



EWES NEWS

Comment



Jeff Spillane,
Commercial Manager

A key ingredient to turning over lambs is growing them well. Good animal health is a corner stone of this. Preventing sudden deaths,

a solid worm control program, and making sure B12 is adequate are the big issues. Others issues we've been discussing are feed transition, fly control and pneumonia. Interesting times for the beef cattle scene. Store R2 cattle are hard to come by and with the soft dairy grazing market it's likely beef weaners are going to be in hot demand this autumn. The key elements of a profitable beef system in this market are aiming for high performance in growth rates and getting cows incalf in the 1st 2 cycles.

In this article we look at the benefits of foetal aging preg testing, the issues that arise with a change season, and lining ewes up for tugging. We also have an out of season case from Ranfurly of Nitrate poisoning and we touch on some of the beef cattle repro research going on. This season we can offer free lab testing for determining your BVD status.



The Palmerston-Waihemo A and P Show was a great place to have a chat with many clients. Scott Tomlinson, (pictured left) did well winning a Lightforce 100W Halogen Spotlight in the Animal Health Plan draw. Lynley Verkerk, visiting from Oamaru, won the draw for a 15 kg bag of Eukanuba dogfood. Congratulations also to Peter Lawson who won a bag of Royal Canin Endurance dogfood. Keep an eye out for the Veterinary Centre team in the next few weeks at the different A and P shows around our district.

Just a reminder of our free delivery service.

*Orders made before 10am - delivery that day.
Orders phoned in after 10am - delivery the following day.*



What comes with green grass?



It is a well established fact that sheep do not always 'do' well when the greenery first returns. We certainly welcome the return of the grass and rebounding winter crops, but we have had several conversations with farmers asking about the issues with the change.

Worm control

Firstly there is a massive emergence of parasite larvae and a synchronised hatch of parasite eggs that have been released from their dry dung casings. Proactive drenching will minimise production losses from the initial hit of gut worms. Sticking to an EFFECTIVE COMBINATION drench, and regular 28 day interval for lambs and hoggets is important. A pre-tup drench to 2 tooth and lighter ewes can be productive. Using a tape drench (First or Matrix Tape) on store lambs or at weaning can give additional benefits if tape burdens are high, or it is the lambs first exposure to tapeworm.

Minerals

B12 can be a limiting mineral to lamb growth in wetter/lush conditions. It is usually an autumn thing, but early Feb has seen out-of-season mushroom appearance...

Short acting b12 for trading lambs is fine, but consider longer acting option for replacement ewe lambs or fine wool lambs to be wintered - SeCo capsules or

smart shot.

Iodine is sometimes debated as to when and how much is required. Here's a collection of facts that I use to make my decision about iodine requirements:

- Parts of Otago and Canterbury have produced goitres in stock, that is, full blown Iodine deficiency.
- Native pastures are much lower in iodine than improved pasture mixes.
- Brassica feeding over the winter deprives pregnant ewes of iodine at a critical stage of foetal development. Some modern clovers prevent iodine absorption in the animal.
- During wetter years, when there is more leaching of minerals, and/or less dirt consumption iodine intake is reduced.
- Foetuses with sub-clinical iodine deficiency have lower birth weights and poorer lamb survival (in Merinos and Crossbreds). The 100 club research from fine wool flocks in the 1990's demonstrated lambs could be saved through iodine supplementation.
- One North Island trial with long acting iodine in Romney ewes yielded 14% more lambs surviving in the treated group compared with controls. Other recent North Island trials have not shown a difference.

Selenium

South Island soils are deficient in selenium. Whether it's a long or short acting form, breeding stock (ewes and cows) need selenium on board at mating. A dose pre-tup (sheep) or in the winter (cattle) is standard practice. Monitoring actual animals levels with blood tests at critical times helps make decisions around supplementation.

Selenium Deficient soil areas in the South Island



Fly

If you dipped with an IGR solution pre-Christmas, the protection is probably wearing off by the end of February. One small spot of fly on a ewe is enough to start cycling activity, so a March-April fly treatment can be prudent. We have a wide range of product actives and application methods available so it is worth asking one of our vets about.

Sudden deaths

We are also hearing of cases of Pulpy Kidney with the fresh growth about. Two shots of 5in1 or 10in1 are required to remove this risk. One shot will provide limited protection for a limited time - the second shot is required for the animal's immune system to develop the necessary protection.

Science and Research

Beef cattle fertility research

The Veterinary Centre has been involved with a beef and lamb genetics funded project, initiated by Neil Sanderson. The ovaries of beef cows from Southland to Wairarapa had ovaries follicle counted using digital recordings of ultrasound images (Antral Follicle Counts). This is an exciting area of research, which does show some interesting insights into the types of cows that end up empty or not conceiving early. Preliminary findings show that those cows with low AFCs tended to be more highly represented in the empty mobs.



Neil and Rose Sanderson

Pink Eye In Sheep

I am looking for a farm to do a field trial on pink eye treatment in sheep. Any farm with a significant out-break please contact me, Dave Robertson at the Veterinary Centre.

Wormwise - Beef and lamb funded initiative

Look out for a WORMWISE workshop coming to your area. I will be facilitating these small group sessions through March and April. These are NOT another power-point sit and listen thing, they are all about active learning and practical worm control measures for your situations.



Beef cattle pregnancy testing

Have you age pregnancy tested your beef herd? There are many advantages to this over the standard wet/dry information. This is where we estimate a calving date for each cow +/- 7 days.

The benefits of dating beef cattle pregnancies mean you can:

- Monitor cows closer at calving. Especially with heifers and studs recording calves on the drop.
- Calculate a conception rate to each cycle and monitor the efficiency of cow cycling and bull activity.
- Winter later cows differently.
- Sell 3rd cycle/late calving cows or can be the first to go if required.
- Identify bull sub-fertility. Detected if there are different conception rates after bulls have been swapped. Suspect bulls can be serviced, tested or culled.

If you have more dry cows than normal but have not aged pregnancy tested, you have missed a big

opportunity to get to the cause of the problem. Foetal aging is a key to diagnosing beef repro performance and vital to implementing change that ensures better results.

Fossil Creek Angus stud, founded by Neil and Rose Sanderson, aged pregnancy tested their herd with the Veterinary Centre for the first time last year.

"The data just saved so many issues for us at calving. We were able to do regular drafts of cows due to calve and made calf recording so much easier...There were real benefits with grazing management and we'll definitely do it again next year".

Recording of the aged data can be as simple as a spray dot on the back, some put a sheep tag in the ear of 3rd cycle cows, or we can record tag /EID with the pregnancy status data.

In order to get accurate data, foetal aging is best done 6-8 weeks post tested, you have missed a big bull removal.

Animal Health - It happens best when planned

Running up to mating a lot of stock work occurs, especially with 2 tooth and hoggets. Having a calendar of events to work to makes sure the right product and the right time is used. If we haven't approached you about getting an animal health calendar done, ask about it next time you are in the clinic getting supplies. Feb- March Animal health planning.

Ewes

- Pre-tup drench +Selenium
- Toxo and campy 1st vax
- 2nd Campy and Flexidine 1 month later

Lambs

- Drench 28 day intervals
- B12 and clostridial vaccine booster

Cows

- Book pregnancy testing

Calves

- Weaning - Oral Matrix hi-mini dose
- 1st Covexin 10 injection

Summer Nitrate Poisoning in Beef

- Michael Lilley BVSc, Veterinary Centre Ranfurly



Near the end of January two 18 month old beef steers died suddenly grazing irrigated mixed pasture. The break was moved later

than usual and the animals were hungry. The pasture contained a mix of ryegrass, clover, leafy turnip, plaintain and some weeds, mainly fathen.

Nitrate testing showed high levels of nitrate in the turnip and moderately high levels in the grass and fathen. This supported a diagnosis of nitrate toxicity. This is out of season for the



Maniototo but the weather conditions of cold cloudy days preceded by a period of rapid growth has allowed nitrate to accumulate in the plant. Without a history of recent Nitrogen application these levels should drop once we get some sunny days. The

pasture will be retested before grazing is attempted. In the meantime the cattle are being grazed on other pasture, however feeding hay before moving the break would also reduce risk of nitrate poisoning if no other grazing was available.

Do you know the BVD status of your beef herd?

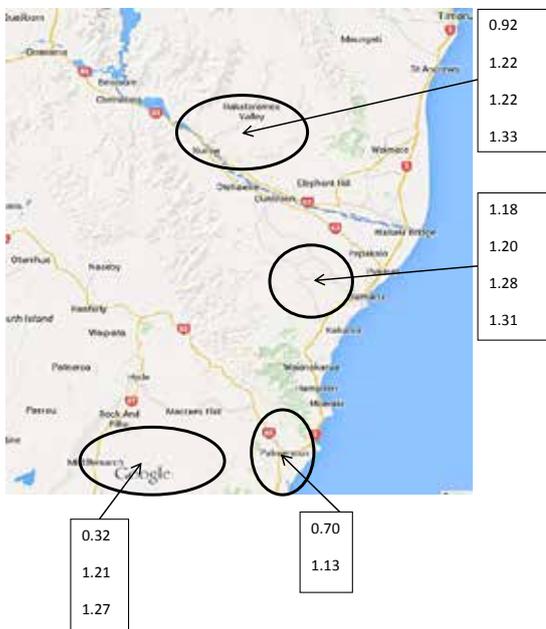
It is an important question to know the answer to as BVD is calculated to cost \$3000- \$9000 per 100 cows. This is due to the effects it has on pregnancy rates, abortions, poor doing calves and deaths. Last season we tested several herds in the district at pregnancy testing time to answer the question. We found that the vast majority of herds were exposed to the virus.

- A value greater than 0.75 indicates that the herd has a Persistently Infected (PI) animal in it or they have had recent exposure to the virus.
- A value of 0.17- 0.74 indicates the herd has minimal current exposure to BVD.
- A value of less than 0.17 indicates no exposure to the virus

As you can see from the data only 2 of the herds sampled had minimal exposure.

All the others have had recent exposure to the virus. The virus was present in all areas of the practice that we went looking for it.

To help farmers answer the question "what is the BVD status of your herd" we have again managed to secure funding to continue testing herds in the district at half price. At pregnancy testing time we will randomly blood test 15 cows from your herd. The lab test results will indicate the level of exposure of your herd to BVD. We will then discuss what this means and what you can do about BVD on your farm.



New to the Team

Bridget Roulston



Bridget is a good keen lass from farming stock in West Otago. she has shown a refreshing enthusiasm for production animal

work. She is a keen trap shooter, getting a new shotgun for christmas so no doubt will be on the lookout for a pond this May...

Angus Gibb



Angus is a keen sheep and beef man from North Canterbury. He is staunch on the virtues of a good Corriedale.

Angus has relished the chance to get out doing our ram runs and is keen to get his teeth into some reduction testing and beef cattle work. Angus has got involved with the local community playing cricket for Valley and is putting the final details on his senior rugby contract for the season.