds such as brassicas or herb and legume-based pastures.

Zolvix Plus – Novel Active Oral Sheep Drench



- Actives - Monepantel plus Abamectin
- Dose 1ml per 10kg liveweight
- From \$0.69 plus gst per 30kg lamb dose (5 litre pack rate)
- Meat Withhold 14 days
- Used as a knockout, exit or quarantine drench in strategic drench programs, Zolvix™ Plus provides premium parasite control and helps to protect the efficacy of other effective drenches.

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Veterinary Centre – By the Big Blue Cross

Maniototo Update...

The Veterinary Centre Ranfurly are joining the Ranfurly community for the Late Night Shopping event – on Friday 11th December. Come and see our well stocked Veterinary Centre, with a comprehensive product range, enjoy a hot ham sandwich on the BBQ – and catch up with our friendly team! Looking forward to seeing you at Late Night Ranfurly.



Case of the month – Hairy Shaker Disease

Euan Tait BVMS
Waimate Veterinary Centre

This year we have seen Border Disease rearing its ugly head. Border Disease, or Hairy Shaker Syndrome, is caused by a virus very similar to BVD. It often manifests itself with poor scanning results (due to early pregnancy loss), abortion at any stage throughout pregnancy and the lambs that are born with the infection are weak, have low birth weight, poor viability, often tremor and have an excessively hairy coat – hence the name. In naïve flocks up to 50% of lambs may be affected and the economic cost can be massive due to the increase barren

rates of ewes and often the lambs don't make it to weaning. Sheep, like cattle with BVD, can be persistently infected and maintain the virus on the farm. If you develop any lambs with symptoms of Border Disease, it is important to carry out testing to check for the persistently infected sheep and get rid of them before the next mating otherwise these will act as a reservoir for infection on the property. If you are worried that Border Disease may be affecting your flock please get in touch with a member of our Sheep and Beef team.



Velvet season

Luke Smyth BVSc
Oamaru Veterinary Centre

Velvet prices may have eased, but it's certainly been a good season for growing velvet and I've seen some beautiful heavy heads cut this season.

Hamish Smith of Ben Dhu Station, Omarama weighs and tags some clean tidy traditional style velvet.

Hamish has been focussing on improving velvet production for the last 5 years and has developed a close association with a trusted Canterbury stud. Dedication and a combination of genetics and feeding has seen a significant improvement in velvet weights. Average velvet weight is now over 5.2kg, including 2 year old stags. The best head was an absolute ripper of over 14kg from a mature 8 year old sire stag and

many of this stags progeny are now coming through the system as 3 and 4 year old stags. It's immensely satisfying to see our clients achieve such positive results.

As an indication of how far the velvet industry has progressed since the 1980's if a mature velvet stag cut over 2kg he was a keeper and if he cut 3kg he was known as a heavy velvet!

Velvet ID tags

The old plastic 'cable tie' tags are obsolete and should not be used.

The new velvet tags Hamish is applying are a wrist-band type self adhesive tag with a barcode and unique number. The tags are wrapped around the velvet in the same way as the old tags and the ends stuck together. Ensure the tag is not too tight as it can constrict and damage the velvet during

freezing. Next season's tags will be different and have a UHF chip in them.

Naturo rings

Animal welfare with respect to velvetting techniques is being actively monitored at the Venison plants and any non-compliance is being followed up by MPI.

In particular, there have been some issues reported with spikers velvetted with Naturo rings.

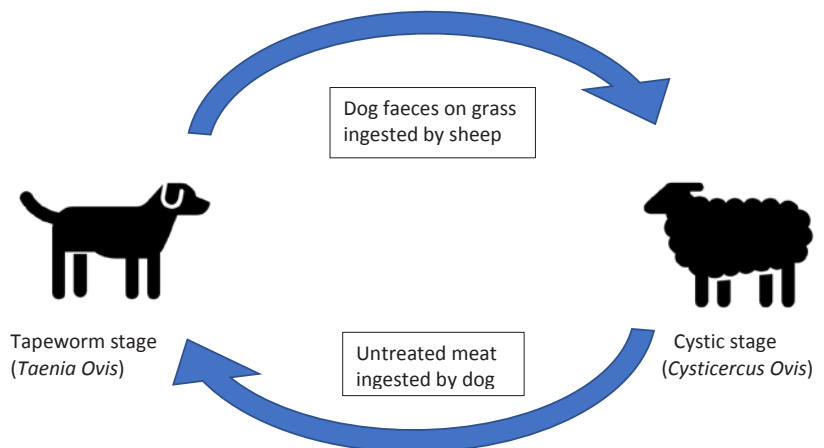
It is vitally important that:

- Only Naturo rings are used and that they are doubled over and applied correctly.
- The velvet is cut above the pedicle/coronet junction.
- Rings can be left on only if the stags are going direct to slaughter within 72 hours and have not had any drugs.



Hamish Smith of Ben Dhu Station, Omarama

Sheep Measles Euan Tait BVMS



Locally we have had reports of increased incidence of cysts associated with sheep measles being apparent in carcasses. This serves as a timely reminder about good practice with farm dogs to prevent infection. Regular monthly worming of all dogs on the farm with Praziquantel (Droncit) should be standard. Dog tucker sheep meat should be frozen for at least 10 days at -10°C to kill the tapeworm and prevent infection when ingested.



Flea Season

Anna McLeod BVSc
Waimate Veterinary Centre



With Summer here already, peak flea season is well upon us!

Why worry about fleas?

Fleas cause skin irritation, itching and discomfort. Severe itching from a heavy infestations or a sensitivity to fleas can result in significant hair loss, skin infections, and potentially loss of appetite and body condition.

A dog stopping to itch and scratch constantly is more distracted and much less productive at work. As prolific multipliers in the environment, seeing a flea on your dog is always the tip of the iceberg. When considering a control programme for your team, a reliable long-acting product is ideal. This ensures ongoing itch protection and breaks the cycle of re-infestation from build up in their environment. With several options available, we can help you ensure the best plan for the comfort and performance of your dogs this season!



Beef Breeding

Dave Robertson BVSc BSc
Oamaru Veterinary Centre



An even line of AI composite calves at the Hummock. Progeny were 20 kgs heavier at weaning than naturally mated mobs due to advancing and condensing the calving spread

December is an action month for beef cow systems. Calf marking and bulls going out. Observing bull behaviour and performance is important. Rotating bulls each month can mitigate issues. Note swap dates in your diary.

Are you in a BVD vaccinating programme? Many cows get there booster at calf marking as the bulls go out.

The artificial insemination of commercial beef cows is growing. It is interesting to see progeny coming through for mating from previous AI programmes, because that's what its about really. The long game of herd improvement.

In a text book world cows should be gaining weight from November to February harvesting surplus feed and improving pasture quality, this is a challenge right now. Scope and frequent shifts are the most practical management options on farm, grazing off-farm has been adopted by some to protect younger breeding stock, along with removing wet-dries at marking. Getting back in calf is so important, that weight loss in cows at this time can be very costly (in long run).

Early weaning and aged pregnancy testing are useful. Dry years when cow numbers need to be reduced 3rd cycle/late calvers should be the first to go. If heifers are to be reduced then identify 2nd cycle for potential sale. We can identify down to 30 days pregnancy, but prefer 35 days as a cut off. Talk to one of our experienced scanners about a date for your heifers and cows.



Jasper Meek in action - AI'ing a beef cow

CHRISTMAS HAM PROMOTION

With selected drench purchases, you get a tasty kiwi ham on the bone for Christmas





EWES NEWS



Ram Health Checklist

Euan Tait BVMS
Waimate Veterinary Centre

Rams are, unfortunately, often a forgotten entity on the farm at this time of year. Over the next few months it is pivotal to get your rams back up to scratch for next year's mating and make sure those that are going to struggle to perform leave the farm.

A thorough check of rams just now can increase their longevity and improve mating capacity for the following season. A recent study carried out by Dave Robertson and Bridget Roulston of the The Veterinary Centre found that ram wastage on some properties can be as high as 25% per year. This comes at a huge expense to the farmer and investment of time and attention now can greatly reduce these losses. This year we are offering a thorough "Warrant of Fitness" for rams – not just testicle palpation – to help increase longevity of the rams on your farm. This will include:

- Testicle palpation
- Feet soundness
- Teeth and BCS check
- Fly control and clostridial vaccination
- Review drench plan and trace element status



Footrot

What your rams need...

- Clostridial vaccinations e.g. 5/1 or 10/1
- Klik – fly control
- Dectomax – mange and worms
- Feet check
- Mineral boost – selenium and iodine.



Bill Sutherland – checking rams prior to sale at Benmore Station



Jim Hore - Stonehenge Romney and Merino studs

Body Condition (BCS)

On average rams lose 13% of their bodyweight over mating – with many losing up to 30%. Rams losing more body condition had slower recovery and higher culling rates.

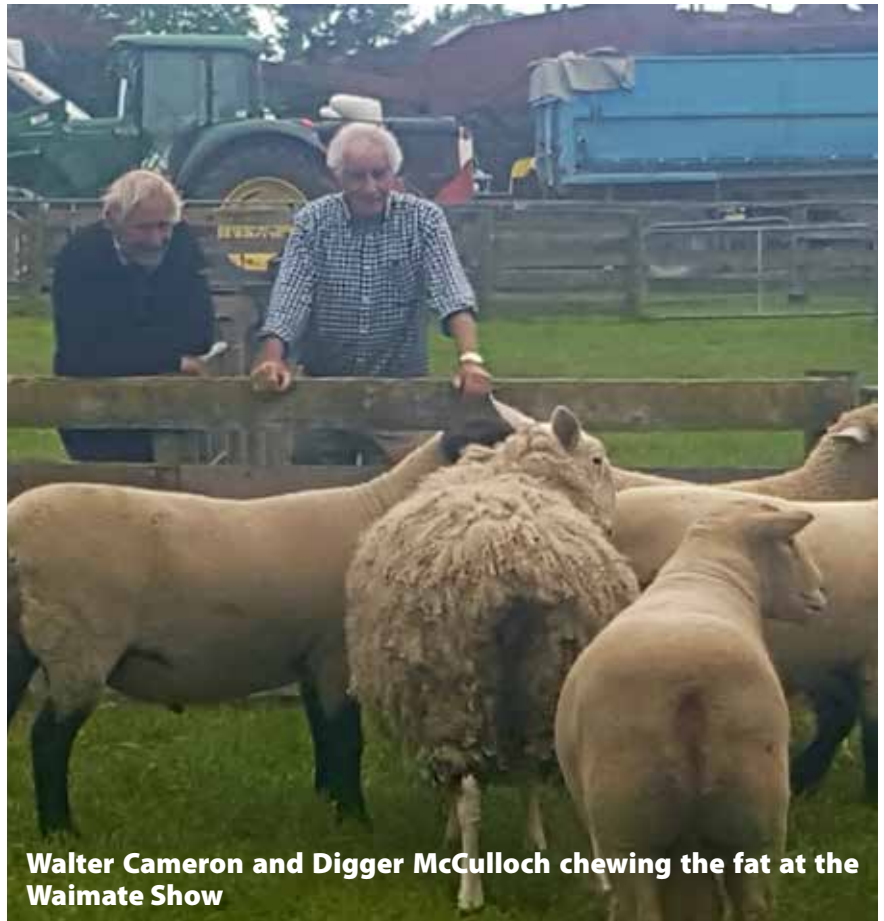
Teeth

Broken mouths are associated with ill-thrift, death and are a main reason for culling. Checking ram's teeth over the coming months allows earlier culling decisions to be made and gives time for replacements to be sourced. Running rams on longer pasture is likely to decrease tooth wear and also has the added benefit of likely improving BCS.

Testicles

Of course, at the crux of our ram inspections is testicular palpation. We will check for any inconsistencies in the testicles indicating potential subfertility, and also lumps which could indicate infection with *Brucella ovis*. Brucellosis can have a devastating effect on a flock so annual check-ups are highly advisable. Anything with suspicious lumps will be blood tested to rule out brucellosis. Scrotal mange is often found during routine testicular inspection.

Testicular palpation should be the basis of the annual ram inspection and we often find several rams that will be sub-fertile – not keeping these rams and finding suitable replacements is vital for flock efficiency and performance.



Walter Cameron and Digger McCulloch chewing the fat at the Waimate Show

Sheep Production



Dave Robertson doing a FEC in Oamaru

**Invest in your farm's future.
Know your drench status.
Do a reduction test.**



Now is the time to do a FECRT.

**Call your local
Blue Cross Veterinary Centre
to book one today!**

Product of the month – Cyrex Liquid

Elanco



Active ingredients

- Contains Cyromazine for long term protection and Spinosad for instant kill
- Effective against flies, maggots and lice
- Combination power of 2 actives to mitigate resistance.

Application

- Dilution rate 1 litre makes 500 litres of wash
- At least 2 litres of wash required per sheep and an additional 0.5L for each month of wool growth up to a maximum of 5 litres per sheep.
- Suitable for all breeds of sheep.
- Meat withhold 7 days
- Length of protection
- Up to 12 weeks protection (requires full saturation)

Pricing

- \$0.20 per litre

