

Sheep Farmers Newsletter August 2009

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Practice News

It’s all fairly routine and ordinary here really. Peter Heslip will start in the Balclutha Small Animal clinic later this month. Sid Taylor has started through at the Milton end.

I have been to a couple of discussion group type field days and apart from being very wet under foot (as of late July) most people seem to have adequate feed reserves and stock appear to be overall in pretty reasonable condition. So at this stage it’s all looking pretty positive for a good lambing – Hughie just has to play his part!

Recent Animal Health Problems

1. Listeriosis: – No winter goes by these days without us seeing some cases of Listeriosis, although to be fair I think we have seen fewer this winter than for a few years. Just to recoup - Listeriosis mainly occurs when baleage or silage has not reached a sufficiently low pH (level of acidity). The pH needs to be <4.8. If the pH is too high this allows the growth of large numbers of Listeria bacteria which can cause two different types of disease symptoms:

- *Nervous disease* – often seen as circling, head tilt etc.
- *Enteric disease* – usually seen as sudden death, often with evidence of a khaki coloured scour.

The nervous form can be treated with penicillin – give a good dose (10mls) of Ovipen. The enteric form is more severe and difficult to treat. It invariably only occurs when baleage is being fed. If you suspect this form contact us so that we can autopsy them. This is necessary as Salmonella, (the enteric form, not Brandenburg) and this form of Listeria look identical and laboratory work is needed to sort them out. Penicillin is not effective against the enteric form.

The usual cause of elevated pH is insufficient compaction and therefore too much air is present for good fermentation. This is more common with baleage than pit silage and is often contributed to by the grass being too mature when it is made – it is stalkier and drier and more difficult to compact sufficiently. Obviously in the case of baleage, damage to the plastic wrap adds to the problem as well.

2. Pneumonia: - There have been a couple of cases of deaths due to pneumonia, one in hoggets and one in two-tooths. In both cases it is likely that the problem originated as so called enzootic pneumonia in lambs back in the summer period. Treatment with antibiotics is possible if you spot them in time.

The other treatment that seems to help reduce the incidence of new cases is a dose of L.S.D. This helps boost the immune system and so helps them to throw the infection off. It may not be worth doing a yarding especially to do this but if they are going to be yarded anyway it is definitely worth considering. At the end of each race (while you are filling up for the next race) sit the drench gun in some disinfectant – it may just help lessen any spread via the drench gun.

Reminders

The pre-lamb period with its various activities is just around the corner so following is a review of these procedures, all centred on enhancing lamb survival.

1. Clostridial Vaccination: - The pre-lamb booster shot should be given to the ewes one – three weeks pre-lamb. There are various options apart from straight Ultravac – you have Prolovax (B12 + 5 in 1), Nilvax (levamisole + 5 in 1) and Eweguard (Cydectin + 5 in 1 +/- B12). All are available in a plain or selenised version. Unless there has been late autumn application of Se prills, or some other concurrent form of Se administration, you are probably better off with the selenised product so that newborn lambs start off with good Se levels. Good immunity will be passed on to the newborn lambs from all the above products if, and only if, the ewes at some stage earlier in their lives received two doses of 5 in 1 three to six weeks apart.

If, when skinning dead lambs for mothering on purposes, you find a jelly-like material clotted under the skin around the navel, then something is not quite right with your vaccination programme – contact the clinic to get this sorted.

2. Trace Elements: - The two important ones are selenium and iodine. Selenium, if necessary can be administered with Ultravac, Prolovax etc. – see above. Unless Flexidine was used pre-tup, (in which case further iodine supplementation will not be needed), then the only other effective form of iodine supplementation is as an oral dose. The correct dose is 280mg of potassium iodide (note, many proprietary products have a lot less) and the correct timing for this in severe cases of iodine deficiency is eight and four weeks pre-lamb. In moderate cases (which are the majority) give one dose six weeks pre-lamb. Many farmers, because of convenience factors, administer it too late at the same time as they give Ultravac, Prolovax etc.

3. Vit E: - A deficiency of Vit E in particular can result in poorer lamb vigour and survival. This is practically guaranteed where stock (both sheep and cattle) have been on brassicas but it is also likely on the other winter feed as Vit E is low in stored feed (hay, baleage etc), and in mature grass.

Various factors influence the best time to administer Vit E making it hard to give a recipe for all. Where Flexidine has been used - the closer to lambing it can be given the better. For other situations ask at the clinic. L.S.D. liquid represents the gold standard for quality and, more importantly, stability. As I have said plenty of times before, beware the crap copycat products even though the salesman will tell you it is the same as L.S.D. One local product we had analysed had 14% of the level of Vit E it claimed to have!

4. Pre-lamb Long Acting Anthelmintics: There have been no new developments in this area since last year

and the story around their responsible use has not really changed for several years now. In summary, **whole flock** use of these products does accelerate the development of drench resistance. Selecting some stock for treatment based on factors such as pregnancy status, ewe condition etc. helps to reduce this effect as opposed to treating the whole flock. Regarding available products (about four different capsules and eight different injection products) the No.1 choice as far as minimising the selection for resistance is Bionic Combination capsules. At the other end of the scale the worst are the moxidectin (Cydectin and Eweguard) injection products with the long acting version of Cydectin (remember – it's only long acting against one worm type down here) bringing up the rear. See May 08 newsletter (you can look on our website) for more info on Cydectin LA.

Prescription Animal Remedies (PARs)

Thanks to the majority of you who have returned the annual PAR renewal forms. If you are one of the few who has forgotten to do this please do so promptly otherwise the retail staff will not be able to supply you with these. You will need to speak to a vet and we can't always guarantee there will be one around at the exact time you need something.

Ag Recovery Programme

This is the programme whereby old chemical containers are accepted back for recycling. Most (if not all) of our major suppliers are now on board with this initiative. This means you can now recycle the ever increasing pile of 20lt containers that seem to accumulate round the sheep yards. In the Clutha District the drop off/collection point is the Mt Cooee landfill. It is open for this purpose on the first Wednesday of every month from 9.00am – 4.30pm. There are a few instructions to follow re washing of the drums etc – see their website for details – www.agrecovery.co.nz

Non Urgent Calls

In an effort to reduce unproductive driving time, and therefore mileage costs, we are trialling accumulating non urgent routine calls on an area basis and on a set time each week we will attend to these. The times and areas proposed are:

Balclutha Area –

Monday – Top of Owaka Valley, Kuriwao & Slopdown.

Tuesday – Katea, Owaka & Owaka Valley.

Wednesday – Waiwera South, Taumata, Clinton, Wairuna & Waipahi.

Wednesday – Greenfield, Balclutha side of Waitahuna West, Tuapeka Mouth & Tuapeka West.

Thursday – Lovells Flat, Hillend & Awamungu.

Thursday – Glenomaru, Owaka, Tahakopa & Chaslands.

Milton area –

Tuesday – Glenledi & environs.

Wednesday – Milton side of Waitahuna West, Waitahuna East, Mahinerangi, Lawrence & Beaumont.

Thursday – Black Rock, Hindon & Middlemarch.

Farms within 15km of either clinic plus the Clydevale and Taieri areas can be covered anytime. We have always tried to group non urgent calls – advertising the days and areas may assist with this. Note this is for non urgent work only – don't be tempted to put off a more urgent call to fit in as this will be more likely to result in an unsatisfactory outcome (PC way of saying a dead animal!).

AGM

The AGM will be held on Tuesday 25th August at the Rosebank Lodge. Due to auditor problems this is a couple of weeks later than normal. The guest speaker will be Garry Waghorn, who will be speaking on current research for future profit from livestock farming including identifying efficient animals, cost of greenhouse gases & the importance of too much Nitrogen.

Salmonella Brandenburg

At the time of writing (27th July) we had only had one case but it is a bit of a ripper. Within a week about 15% of the mob had aborted and a number of ewes had died and new cases were still occurring. Remember to be quite strict about personal hygiene if you strike some abortions that could be due to Salmonella brandenburg. It is quite contagious and not a very pleasant disease to catch. Toddlers and young children seem to be particularly susceptible.

Update 29th July – now have 3 farms, all in the one area with suspect S. brandenburg.

While on the subject of abortions I have had the odd report of ewes being identified at scanning with dead foetuses in them. At this stage any foetuses are pretty small and you may struggle to find any. If you identify the affected ewes and do not vaccinate for Toxo and Campy we can blood test 10 affected (and 10 non affected ewes) to see if these infectious agents are involved – no charge for the lab fees. So remember about this **before** you cull the affected ewes.

Scanning Results

I haven't heard a huge number of results yet but mostly those I have seen to be up a pleasing amount with the odd farmer claiming an all time record for the farm so it's all looking pretty good really. Despite that though there still seems to be a few instances of too many dry dries, especially two-tooths. If you have significantly more than 2% dry mixed age, or 3% dry two-tooths, then give me a call. With a bit of investigation it is often possible to reduce these down to at or below the target levels and so get rid of much of this rather annoying area of wastage.

Lamb Rearing

Following on from the good scanning's being reported, this may well mean that there will be more lambs being artificially reared. One of the most annoying problems that is often encountered in artificially reared lambs is abomasal bloat. This is when you find a lamb dead with a tightly distended abdomen, usually at >3 weeks of age and after they've consumed many \$'s worth of milk powder. One simple thing you can do which quite often seems to prevent this problem occurring is to give all lambs to be reared an iron injection as they come into the rearing facility, and repeat this again in three weeks time. The product, Ferriade is not expensive. I also have a handout I have prepared with a whole lot of info on artificial lamb rearing in it.

New Product – Expo Pour-on

This is a new pour-on for lice control in sheep. You may have heard of Extinosad – a saturation (plunge or shower) product for lice control – well this is the same chemical but in a pour-on formulation. This means we now have another chemical pour-on formulation available for use. With resistance developed years ago to the synthetic pyrethroids (Wipeout, Vanquish etc) meaning these can't be reliably used, all the other pour-ons were from the same family – the IGRs represented by Magnum, Zapp, Exit etc so these have been getting fairly widespread use on some properties. There is evidence in Australia that some resistance (yes, the R word again) to the IGRs is starting to emerge so this product's arrival is very timely. I would strongly suggest that those of you who have regularly used an IGR pour-on now alternate their use with that of Expo to try and delay any resistance build-up (to either chemical).

Expo is recommended for use off shears or in coarse wool breeds of up to three months wool length. It provides pretty much instant knockdown of lice, has no withholding time and is quite reasonably priced – just under 41c/ewe dose. It has a scourable blue dye in it and is applied via the usual type of T Bar applicator.

Merchandise Matters

The list the retail team have put together this month is as follows:

- **Tempor 5lt** – get a free Merino T shirt with each drum.
- **Matrix Hi Min 20lr** – Receive an extra 5lt free with each 20lt drum.
- **Cydectin Pour-on** – Receive 10% extra free on the 2 & 5lt packs. Also on the 15lt herd pack there is a choice of several different promos.
- **Combat Topline** – this is a new abamectin pour-on for cattle and is very well priced – see retail staff for details.
- **Bionic Capsules** – Purchase 2000 and receive a fully weatherproof Typhoon jacket.
- **Extender SeCo Capsules** – Purchase 1000 capsules and receive a 20lt drum of primer drench (levamisole) free.
- **Genesis Injection & Pour-on, Eclipse & Eprinex Pour-ons** – All purchases of qualifying quantities receive either a pair of muck boots or an all weather jersey. Deferred payment option also available.
- **Dectomax Injection** – Purchase two starter packs and receive a slaughter pack consisting of Victory boning and skinning knives, a Cambrian 30cm steel and scabbard.
- **Cydectin Injection & Pour-on, Eweguard Injection** – All purchases qualify for the Wanaka Wine Tasting Weekend Draw. Deferred payment option is also available.
- **Meaty Bites Working Dog** – 20kg on special while stocks last.
- **Tux Energy 40kg** - \$94.95 plus receive 2 packs of Nescafe Café Menu Flat White free.
- **Whiskas Dry Cat Food 9kg** – Purchase 1 bag @\$42.15 nett & receive a box of single serve pouches free.
- **Milligans Calf Milk Powder** – The price of this has been reduced & is now \$71.65 nett incl GST.
- **Kaiwaka Clothing** – All lines of this wet weather clothing have 30% off (shop stock only).

John A. Smart B.V.Sc.