



EWES NEWS

Our Team, Science, and your Business – a Collaboration for Growth

Dave Robertson BVSc BSc Oamaru Veterinary Centre and Ryan Luckman BVSc Waimate Veterinary Centre



Veterinary Centre Sheep & Beef team

Science underpins EVERYTHING in our lives. Agriculture has advanced significantly because of the scientific discipline of discovery. It has changed the way we answer problems. It tests our ideas and the solution is verified.

All farmers benefit from developing relationships with practical science-based services. The Veterinary Scientist is also

having to evolve to explore the questions of animal health that modern systems present.

The Veterinary Centre has a commitment to always being better at providing support for the farming business community.

Our search for innovation has led us to refine how animal health

want you to define what success in animal performance and health looks like and we will do our best to find science-based solutions for that vision.



discussions are conducted. We are excited to launch a new platform that explores opportunities for better production, less disease, monitoring key parameters and sustainable health product use.

Within this framework, you will be able to:

- Use industry based KPIs and high level data from your farm to highlight issues and find potential solutions
- Look for opportunities and areas to refine within your current animal health programme
- Ensure you are getting value by using the right products at the right time
- Meet supply agreements that require an authorised Veterinary Animal Health Plan

We want relationships with our farming clients that can evolve to meet the needs of what it is to efficiently produce quality food for the modern consumer. The health of your main animal assets is our business. We take that responsibility seriously. A strong link to practical, Veterinary Scientists is essential to being able to access the solutions for farming in this new and rapidly evolving world.

We don't want to tell you what to do. We

Multine B12 with Selenium

Administer 5 in 1 clostridial protection, B12 and selenium supplementation in one convenient injection.

- Less than 60 cents plus GST per dose.
- Safe for lambs at tailing and weaning.



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August Action month

Dave Robertson BVSc
Oamaru Veterinary Centre

There's a lot going on in the month of August for all our farmers. So here are some bullet points about the animal health parts to consider

Worm control

Pre-lamb worm control is important for many sheep flocks. When ewes are within 3-4 weeks of lambing there is a lot of demands on the system. Making an udder, developing the foetus and placenta are the main ones. Feed requirements increase by 50% and rumen capacity is significantly reduced. Removing a worm burden makes sense to reduce the protein drain of the system.

Targeted worm control treatments are becoming more widespread. This means we don't treat all ewes with the same product and some don't get treated at all.

- This saves you money
- Uses drench on those ewes that will give the best return
- Is a more sustainable use of the drench chemicals

Who does not need a drench:

Good condition, well feed, mixed-aged ewes on green feed crops pre-lamb and set stocked on 5-10cm of quality grass are less likely to benefit from worm treatments. Ewes carrying singles that are in reasonable condition may not require a drench pre-lamb.

Who does:

Twinning and triplet ewes can benefit from a clean out of their winter worm burden

before lambing.

What about long acting capsules?

When used in certain conditions ewes are in better condition, have less dags and 2 toothed and in-lamb hoggets give the best return on an investment in long acting worm control over lambing. Light condition, twinning, mixed-age ewes on sub-optimal feed at set stocking may also benefit from long acting worm control.

Extensive pastoral areas where feed quality and quantity are harder to control or predict often like the insurance of taking care of the worm challenge with long acting products. However, blanket treatment is not going to sustainably deliver optimal results as parasitic worms become resistant to drench chemicals.

What drench to choose:

An effective one and choose some animals that do not get drenched. These undrenched animals are useful at weaning to run with weaned lambs. They will provide a sprinkle of wild-type drench susceptible parasites.

Talk to us today about the finer details of a targeted system for your flock.

Refugia is the key to sustainable drench use. We encourage identifying your undrenched animals... it doesn't always have to be a refugia tag!

Maniototo Sheep handlers

Jeremy Hore, Amanda Howel and staff are a rugged team braving the Central Otago winter to deliver animal health remedies to sheep.

Most farmers have finished scanning now and are gearing up to do their animal health. Most of you will know Jeremy from his days as Ranfurly Veterinary Centre territory manager, when asked about targeted treatments and refugia Jeremy



commented that it is more common and farmers are "getting it". There is still probably more scope to identify un-drenched animals and dose based on ewe condition at times of the year.



Babiche Heil Ranfurly Veterinary Centre, has just completed a highly successful Roadshow series for our Equine clients. From left Euan Tait, Waimate Vet Centre, Babiche Heil, Ranfurly Vet Centre and Cathy Thompson from Waimate – receiving her lucky prize from Provet.

24-7 SMARTRACE Boluses for ADULT Sheep



- Selenium
- Iodine
- Cobalt



Active Life of at least 3-4 months following administration
Single Bolus Application
Available in packs of 50 boluses
\$2.20 plus GST per bolus

Chris Chave South Canterbury and North Otago sheep conveyor operator

Provides a friendly and efficient conveyor-system for administering your animal health products this spring. He does get asked more about

refugia and what drenches to use. "Just ask your vet" is his safe deflection. Chris also does feet inspections. The drier autumn and winter has meant this is

a perfect time to remove the pool of subtle footrot infection before the ewes are spread out. Don't waste a good dry period and get on top of footrot.



“Newetrition”

Lucy Cameron BVSc BSc
Waimate Veterinary Centre



Fully feeding multiples

With scanning ticked off on most places, it's time to start thinking about prioritising feeding your multiple bearing ewes as they approach late pregnancy.

During the last trimester, the energy demand of the growing lambs increases rapidly. If ewes are not fed well over this period, several negative effects can occur. Colostrum quality and total milk yield will suffer, milk let down can be delayed, and lamb vigour and survival will be reduced.

About 7 weeks out from lambing:

- Ewes should be offered **1.7 – 2.4 kg DM/day**
- Avoid grazing below **900 kg DM/ha** (~2cm)

In the last 2-3 weeks of pregnancy (i.e. from set-stocking):

- Offer **3 – 4 kg DM/day**, with the aim of them getting 2.5 – 3 kg down the throat
- Avoid bulky feeds such as hay, and bulb crops (which contain lots of water)
- Aim not to graze below **1200 kg DM/ha** (~3.5 – 4cm)

Triplets:

- **If you can offer post-grazing residuals of 1200 kg DM/ha, there's no benefit to separating twins and triplets** – the ewes can't physically eat more
- However, if you can't offer all multiples that allowance, prioritise your triplet bearing ewes so that they are on higher covers

Body condition score:

- Poorer conditioned ewes will produce up to **a litre less milk per day** than heavier ewes – this won't necessarily matter if she just has one lamb, but will have a big impact on twins or triplets
- The good news is, if ewes are fully fed at the end of pregnancy, milk yields will be high regardless of body condition score – a win for lamb survival.



The Pros and Cons of De-Sexing Working Dogs

Sarah Boys BVSc
Oamaru Veterinary Centre



Working dogs are not typically de-sexed for two reasons:

- To retain the possibility of breeding if they turn out to be good workers – a very valid reason.
- The concern that they will lose their drive to work after neutering although there is no scientific support for this.

There are several health benefits to de-sexing that you should be aware of.

Advantages of speying bitches:

- Prevention of heat, minimizing time shut up or being closely watched
- No mismatings or mismating injections
- No pyometras (a common, life threatening uterus infection)
- No false pregnancies
- No vaginal prolapses
- Reduced risk of constipation
- Reduction in the risk of mammary tumors
- Older bitches are more at risk of whelping problems

Advantages of neutering dogs:

- No testicular tumours
- Reduced risk of enlarged prostate
- Reduced risk of constipation
- Reduced territorial aggression & fewer dog fight wounds
- Improved condition in dogs that are hard to keep condition on. Those that are already well conditioned will need to be fed less.

Disadvantage of de-sexing

- Desexing is irreversible
- Following surgery, both dogs and bitches require a 2-3 week recovery period.
- While minimal, there is always some risk associated with surgery

If you are not planning on breeding from a working dog, there is no reason we cannot de-sex them later in life.

Feel free to call us if you have any questions about de-sexing or working dog health.



Pre-Lamb Vitamins



Gwyn Mark BVSc
Omarama Veterinary Centre

Vitamin supplementation is an important part of pre-lamb treatment for ewes. Vet LSD and **Hideject** are proven products, which can improve performance during late pregnancy and lambing.

- **Vet LSD** contains vitamin A, D, E, iodine, Se and Chromium. Made as a combined product to give ewes everything they need for lambing. This oral product can be mixed with drench or just with water.
- **Hideject** contains Vitamin A, D and E. It is a convenient Intramuscular injection and gives a much higher dose of vitamin D. It does not contain iodine therefore a great option if flexidine has already been given.

The key benefits from these products are from the vitamin D and E.

Vitamin D is an important part of the calcium metabolism and smooth muscle function. It makes sense to give Vitamin D pre lamb as levels are at the lowest during the winter months when there is less sunlight hours. More recently it has been shown that flocks which have had Vit D supplementation had a reduced number of bearings compared to those with no vitamin D.

Vitamin E and Selenium work together to prevent and repair cell damage in the body. They both are important in immune function as well as growth, reproduction, and preventing white muscle disease. Giving Vitamin E in late pregnancy can improve lamb vigour and survivability. Vitamin E is available in the diet but only in low levels in stored feed and low quality grass. Selenium can be supplemented in many ways but important to consider selenium in your refugia plan as those ewes will not be getting the supplementation from the capsule or selenised drench.



Deer drenching- New products on the horizon

Luke Smyth BVSc
Oamaru Veterinary Centre

Many farms will need to think about a drench for R1's coming out of the winter. The deer drench story has been a frustrating one for many years with few 'on label' drenches to choose from and emerging resistance to the few choices available.

At present the gold standard has been a self-mixed 1:1 combination of Exodus pour on and Oxfen C plus given orally at 1ml/5kg bodyweight. This combination has been one of the few ways of getting

enough of the three drench families in the right concentrations to kill internal parasites. However this mix does come with a 39 day withhold period with a veterinary prescription.

In late spring 2020 we are expecting the release of a new triple combination oral drench for deer onto the market. Dave Lawrence has been working extensively on this product.

As a registered triple combination oral drench for deer it will have a 1ml/10kg

body weight dose rate and a meat withhold period of between 21-28 days. Meaning it will be a good practical option to be used in yearling deer being killed on the spring schedule.

This is an exciting step for the industry. But we will need to ensure we protect the efficacy of this new drench and utilise all of the other farm management tools at our disposal.



Metabolic Disease in Ewes

Daley Watson-Krawitz BVSc
Waimate Veterinary Centre

Metabolic diseases are a common occurrence each year around lambing. By far the two most common are Pregnancy Toxaemia (also known as sleepy sickness, or twin lamb disease) and Milk Fever.

Milk fever is a lack of calcium which can occur in multiple bearing ewes in the last few days before lambing. At this point the demand for calcium from the growing foetus is significantly more than what the ewe can gain from its diet and mobilise from her own stores. This often arises due to a period of reduced feed intake. This can be from sudden feed check, a change of feed, excessive mustering or holding in yards for too long. Feeds low in calcium (maize silage, green feed oats, fodder beet bulbs) can also increase the risk of milk fever. Affected ewes begin as twitchy, staggering, quickly progressing to being dull, may have a snotty nose, and go down followed by coma and death. Lambs are often born dead or weak.

Pregnancy Toxaemia also occurs in late pregnancy due to a lack of energy resulting in a mobilisation of large quantities of fat tissue. During the last 2 months of

pregnancy a multiple bearing ewe's energy requirements nearly double as this is when 70% of the foetuses' growth occurs. A 70kg ewe with twins will need 2kg of high quality feed (11+ MJME/kgDM), this is a large volume – about 2 shopping bags full! It becomes quite easy for these ewes to be underfed if they do not have access to sufficient high quality feed. These typically begin as well conditioned multiple bearing ewes which lag behind, but as the disease progresses they too become dull, stagger, may appear blind, and go down followed by coma and death. Their wool may also pluck out quite readily.

There are 2 syndromes:

-Underfeeding over an extended period in the last trimester of pregnancy
-A sudden stress event restricting access to feed such as a severe storm or extended yarding
As both of these diseases can present in a similar fashion (a down ewe close to lambing) they can be difficult to distinguish. Also milk fever often progresses to sleepy sickness, particularly in twin bearing ewes. As such it is best to treat for

both diseases, the goal is to get them up and begin eating high quality feed as soon as possible. If it is uncomplicated milk fever a rapid response within an hour is expected, pregnancy toxaemia can be hard to treat in its late stages and may take longer to respond. Treatment consists of giving calcium as either Glucalphanos or Calpro375 (100ml slowly in the vein if possible or under the skin) and a form of energy (e.g 100 - 120ml Ketol or Calstart orally) twice per day.

Getting onto these cases as soon as possible is key to a good outcome. If they remain down and unresponsive several hours following treatment and show no interest in food their prognosis is poor as brain and kidney damage has often occurred.

If you have any questions then feel free get in contact with one of us at your closest Blue Cross clinic.



Keeping the foot down on foot rot



Bridget Roulston BVSc
Ranfurly Veterinary Centre

The dry Autumn conditions in the Maniototo and Strath Taieri has put pressure on feed budgets, making

grazing the long acre more tempting as we patiently await the spring growth. The silver lining of the dry weather has been the massive reduction in foot rot cases. The hard work farmers have put into tipping, troughing and treating sheep in combination with the dry conditions has been rewarded with very low case numbers. It is always awesome to hear farmers reporting zero or single figures after tipping whole flocks! The next question asked is always "How do I keep it that way?" Think of foot rot as the COVID-19 of the feet in sheep – Your farm is a separate country (with good border security, and quarantine protocols); cold dry conditions are wearing PPE out in public (reduced spread); warm and moist conditions are Florida beach parties (lots of potential spread). The aim is start the 'party season' with as few cases as possible as once lambing starts the opportunity to separate and treat animals is limited. Fortunately (for the sheep) we do have a vaccine available "Footvax". Prelamb and pretup have traditionally been the times where it is used to reduce the amount of clinical disease. Footvax is not the silver bullet but is a tool in the overall foot rot management plan. Have a chat to one of the vets in the Sheep and Beef team to discuss your situation and whether Footvax is an option for you.