



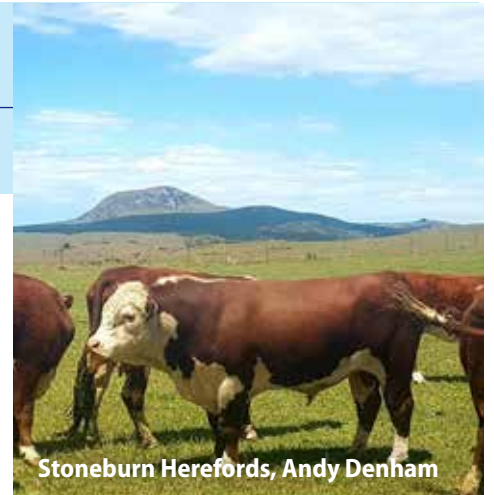
# EWES NEWS



## Bull Testing

**Dave Robertson BVSc BSc**  
Oamaru Veterinary Centre

Service bull testing and semen evaluation is valuable information for studs and commercial bull teams. May – June is a good time to book mating ability testing in-order to work how many new bulls you require. Insurance on bulls often expires at this time of year, hence good to get a professional assessment of your bull team prior to this occurring. We have recently up-graded technology for semen collection and evaluation. The through put is very efficient and we are not only evaluating the viability of samples in real time on farm but also assessing semen structure (morphology) at an accredited laboratory.



Stoneburn Herefords, Andy Denham

## Growing Future Farmers

The Veterinary Centre a proud to be involved with the pilot Growing Future Farmers scheme that is up and running in our area. This is an on-farm placement initiative for school leavers, who get the opportunity to live, work and learn in real-time on working sheep and beef farm. It is a 2 year practical programme looking at the full range of skills required to be part of sheep and beef cattle farming. Omarama Station owners Richard and Annabelle Subtil are one of the host farms who have taken a student and recently hosted a very successful day on meat processing for all the students. The Veterinary Centre will be providing support with animal health information and tutoring at various times. Great to see local farmers supporting a practical programme to develop the next generation of farmers. Ping Horn of Kurow is the overall scheme supervisor.



Ellise O'Neil GFF student mustering at Omarama Station



Left Jake Faulkner (student), Richard Hingston (chef), Brooklyn Scott (student), Elise O'Neil (student)

## Product of the month

### Royal Canin Energy 4800 Dogfood

- Elevated fatty acids (30%) for sustained endurance
- High protein levels (32%) for muscle condition
- The premium food for keeping condition and sustaining working dog energy through winter

### Price

- Pallet price (36 bags) \$123.90 incl gst per bag
- May Promotion - Buy a pallet and get 2 Extra bags at no charge.



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## OUR CLINICS

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# Iodine Supplementation

**Daley Watson-Krawitz BVSc**  
Waimate Veterinary Centre

Iodine is an important trace element required by the growing foetus for metabolic function, brain development, lung development and wool growth. These factors contribute to making deficient new born lambs weak and very susceptible to cold stress. Iodine deficiency can occur due to a low level of iodine in soils/plants but more commonly is due to ingestion of compounds which block the uptake of iodine from the diet. These compounds (called Thiocyanate goitrogens) are found in most Brassica species such as kales and many New Zealand cultivars of clover also contain the compound. Kale and swede bulbs also contain low overall levels of iodine. South Canterbury and parts of Otago are known to have naturally low levels of iodine in soils and last year we did see some clinical cases of iodine deficiency in new born lambs in the Waimate district.

Clinical goitre is the classic sign of Iodine deficiency, however less obvious signs may be occurring and could be resulting in a lower lamb survivability. Often this is put down to poor weather at lambing but low iodine could be a contributing factor. It is important to note that iodine is a requirement for the **developing foetus during the last half of gestation**. Testing for iodine deficiency can be difficult. The best test is to collect and freeze 10-15 slinks/dead lambs at birth, this allows us to dissect and weigh thyroid glands to give idea if levels during pregnancy were adequate and guide decisions for the upcoming season.

**Supplementation should be undertaken if:**

- Feeding brassica crops
- Goitre has been recorded previously on farm
- Significant increase in thyroid:bodyweight ratios previously
- Moderate thyroid:bodyweight ratios and iodine deficiency has been noted in the district.

**Supplementation options:**

As iodine is required for the growing foetus during the last half of gestation, supplementation should be done before and/or during this time. There also can be some positive effects on oestrus behaviour in ewes.

**Flexidine:**

- An oil based slow release injection of iodine.
- Ideally given a month before mating. This will provide adequate levels for the ewe at mating and coverage for the growing foetus well through lambing.
- If this timing is missed, then can give a

half dose at scanning time to provide protection to the foetus.

- Give prior to putting onto goitrogenic crops.

**LSD** (Livestock Survival Drench):

- An oral supplement given through a drench gun.
- Contains iodine and Vitamin D (some evidence to show may reduce milk fever and bearings), E, A. Also low levels of selenium.
- Can be mixed with drenches to be used on

the day.

- Ideally given 3 doses. Prior to mating, at scanning and prior to lambing.
- If not given prior to mating then giving doses at scanning and prior to lambing will provide supplementation for the growing foetus.

If you would like to discuss iodine supplementation or testing then please contact one of us at the Veterinary Centre. If in doubt, collect and freeze some slinks for us to look at this year!



# Feed Crop Measurement

**Daley Watson-Krawitz BVSc**  
Waimate Veterinary Centre

With animals heading onto winter crops at around this time of year it is important to ensure they are being fed enough, the basic starting point is to know the yield of the crop you are putting them on. The Veterinary Centre offers services for:  
-Yielding winter for total dry matter.  
-Perform and provide nutritional advice on a feed analysis (Metabolisable Energy, Calcium, Phosphorus Levels etc.).  
Having an accurate yield of your crops not only allows for an appropriate feed budget but in the case of crops such as fodder beet

helps avoid accidental over allocations and/or acidosis. Please get in contact with one of the team at the Veterinary Centre if you would like a feed assessment done.



# “Newetrition”

**Lucy Cameron BVSc BSc**  
Waimate Veterinary Centre



# Balancing Feed Over Winter

Now is an ideal time to do a **100 day winter feed budget**. Weather conditions and expected pasture growth rates can certainly change, but putting some figures down and having an idea where things are at is still going to put you in a better position to make strategic decisions before it gets tough.

- Account for **feed supply** (pasture growth, feed on hand) and **feed demand** (stock class numbers & requirements) plus **target pasture cover** at the end of the budget period
- Hopefully the end result will give you confidence to get through winter with what you have, if not you've got three options: **sell stock; buy in feed; or take liveweight off stock**
- Be cautious with allowing ewes to lose body condition in early to

mid-pregnancy – during this period placental development is occurring, and underfeeding can lead to lower lamb birthweights

- Also remember liveweight is **4x** more expensive to put back on than it is to lose!
- Any feed changes should be made slowly to give the rumen time to adjust
- Supplements are better introduced early – grain isn't going to increase in volume sitting around but grass grows grass if left to its own devices – also ewes in later pregnancy are more sensitive to sudden diet changes

Our vets are happy to help with this process, whether it involves a full feed budget, or other services such as yielding winter crops, feed testing silage, or just a general chat.





# Beef Cow Repro Review

**Luke Smyth BVSc**  
Oamaru Veterinary Centre

For many beef herds pregnancy test results have slipped and final empty rates of 15% from an 8-9 week mating have unfortunately not been uncommon this season. Furthermore the number of cows which have conceived late/3rd cycle cows has increased. 1st and 2nd calver's are the stock class which has had the poorest results.

This always prompts the question, why was my scanning result so crap?

There are always BVD, Selenium and bull soundness issues to consider but the single most common cause of a lower than potential pregnancy scanning has been cows being too light at mating time. It was certainly tough farming through the dry spring/early summer, the anticipated spring flush never eventuated and cows lost weight as they milked, off their own back. This has been reflected in calf weights at weaning with many average calf weights being back by 20kg/head.

As we review a scanning result I am more convinced than ever that we must address cow condition issues at key points of the year first and foremost to optimise their performance.

- Pre winter.
- Pre calving.
- Pre mating.

So what can we do to improve cow condition pre winter?

1. Use pregnancy testing data to cull empty and late calvers. Late calving cows have the least profitable weaners and the greatest chance of being empty next year. Identify them and make sure they are first culled if numbers are to be reduced pre winter. Yes kill space is tight and if late calvers can't be culled consider running them separately to optimise feeding of the main early calving mob.
2. For the individual light conditioned cow the influence of a drench and preferential feeding can be dramatic.
3. Invest in trace elements. Right now is the best time for copper supplementation before we go into winter, especially with pregnant cows on crop. Giving long acting Selenium injection pre winter will ensure peak selenium levels through calving and mating.

This season has also highlighted the importance of always having good numbers of well grown replacement heifers that are early calving coming into the herd. . A simple rule of thumb should always

be to over mate your yearling heifers for only 2 cycles and cull the empties. When 1st calving heifers join the herd it can take longer to get back in calf, especially for lighter animals which are still growing. Top performers manage this age group well.



## Bull Maintenance

**Dave Robertson BVSc BSc**  
Oamaru Veterinary Centre

Lame bulls happen. It is not always the stud breeders fault. Tidying up a bulls feet can ensure they can be sound for another season and will not grow a deformed hoof. It is very routine to sedate and cast sire bulls to sort out feet. Our specially designed tungsten blade grinder disc makes this job a lot quicker and easier.



## Worm Control

### Value of drench checks:

Egg count your hoggets before drenching and 10 days after. This is becoming a vital tool in monitoring for the need for a drench and for the efficacy of a drench. Drench resistance is out there. Find out if you've got it and stop the slide of further resistance.

Ewe hoggets and lambs over wintering should receive a novel acting drench. Startect and Zolvix plus are the two options and their main function is to extend the life of the more standard drenches.

Farmers have to start using the new drench families strategically along with weaving in a refugia policy for the farm.



## Maniototo Update

**Raechel Parker BVSc**  
Ranfurly Veterinary Centre

- Lack of rainfall throughout the year has presented its challenges for forage and crop growth.
- Dry conditions have been favourable for footrot management and control.
- Temperatures in the Maniototo remain relatively mild so far this autumn.
- Beef scanning results in the Strath Taieri area have been lower than previous years. This is mainly attributed to the tough spring and poor grass growth leading up to Christmas.
- Despite environmental factors being a major contributor to high empty rates, it is still worth ruling out trace element deficiencies and BVD.



### Calum Linton BVSc

We welcome Calum Linton to our Maniototo vet team. Calum has spent the last 3 years in dairy practice in Te Puke, Bay of Plenty and has migrated south to mixed practice, especially sheep and beef work. Calum is a keen sportsman and has already had a training run with the Maggots!



# A Shepherd's Best Friend

**Ryan Philips BVSc**  
Waimate Veterinary Centre



Bella is a loyal sidekick to a young shepherd on one of our sheep and beef farms. Bella came to us for being lame on her back leg for a week. Her owner was not too sure what had happened but knew she was uncomfortable when walking. While Bella walked, her back left hock dropped ever so slightly at each step. After careful examination and x-rays the diagnosis of a partial Achilles tendon rupture was made. Luckily, Bella's owner bought her in to our Veterinary Centre Team early enough for her to have the best chance of recovery. Partial Achilles tendon ruptures can be tricky to treat and they require quick action. Depending on the severity, the tendon usually requires 1-2 months of immobilisation either by casting the leg or surgery. In this case Bella's leg was set in a cast for 2 months with strict rest. Even though she wanted to, she was not allowed

to help on the farm in that time. Her owner knew this would be a long road to recovery, but he was very dedicated to Bella. Over time Bella's tendon began to strengthen to the point that the cast was no longer needed. After the cast was removed, Bella visited the Kurow Clinic once a week for a month for physiotherapy as well as continued physiotherapy at home. Bella is now back out on farm assisting her owner with daily farm work!

Partial Achilles tendon ruptures are not uncommon in dogs, and it can easily happen on farm. Getting on top of the issue quickly as well as being dedicated to the recovery process will give the dog the best chance of recovery. So, if you think that your working dog or loyal sidekick is sore while walking please get in touch with the Veterinary Centre Team and we can help you get the best result for your dog.



## Nitrate Toxicity

**Euan Tait BVMS**  
Waimate Veterinary Centre

Throughout the practice, we have already seen animals affected by nitrate toxicity. It occurs most commonly in late autumn or winter and often after a flush of growth following a dry period. Nitrate converts to nitrite in the rumen which reduces the blood's oxygen carrying capacity and rapid death can occur.

Brassicacae, fodderbeet, Italian ryegrass and oats can all produce nitrate toxicity, with rape being the most notorious. Nitrate levels in forages can easily be tested by The Veterinary Centre or if you purchase a nitrate testing kit they can be checked readily on farm. Good management can help prevent nitrate toxicity.

### **Risk factors for nitrate toxicity include:**

- Physiological stress eg pregnancy
- Hungry animals eating high rates of nitrates
- Immature/stressed plants have higher nitrate accumulation
- Lack of photosynthesis – cold, cloudy conditions

### **Reducing these risk factors:**

- Testing of forage samples
- Avoid putting hungry stock straight on to risk crops (feed hay or silage first)
- Feed risk crop later in the day as sunshine will reduce nitrate levels
- Don't let animals graze kale, rape or ryegrass too hard as stem closest to the soil contains the highest nitrate levels

If you see any symptoms of nitrate toxicity (staggering, muscle tremors, fast breathing, excess salivation, down cows) after feeding the risk crops please call us immediately and remove all animals that can walk out of the paddock. As ever, prevention is much better than cure and testing your forage is a quick, cheap insurance policy for making sure crops are safe to feed.



## Feeding ewes early pregnancy

**Dave Robertson BVSc BSc**  
Oamaru Veterinary Centre

### **Setting up for winter**

If ewes are in optimal condition, once passed the 1st cycle of mating ewes they do not need to continue to be gaining weight. But are they in optimal condition? With feed quality generally being poorer and less abundant this autumn, ewe condition may need attention sooner rather than later.

Body condition scoring and feed budgeting is the way to take the guess-work out of this subject. I expect more ewes may not have achieved optimum BCS 3 this mating and it will be interesting to see how this effects ovulation rates this year.

If there are lighter BCS ewes then taking them out early it is possible to "re-build" condition from now to the point of lambing. Adding BCS to light twin ewes after scanning and shearing is hard to do with the bigger foetus taking a greater part of reserves.

There is a need for astute feed planning this year. This comes in many forms. From measuring pasture cover and grass growth rates to measuring crops and testing the dry matter and energy content of baleage. The Veterinary Centre can assist with this process. Just bring in a recyclable bag full of feed to test.

