



# Veterinary Centre EwesNews

## NEWTRITION Fodder Beet Tips



**Lucy Cameron BVS<sup>c</sup> BSc – VETERINARY CENTRE** Waimate

A mild start so far, but winter is here. Some tips to keep in mind as many of you start grazing your fodder beet crops:

**Yield** – Unlike say kale or rape, fodder beet is notoriously tricky to “guesstimate” and must be yielded correctly. We can do this for you, or talk you through the process, which is very different from yielding other crops. Getting the **bulb dry matter tested is essential** and has a significant impact on the final result.

**Allocation** – If you have R2’s you will initially be increasing their allocation by 1kg DM every second day (R1’s ½ kg DM every second day). To know how many rows to allocate go back to your yield:

- For a **25 t DM/ha** crop there will be **2.5 kg DM/m<sup>2</sup>** thus = 1.25 kg DM per linear metre
- So for a 120 metre long break you will have 120 x 1.25 = 150 kg DM of feed in that row

**Supplement choice & protein** – Something fibrous to chew on is obviously important to keep the rumen working and reduce the risk of acidosis. While your stock are transitioning on to their full allocation slowly reduce the amount of supplement available, once on ad lib R1’s can have 1kg DM and R2’s 2kg DM, sheep should be happy with 100g DM/h/d.

The right choice of supplement is essential, because for some of your stock classes it’s not just providing **fibre**, it’s also needed as a source of **additional protein**.

**Younger growing animals, and pregnant & lactating animals need more protein than fodder beet alone can provide.**

- R1 calves/hoggets need 16-17% CP (crude protein)
- R2’s need 14-15% CP
- Lactating ewes need at least 15% CP
- Heavily pregnant twin bearing ewes need 16-18% CP in the diet

Fodder Beet bulbs are generally 7-9% crude

protein. Most of the protein is in the leaf, but depending on the stock class being fed this is often not enough to balance the bulbs especially as **leaf reduces later in the season**.

Higher protein supplements include **good-quality grass or lucerne silage/baleage**. A feed test is always a good idea, especially if you’re feeding a more susceptible group such as twin-bearing ewes in late pregnancy.

**Lambs** – Struggle to fatten on fodder beet as the protein requirements of rapid growth in lambs limits their daily LWG. For lambs it is more common to use fodder beet as a ‘holding paddock’, achieving LWG’s of 80-100g/day but with a very high stocking rate (~300 lambs/ha), and then put onto pasture to fatten as needed.

**Clostridial vax** – All animals should be vaccinated against clostridial disease before going onto fodder beet, particularly R1’s, R2’s & sheep. Sheep are significantly more susceptible to clostridial disease than cattle and it is critical they are fully vaccinated. For lambs this should consist of a course (2 shots) of 5-in-1 or Covexin 10-in-1. Adult animals should receive a booster at least 2 weeks before going onto crop as well if they have been routinely vaccinated pre-lamb.



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## Veterinary Centre Winter SEMINARS

- ▶ **Animal Health Update**  
15 June – 5-6pm  
Ranfurly – Waipata Country Hotel
- ▶ **Custom Footrot Vaccination**  
1 July – 4-5pm  
Omarama – Boots & Jandals Hotel
- ▶ **Sheep & Beef Seminar**  
7 July – 6-7pm  
Waimate - Waihao Forks Hotel
- ▶ **Sheep & Beef Seminar**  
28 July – 5-7pm  
Kurow – Kurow Hotel
- ▶ **Spring Management**  
4 Aug – 4-6pm  
Palmerston – Waihemmo Lodge

It'd be great to catch up!

**Book Today**

RSVP to [events@vet111.co.nz](mailto:events@vet111.co.nz)



# Winter Lice Management

**Vanessa Love BVSc – VETERINARY CENTRE** Ranfurly



Lice are becoming more common in NZ sheep flocks, with many farmers now doing once yearly shearing and less plunge and shower dipping being used in favour of lower volume, faster use products.

Lice are host specific meaning cattle lice don't transfer to sheep and vice versa. The life cycle of a louse consists of three week long nymph stages which moult and become adult lice who live for four weeks laying eggs glued to the base of the hosts hair or fleece. They live their entire short lives on the animal.

Lice spread from sheep to sheep by close contact, management practices encouraging close contact increase spread. A louse separated from its sheep host, could live in the yards or on fences for five days. If in direct sunlight it may only be a couple of hours.

Lice don't move far, most movement is up and down the wool fibre. When it is hot and bright, lice are close to the skin, when cool and shady they move to the fibre tip where they are more likely to spread. Therefore lice populations are highest in autumn/winter and naturally drop over summer.

Spread occurs slowly and numbers build up over time, the most common sheep lice *Bovicola ovis* will only lay 30 eggs in their life. Poor condition or stressed sheep are more susceptible to higher lice burdens.

Shearing removes up to 80% of lice burden depending on closeness of the cut. Treatment is best done when lice numbers are at their lowest, in summer or immediately off-shears.

Long wool emergency treatments won't eradicate lice but will reduce spread and prevent further damage. They should be treated when next shorn with a different chemical group. If treatment isn't feasible in pregnant ewes, they will spread lice to their lambs within 24 hours

of birth and treatment will be needed at tailing or weaning.

Tips for chemical use:

- Change chemicals regularly
- Where complete saturation occurs in plunge or shower dips there's no advantage to using two actives unless also targeting flystrike.
- Apply products as per the label
- Dip each mob at the best wool length and time for that mob.
- Focus on on-farm lice eradication.
- Separate treated sheep from untreated.

Chemical use is one part of a farms lice control plan, other components are good biosecurity, secure boundary fencing and checking bought in sheep for lice.



## When did you last look in your dog's mouth?

**Sarah Boys BVSc – VETERINARY CENTRE** Oamaru



Working dogs are less prone to dental disease than small white fluffies, however may have some of the following problems:

- Fractured teeth
- Tooth root abscesses
- Dead teeth
- Oral cancers

These conditions frequently go unnoticed but can cause chronic pain, poor body condition and prevent your dog from working to its full potential.

Tooth wear is another common condition in working dogs. Worn teeth are usually darker in colour and may be worn down to the gum line. If this occurs gradually, the tooth responds by laying down a protective layer at the top of the tooth to harden the area. These teeth are normally left alone but are at an increased risk of infection so need to be monitored closely for any sign of inflammation around the tooth or tooth sensitivity.

An example of a fractured tooth that went un-noticed in a Huntaway. This dog presented for lameness and the dental disease was picked up during examination.



## Product of the Month

**Active(s)**  
Barium Selenate



## Selovin LA

**Long acting selenium injection**

- A single injection guarantee's selenium levels for 12 months.
- For heifers this ensures adequate selenium for pregnancy, calving and early lactation.
- For calves this ensures adequate selenium for growth through their first winter
- Calves born with higher selenium levels have better survival rates.

### DOSE RATES

Lambs at Weaning	0.5ml
Sheep	1-2ml
Calves	1-2 ml
Yearling Cattle	3-5ml
Adult Cattle	6-10ml

**Price**  
**\$3.59** Excl GST  
**per 5 ml dose**



# Scanning Hinds for Pregnancy



**Luke Smyth BVSc – VETERINARY CENTRE Oamaru**

While we've had an exceptionally dry mild autumn the year is not standing still, and winter is rapidly approaching. Most stags were probably removed from the hinds in early to mid-May and the most common question I'm now getting asked is "when should I be scanning my hinds". The answer is it depends on what information you want to get from your pregnancy test.

We've already scanned mobs of hinds where AI was used in late March followed by a chaser stag, this has allowed us to identify AI pregnancies and the first round of natural mating's to the chaser stag through aging of the foetus.

To achieve the best possible outcome from scanning there are a few things to consider.

**Timing of scanning.** Hinds can be diagnosed pregnant from 35 days of pregnancy until around 120-130 days of pregnancy. After 120 days, the pregnancy tends to drop down into the abdomen

making visualisation of the pregnancy difficult.

Hinds should be scanned 35 days after the stag has been removed from the mob, this means most hinds should be scanned from early June through to early July.

**Facilities.** Sufficient restraint of hinds is necessary. While deer crushes are the ideal setup but with quiet hinds and an extra person to help with deer handling, swinging doors, races and small pens can all be workable options.

**Permanently identify dry hinds.** Dry hinds should be tagged with either a coloured fold over sheep tag or a slaughter tag, this saves a lot of confusion further down the track when aerosol marks wear off!

If you are planning to scan your hinds for pregnancy or are unsure about your facilities or the help required please talk to one of the Veterinary Centres experienced deer vets.



## Crop paddock Macraes



## The Styx



### Products of the Month

#### Startect

broad spectrum oral combination drench for sheep

**Active ingredient**  
Derquantel, Abamectin

**Controls**  
Itch Mite, Lungworm, Nasal Bot, Roundworm



**Withhold**  
Meat 14 Days

**85c** Per 40kg Lamb Dose  
Excluding GST



## Autumn Exit Drenching with Novel Active Drench Products

#### Zolvix Plus

broad spectrum oral drench for sheep and cattle

**Active ingredient**  
Monepantel, Abamectin

**Controls**  
Roundworm



**Withhold**  
Meat 14 Days

**\$1.03** Per 40kg Lamb Dose  
Excluding GST





# Bull Soundness

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

From the pregnancy testing I have done in the last 3 months many of the poor results have been due to bull soundness issues, hence I have spent most of this month service testing and fertility testing bulls. Conversations often end up on the topic of why don't bulls last.

Some stats:

- The most common reasons for bull breakdowns are penile injuries, chronic lower back degeneration and lameness (feet infections and leg injuries). Penile injuries are the most common insurance claim.
- The average service lifespan for a beef bull is 3 seasons (5 yrs old).
- A \$10,000 bull lasting 3 years means an average calve cost of \$110/calf. If they lasted 5 seasons it would be \$66/calf.
- 45% of unsound bulls go out for another season.

So what bulls last longer? How did we get this situation where we cannot cull bulls on production based reasons – it is always replacement of injured bulls? What do we look for in the appearance of a bull or the figures that is going to indicate it will last longer? I am not entirely sure of the answer here but I have come up with a theory based on biology and crude observations of what happens in nature that may explain some of the dilemma of bull breakdowns

The physics: Cattle have got bigger.

A 1000kg animal throwing all its weight in the air and forward in an attempt to thread a bit of fibro-elastic tissue through a 10cm target (without looking) is bound to cause some issues eventually. Like the higher injury rate in modern super-rugby players compared to the amateur era, it appears the injury rate in bulls has increased as bulls have got bigger. It is known also that leaner commercial bulls (of the same genetics) have lower injury rates than fatter, heavier bulls.



1963 R2 bull Navigator GEM.  
Record price Hereford bull.  
Probably ~500kg.



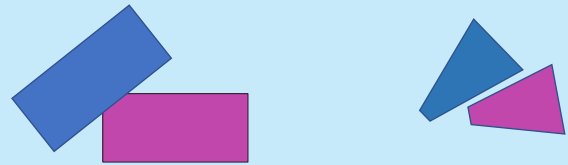
2022 a great example of a modern well-balanced, R2 horned Hereford bull  
Est weight ~800kg.

But I don't think it is just a size issue, there are some geometric things that have occurred in our pursuit of more meat and a certain aesthetic.

## The geometrics of mating injury risk

With domestication and selection for more muscle we now have squarer, longer animals with more meat (and weight) in the hind quarter. The bull is required to lift this hind quarter weight and move forward in an explosive movement during mating. It lends then to the argument that with more force and energy required to move heavier hind quarters there is more risk of error or injury. The domestic cow also has a high tail head setting ("a good top line") which means bulls have to move their hind quarters further to achieve a mating from potentially a less stable platform. Looking to nature there are not many examples of ruminants with fibro-elastic penis arrangements that have proportionally square tail heads or large hind quarters. Wild types are generally triangular shapes with finer hind quarters that slope from the hip to the tail head (see the pictures of the Wildebeest, the Bison, even the Rhinoceros). The wild-type female has a more sloping hind quarter angle that would remove some of the angle that the male hindquarter has to travel

and also allows the male when mounted to have the centre of balance through the brisket over female rather than through the lower spine in a domesticated bull.



The longevity of Wildebeests and Bison is 10 -20 years in the wild. I wonder what the incidence of penile damage and lower back injuries is in them?

This is all very interesting and somewhat academic, but what can we do about improving the fertility outcomes of our beef herd and longevity of domestic bulls we purchase? I don't think most stockpeople could handle selecting "tadpole arsed" animals for the sake of mating efficiency and longevity. But I think we did learn from the 1980's when selecting for extremes of growth, frame size and hip height that bull longevity crashed. There is no one set way nature designs things, but there is a proportion and balance to all shapes and forms that will lead to better durability than shapes out of balance or over-stressed in certain points. EBVs have been fantastic for advancement in measurable beef production traits, but they cannot be the total answer to selecting balance and proportion for the physical requirements of efficient serving ability. Weak neck muscle, lack of masculinity, paunchy guts, straight hocks, loose pizzles, nervous/agitated demeanour, small testicles are all kind of indicators of things that may lead to reduced longevity. It does raise the question as to what dark, unsound shapes we maybe selecting by using only artificial insemination of the latest and greatest figured bulls from overseas that we have never seen or even know if survived passed a year...

The Greeks had their guide to the aesthetics of nature in the golden ratio 1: 1.6 (closely associated with the Fibonacci number sequence that describes biological growth patterns). The Greeks and Di Vinci based a lot of their art and architecture off that ratio. Perhaps this may be the answer to selecting better balanced bulls with longevity?

