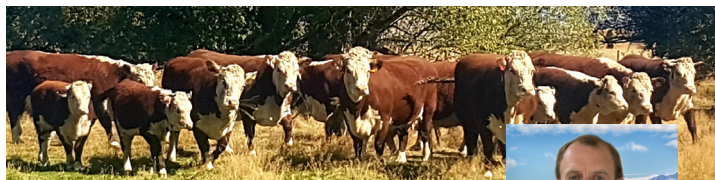




# EWES NEWS



## Dave's Comments

Dave Robertson BVSc, BSc

Great businesses don't aim to win or be the best. If you do win a trophy what then? You don't stop. Farming is not bound by a referees whistle. Good farm businesses have a genuine sense of purpose, whether it is formalised in writing or not - one which does not just involve the owner and their finances. It is a business that is about connecting with the animals (wild and farmed), the landscape, the seasons, the community you are in and your family legacy. Staff and family members that feel part of a farm that has a greater cause than the bottom line, will dig in when times are tough and feel good when results are achieved. I see these farms. I feel part of what they do when I am there. It is a great thing. Thank you.

Dave Robertson

## Business, but not business as usual!

The primary sector is going to be held aloft over the period of the next 12-24 as the saviours of our economy. It is very important that the wheels are kept turning and veterinarians will play their part in making this happen. However just like every business there are some slight changes in how we will operate.

- We're still open for essential services
  - ◆ We are doing most farm calls. Most vet jobs either aim too:
    - Alleviate/resolve welfare or illness
    - enhance the medium-term productivity and

sustainability of a farm.

- ◆ Observe 2m distance from our staff.
- ◆ Have stock ready in the yards. We will stay in our trucks and not go on farm vehicles.
- ◆ We will supply our own food and drink.
- Delivery of product
  - ◆ Our TM's are still operating.
  - ◆ Please contact your TM directly or the clinic.
  - ◆ Supplies are dropped at your designated spot on farm.
- Pick up of goods
  - ◆ Ring ahead. Ring when you arrive.
  - ◆ We will leave out for you.

## News from the Maniototo

Babiche Heil DVM, MSc., DipACT, MANZCVS  
Ranfurly Veterinary Clinic



## Stockhorses, a valuable asset for high country farming

### Selenium

We are all very aware of the deficiency of selenium in our soil in the Waimate, Waitaki and Central Otago districts. Routinely blood samples and livers are submitted to the laboratory to measure selenium levels and stock is supplemented where needed.

Selenium is an important antioxidant and protects cells from damage, prevents muscles from tying-up and is necessary for an optimal immune response. Selenium deficiency is easily overlooked but it will have a negative impact on the work tolerance and general health of the horse.

Horses are no different than sheep or beef and their only source of selenium is through their diet. The requirement for selenium is 1 mg per day for the average horse, increasing with work intensity. Be aware, as in stock, an overdose of selenium is toxic.

A blood sample can be taken from the horse to measure selenium and supplementation can be started as needed.

**NOTE: These test and vaccination programmes can be discussed and actioned when all services resume.**

### Tetanus

Tetanus is an often fatal disease caused by toxins produced by the bacteria Clostridium tetani, a bacteria that grows in low oxygen conditions. Clostridium is present in horse feces and contaminated soil. The common believe is that only large wounds form a risk of infection to the horse, but a small puncture wound is as dangerous as an open laceration or a crushing wound.

Since treating horses with tetanus is mostly unsuccessful prevention is preferred and is much more affordable. A sensitizer followed by a booster 2 – 4 weeks later, a booster injection once every 4 years keeps your horse protected from tetanus.

If an unvaccinated horse has a wound an antitoxin can be given, however, this only protects the horse from tetanus for 2 – 3 weeks.



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# Artificial insemination and embryo transfer in deer

Finja Schmidt BVSc  
Waimate Veterinary Centre



## 'It's the roar again ... AI or ET in your deer for next season might be an option'

With the increasing attention on optimising performance in our deer herds, the use of additional tools should certainly be considered to improve reproduction performance. The Vet Centre works alongside breeding companies to develop a protocol specific for your farming operation. There are two different methods of improving reproductive performance - artificial insemination and embryo transfer.

### Artificial insemination (AI)

This involves a CIDR insert (controlled internal drug release) being used for 12 days and upon removal, an injection of eCG is given. All hinds are inseminated with AI 54 – 58 hours later. This protocol allows hinds in the programme to be synchronised and for all to be mated at the same time.

- The expected conception rate varies; between 65 – 75%. Most breeding places would sell semen to use. The majority of semen used is locally collected (in the region or elsewhere in NZ).
- The timing of AI is critical; it needs to be in the natural breeding season (late March / early April) and needs to align well with feed supply for your farm.
- Advantages include: using specific stags semen, not necessarily having to have the stag on farm, being able to use semen across more hinds to mention a few.

### Embryo transfer

This involves a CIDR insert (controlled internal drug release) being used for 12 days. In the days leading up to and after CIDR removal, hinds are injected with FSH every 12 hours. This allows hinds to superovulate and release more eggs than they usually would. They are then mated (naturally or via AI). Then 7 days after mating, the fertilised eggs (now embryos) are harvested from a single donor and inserted into numerous recipients.

- The conception rate varies too: 65 – 75% would be for most.
- The average embryos harvested from a donor is between 4-7 embryos. We usually work on having 6 to 7 recipients for each donor.
- Advantages include: shortening generational gaps, utilises better animals genetic and increasing their number of offspring and suitable for disease control.

Most people utilising these programmes would be velvetting operations and/or trophy farms. However there is a real potential to use this for venison operations. These could be considered for next season now. We would be more than happy to help.

# Still time to flush ewes for improved mating performance!



Daley Watson-Krawitz BVSc  
Waimate Veterinary Centre

With mating rapidly approaching for many, now is the time to target lighter ewes. Lighter ewes benefit from preferential feeding and flushing for 2-4 weeks prior to mating and throughout the mating period. Ewes in good body condition score (BCS) and on an increasing level of feed during mating have a better ovulation rate and subsequent scanning %.

Studies have shown effects of BCS and flushing on lambing %:

- An additional 6-10% for every extra unit of body condition score at mating, for ewes below BCS 3.
- A further 5-10% increase for animals flushed on a rising plane of feed.

Identifying your lighter ewes is best done by body condition scoring the mob. This is done by putting your hands on them, feeling for fat cover and separating off any with a BCS 2 or below. These are the ewes that will benefit the most from the extra feed. The benefits of increasing condition on ewes at BCS 3+ is minimal, so this group should be maintained.

The light ewes should be your priority mob at this time and feeding these animals is the most profitable use of feed at this time of year. It has been shown that an increase in 1 BCS gives a \$14 return per ewe due to increased lambs on the ground.

Ewes can feasibly gain 100-130g/day if fed enough good quality pasture, meaning with a flushing period of 4-6 weeks before/during mating those lighter ewes could gain up to 5kg (1 BCS) over this period. To achieve these growth rates they must be rotated frequently on good quality pasture and not made to graze below 1500KgDM/ha = 3cm pasture height.

*Please get in contact if you have any queries regarding the mating period.*

# “Newetration”

Lucy Cameron BVSc  
Waimate Veterinary Centre



## This month: Raphno

There has been a lot of talk in the last couple of years about Raphno, a new crop on the market, and the first new brassica released in over 30 years! Some of you, like us, may have grown it for the first time this season.

## What's so special about Raphno?

- Re-growth: managed well it has potential for 4 – 5 grazings over a season

- Breeding: it's a kale X radish, and bred to be high yielding (e.g. over multiple grazings vs Goliath) with greater drought tolerance than many crops (a real bonus this season), and improved clubroot & aphid tolerance vs traditional brassicas – but monitor for other brassica diseases e.g. leaf miner

- Palatability: in trial work lambs found Raphno tastier than forage rape

## How should it be grazed?

- As a rule of thumb aim to graze by knee height – around 50-70 days post emergence (any later will reduce regrowth, feed quality and utilisation) – so get in there early, and there's no need to wait for it to mature (unlike rape)

- Right about now your crop should be shut up to get one more grazing in late winter. To decide if it's worth carrying through, pace out 1m<sup>2</sup> and count the number of plants – if you have at least 20 plants/m<sup>2</sup> you're good to go

## What about animal health?

- “Rape Scald” or photosensitisation has been reported on Raphno, although it's thought to be less common than on forage rape
- As with other brassicas/crops follow all the usual precautions – transition on slowly, vaccinate for clostridial disease, monitor nitrate levels, have a source of fibre – and plenty of fresh water. Any issues – get in touch!

# Cat walk talk

Dave Robertson BVSc, BSc



## Beef results pregnancy testing update:

Pregnancy testing is an essential tool to ensure you do not winter unproductive cows. Wintering late calvers separately will also help with grazing management. When feed is short, off-loading empties early and late calvers if you have to.

Farmers who have maintained cow condition have got good PD results, ~60-80% 1st cycle and less than 5% empties. Those with beef cows that look more like dairy cows have a greater tendency to be 3rd cycle+. Our condition scoring function with data entry shows this trend.



Charlie at Ben Dhu happy with the heifer preg testing result this year

## How has the beef cow AI season gone?

MA cows	Total	AI preg
Angus	95	65%
Angus	70	62%
Angus	40	83%
Simmental	40	74%
Comp	253	62%
Comp	40	73%
R2 Heifers	Total	AI preg
HerexFr	112	66%
Angus	150	57%
Mix breeds	20	45%
Comp 1st serve	177	54%
Comp 2nd serve	72	53%
Comp total		76%

With the fixed time AI programmes across the farms they have generally achieved their budgeted number of pregnancies. The average cost of each AI (with the variability of semen cost and conception rates) is \$90 - \$110/ pregnancy. Which stacks up well, especially if it advances your breeding programme with better heifers coming through and improved the carcass value of finished steers. AI does advance the average calving date and condense the front end, which can be good for heifer management. It will not reduce the requirements for bulls.

**Conclusion:** AI in commercial beef works.

# Introducing New Members of our Team



**Ella Swann BVSc Veterinarian**  
Oamaru Veterinary Centre

After growing up in the North Island, then spending 5 years at university in Palmy North, I figured time to figure out what this South Island is about. I am excited to develop a well-rounded set of skills that can be used across the board of mixed animal practice. I'm looking forward to calving later in the year and in the meantime, I also find Milk Quality Reviews interesting. Outside of work I enjoy hiking and getting involved in the local hockey club.

I am looking forward to meeting and working alongside all of the Veterinary Centre's farmers and clients.



**Jasper Meek BVSc Veterinarian**  
Oamaru Veterinary Centre

I come from a faraway place called Auckland (don't hold it against me). I have since seen the light and decided to make the move to the better island. I'm keen to get stuck into all aspects of sheep and beef vetting and help farmers reach their goals. I find parasite control particularly interesting and look forward to the challenges that come with it. I enjoy most sports and grew up playing football, basketball, and volleyball, but migrated to Oamaru to make the most of our backyard. I love the outdoors and try get out skiing, mountain biking, rock climbing, tramping, and surfing as much as possible. I look forward to getting out on farm and meeting all the sheep and beef farmers of the Oamaru Veterinary Centre.

## OUR CLINICS

### Veterinary Centre Oamaru

311 Thames Street, Oamaru Ph 03 434 5666

### Veterinary Centre Waimate

128 High Street, Waimate Ph 03 689 7213

### Veterinary Centre Palmerston

29 Stonsa Street, Palmerston Ph 03 465 1291

### Veterinary Centre Glenavy

19 Redcliff Road, Glenavy Ph 03 689 8118

### Veterinary Centre Kurow

32 Bledisloe Street, Kurow Ph 03 436 0567

### Veterinary Centre Omarama

13 Chain Hills Highway, Omarama Ph 03 438 9868

### Veterinary Centre Ranfurly

16 Charlemont Street East, Ranfurly Ph 03 444 1020





## Novel drenches - start using them

Now is the time to drench any young stock that are to be over wintered with a new drench active ie Startect or Zolvix plus.

### Trading lambs and ewe hoggets

Novel drench families are not new. But we REALLY HAVE TO START USING THEM. Talking to my Wormwise veterinary colleagues around the country there are reports of triple drench failures. It is starting to happen here too. A clean out with Startect or Zolvix plus is an effective way of eliminating any resistant parasites that may have accumulated in stock prior to going into the winter. Farmers that have done a reduction test and have identified emerging resistance have seen the value

a new drench family into the system. The main thing this April is not to sneak your drench intervals out. It is prime conditions for egg hatch, larval development and parasite consumption on pasture. Stick to 28-30days between drenches in hoggets/ trade lambs.

### Capital stock

Two toothed can often benefit from a drench prior to going to the ram. Older ewes can be targeted.

All sheep farms need a refugia plan. That is leaving some ewes undrenched to prevent resistant worms accumulating. Farmers that tag or identify refugia ewes seem to stick with it and trust the process.



Now is the time to drench any young stock that are to be over wintered with a new drench active ie Startect or Zolvix plus.



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Veterinary Centre - By the Big Blue Cross

*Paul and Ian Roy, at Macraes have been using a novel drench once per year on their hoggets for the last few years.*

*They don't have major drench resistance issues, conventional drenches are still working and they have an active refugia policy for ewes which varies depending on the season.*

*"It's great we have these new drench families, we just have to be smart about how to use them" says Paul.*

- Autumn is a good time to apply a lice treatment before they build up.
- Jetting with Cyrazin KO is a good alternative to Cyrex.
- Pour-on with Encore has good knock down and persistence.



## Rams in Action

Sire rams lose on average 13% of their body weight over mating; the range in our Ram Health Study in 2016 being -46% to +8%. Ram teams that lost more than 20% of body weight were more likely to have higher culling and death rates. If rams were lame when they went out 40% were not present for the next mating. Rams also had very high FECs pre and post mating. What does all this mean right now?

- Ensure rams are in good condition at joining.
- Drench them before they go out and when they come back in
- Sort out all feet issues before mating before they become a major issue. Antibiotics per se do not effect fertility, but pain, high temperatures, lameness and infection do!