



EWES NEWS

Comment

The stars are lining up for a profitable red meat season. Weather has been favourable for lambing, schedules remain high as Christmas chilled demand for Europe kicks in, beef returns are as high as they have been in recent memory and we've even had the odd shower of rain.

With the lessons of a few years ago it would be hard to imagine schedules getting out of sync with the market again. Current prices appear sustainable for the medium term at least.

In favourable times such as these investments that may have been deemed necessary costs or marginal now become significantly rewarding. Rumensin antilbloat capsules are used to prevent animal deaths when bloat is a serious risk. In the current market they not only achieve this, but the extra weight gain earns an additional per head margin as a result of feed efficiency benefits.

As a progressive and productivity focused practice it is in markets such as these that we excel, by ensuring your day to day animal health problems are resolved as well as enhancing the profitability of your operation.



Charolais Beef in the Maniototo

*“the leading light in
animal health”*

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Pre-weaning tape drench to lambs – is it worth it?



Dave Robertson BVSc

Lambs are probably at their wormiest point at weaning, so what has been the cost of carting that worm burden around in a 12 week old lamb?

A 2011 New Zealand Beef and Lamb trial was set up to analyse the benefits of a pre-weaning drench (+/- a tape drench). Pre weaning being a drench 3-4 weeks before lambs are weaned off mothers. The findings were that

1. A drench pre-weaning improved weaning weight by 1 kg.
2. Adding a tape active (praziquantel) to the triple drench did improve growth rate at weaning by 25g/day over just a straight triple drench.

3. Dag scores were further reduced with the inclusion of the tape drench compared with straight triple drench. The response to tape drenches is variable. It depends on the age of lambs, the larval contamination of the pasture and how low they are grazing. Lambs on herb-clover mixes or on Lucerne would probably not benefit from a pre-weaning drench. Sheep apparently develop some immunity to the effects



of tape worm by 6 months of age, but we do still see them coming out of adult sheep.



Tape worm from a lamb post mortem.

Drench resistance

This can be mitigated by targeting mobs e.g. twin lambs, mobs on shorter, older pastures. Giving lambs an effective knock-out drench at weaning with a triple or novel active will kill any worms that have survived single or dual combination treatments. Also if you are planning on doing a reduction test for drench effectiveness at weaning, leave a mob or 100 lambs undrenched pre-weaning so we've got some worm eggs to test drenches on. You could even see if there is a difference in weaning weight compared with those that were drenched.

We're all about maximizing the weaning draft and there is no substitute for a weaning off young grass and clover paddocks, but perhaps a pre-weaning drench might tip a few more lambs into the draft.

Rumensin Capsules for Beef Cattle

There is no better time to consider optimising your beef performance with rumensin anti bloat capsules. Rumensin results in cattle producing more energy from the same amount of feed. A summary of worldwide trials shows a 7kg weight gain for rumensin treated beef relative to untreated controls. The sole NZ trial showed an increase of 9.7kg! At the current schedule this not only covers the cost of the capsule, prevents bloat and related deaths (especially in the case of beef feeding on clover rich pasture) but also earns an extra \$10 plus per head - a tidy investment in the current market. If you are focused on maximising productivity and profitability call one of our Vet centres to discuss rumensin capsules for your herd.



Mineral Supplementation for Lambs at Weaning

From our roadshows we presented some interesting data to show that the minerals in bionic capsules do contribute to positive effects on lamb growth rate to weaning. With that in mind, if ewes have not had any B12/cobalt supplementation pre-lamb then lamb B12 levels may deplete after weaning. Hence a shot of B12 at weaning may ensure

adequate B12 levels are maintained until slaughter. Prolavax is a short acting option which has the pulpy kidney protection (5 in 1) as well. For replacement ewe hoggets, Smartshot is a long acting B12 which will last through to winter. Ewe hoggets being mated may benefit further from an early Extender seco capsule.

Heifer Mating - Andrew Muir BVSc

One of the ongoing challenges in beef herds throughout the practice area is the difficulties faced in calving 2 year old heifers. With mating fast approaching and a good beef schedule, now is a good time to consider whether to mate yearling heifers. New Zealand research has indicated that a beef herd can be 15% more profitable if heifers are mated successfully as yearlings, but there are a few key things to consider:

- Heifers should be at least 60% of their mature weight by breeding at 15 months
- Mate for 2 cycles only (42 days) - to allow time for them to recover and get in calf the following year
- Use a small mature live-weight bull. A bull with an EBV that is high (above average) for calving ease, or low (below breed average) for birth weight will be least likely to produce calves that are oversized. This may

Ram Soundness - Anna McLeod BVSc

Ram sales seem to be getting earlier every year with many big ram auctions now at the end of November to early December. Getting your existing rams palpated prior to sale will help sort out ram requirements.

Some common abnormalities identified when palpating rams include:

- scrotal mange, retained testicles, small testicles, and lumps or abscesses within the testicles.
- Brucellosis, an infectious disease, is one of the most important causes of infertility in mature rams. It causes inflammation and damage to the base of the testicle, impairing the outflow of semen.

Any rams with lumps palpated are blood tested, and should be kept separate until test results come back.

An annual Brucellosis testing and accreditation scheme for stud flocks is available and ongoing. Ram hoggets must be palpated prior to sale and sires blood tested and palpated.

Feet soundness is very important for ram fertility. Cull or treat chronic footrot before it spreads. You will need

mean a reduction in growth rates, but the decrease in calving difficulties will more than pay for this.

- Studies investigating the effect of manipulating nutrition during pregnancy on dystocia have produced conflicting results. Growing heifers adequately is the key to their ability to calve and rebreed successfully. Aim to have them fit and at 85 - 90% of their mature weight by 2 years of age (this will take a lot of extra feed!).
- Preferentially feed from calving to weaning (60% more feed is required than for a dry heifer). At this stage a heifer needs to feed a calf, grow herself and put on condition for mating. This is the point where underfeeding results in the greatest re-breeding failure rates!

Contact one of our team at your local Veterinary Centre if you would like to discuss heifer mating or EBV interpretation further.

to have several inspections pre mating if your rams have footrot.

Think also about vasectomising any rams that are to be used as teasers. These will need to be done 6 weeks before use.

For more information on the Brucellosis accreditation scheme, or any other ram fertility queries contact your local Veterinary Centre.

Check out our website

www.vet11.co.nz

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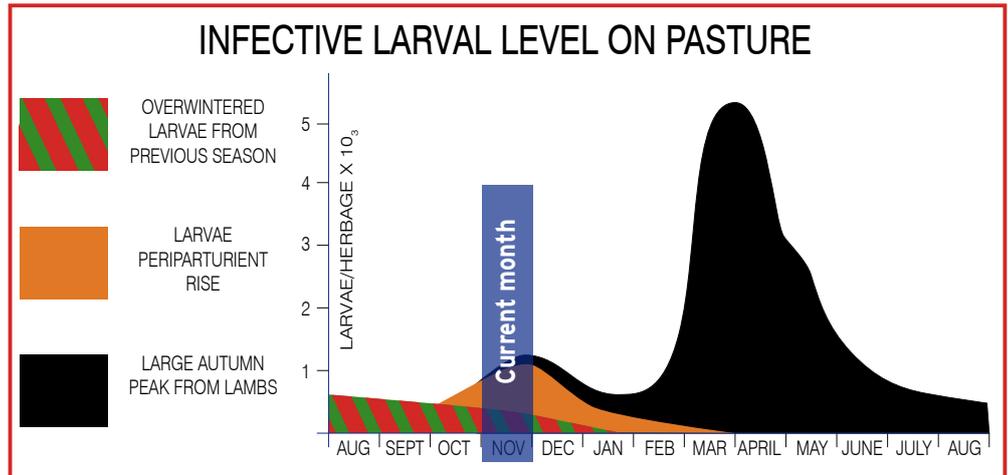
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Worm Watch

Dave Robertson BVSc, BSc

- Pre weaning drench can benefit growth rates leading up to first draft.
- Organise a drench plan for this coming summer including how to use sustainable worming principles.
- Complete reduction test pre-count at weaning and book in your FECRT.



Measuring ewe flock performance at weaning - Dave Robertson, BVSc

The size, speed and number of lambs out the gate from your ewe flock is the real measure of what your sheep breeding unit is producing. This weaning period I am really interested to see how efficient our ewe flocks are around Otago. I am going to start with the sheep production group members. But if anybody else is interested in this sort of analysis, let me know.

Total Kilograms of lambs weaned per ewes mated is the trendy thing to measure across farms. This is a useful measure of ewe flock productivity. In the sheep production group this is

going to be the focus of bench marking our flock performance this summer. It pulls together a lot of things, ewe condition and milking ability, lamb growth rate, scanning percentage, lamb survival, ewe losses etc. To measure it you will need to get sample weaning weights from each mob of lambs and accurate tallies of lambs weaned and the numbers of ewes put to the ram.

If you are interested in applying this type of analysis to your operation first hand then contact Dave Robertson to discuss.



Timely Reminders

- Toxo and Campy orders
- 5 in 1/covexin vaccination of replacement lambs should be started at weaning
- For long acting products following Faecal egg count test review if there is need for an exit drench
- Cash in your long acting product Matrix vouchers
- Free ham promotion on specified products begins November



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