

Sheep Farmers Newsletter October 2009

Clutha Vets Animal Health Centre

Balclutha Clinic

Phone (03) 418-1280

Fax (03) 418-1750

Merchandise Direct (03) 418-1281

Clydevale Store

(03) 415-9121

Milton Clinic

Phone (03) 417-8032

Fax (03) 417-8031

CONTENTS

- Practice News
- Recent Animal Health Problems
 1. Salmonella Brandenburg
 2. Toxo & Campy Abortions
 3. Milk Fever
- Reminders
 1. Scabby Mouth Vaccination
 2. Long Acting B12 Products
 3. Lamb Drenching at Tailing
- Antibiotics and Works Lambs
- Boys Will Be Boys
- New Product: Ultravac SD 6 in 1 Vaccine
- FECRT Testing
- Obituary
- Merchandise Matters
- Promotion Winners

Animal Health Centre

Balclutha

Meredith Mackenzie	BVSc.
Bruce Bissett*	B.Ag. BVSc.
John Smart	BVSc.
Jason Darwen	BVSc.
Suzanne Craig*	BVSc.
Rob Mills	BVSc.
Teresa O'Riordan*	BVM&S.
Hanneke van Kooten	DVM.
Hamish Moore	BVSc.
Nichola Hinchy	BVSc.
Catherine Copland*	BVM&S, MRCVS
Ali Maw*	BVSc.
Peter Heslip	BVSc. MACVSc.

Milton

Peter Kalb	BVSc.
Jillian Clark*	BVSc.
Roo Wijey	BVSc.
Sid Taylor	BVSc. MACVSc.
Pam Doig*	BVSc.

(* Part time)

Practice News

There is one staff change that will occur before the next newsletter. Nichola Hinchy will finish in early November – she is off back across the Tasman to

further her small animal practice aspirations. We have managed to find a replacement but he won't start until January so that can wait until the next newsletter.

On the whole the weather through August and September has been much warmer than usual. Most farms at this stage have adequate feed levels and there should have been quite good lamb survival and hopefully, with mum making plenty of milk, there should be excellent lamb growth and resultant weaning weights.

Recent Animal Health Problems

1. Salmonella Brandenburg. This season cases of abortion and death in ewes due to this rather nasty organism occurred largely in the one geographical area of the practice. The districts from Romahapa through Warepa, Waitepeka and down to Clinton and Waipahi were quite badly affected. There was the odd one here and there in the rest of South Otago but 95% of the cases would have been in the strip described above. I'm not sure why this area was affected so badly compared to the rest of the district. The disease has occurred in these areas in the past so the ewes in these areas having less immunity than others doesn't really explain it.

2. Toxo and Campy Abortions. Every year we get a few cases of abortion due to Toxo and Campy and this year was no exception. Luckily most vaccinate against these so numbers of cases are not high. Having said that though, we have for the first time in a long time, had abortions due to Toxo in two-tooths that have been vaccinated. This is quite unusual as this vaccine (& the Campy one) are pretty effective. The background to this breakdown is still yet to be investigated.

Remember if you have not vaccinated for Toxo or Campy, and are wondering if either of these infections could be the cause of some of your wet dries, (you don't always get obvious abortions) then there is a blood test available that can help determine whether these agents are involved or not. We blood test 10 wet dries and 10 ewes with lambs at foot. There is no charge for the lab fees. Contact the clinic to arrange this (before you get rid of your dries).

3. Milk Fever. This season seemed to be worse than usual for the number of milk fever cases in ewes prior to lambing. Some of these that I was involved with also had low magnesium levels in addition to the usual low calcium level that is associated with clinical milk fever. If you quite often have cases of milk fever occurring each year it could be worthwhile to check some bloods (10) in the ewes in the late July/early August period. If magnesium levels then are a bit on the low side, supplementing with magnesium (by pasture dusting like dairy farmers do) up until set stocking will often markedly reduced the number of cases.

Reminders

- 1. Scabby Mouth Vaccination:** After the experience of 3 years ago there should be no need to remind you of the necessity to check for takes. Do this 8-10 days post vaccination – there should be a raised angry looking scab along the scratch line.
- 2. Long Acting B12 Products:** The two products (Prolaplan and Smartshot) are now quite widely used. To get the most out of them they should be given at tailing. Again this year the reduced price for Prolaplan still applies (67c/dose - used to be 82c). If you use repeated injections of conventional B12 (Prolaject) you should consider using one of these products instead - they ensure a consistent, even supply of B12 and you can basically forget about Cobalt/B12 deficiency for the entire season when they are used.
- 3. Lamb Drenching at Tailing:** In a word don't. Any worm burden they have is so infinitesimally small that a drench is a waste of time (& money). The only exception to this would be if, for weather reasons tailing was so late that lambs were 6 - 8 weeks of age, then it could be considered.

Antibiotics and Works Lambs

Depending on the works involved there are a couple of versions of a scheme whereby a small premium (50 - 75c) is paid for so called antibiotic free lamb:

Version 1: SFF & Alliance. If one lamb is treated with antibiotics then all lambs are somehow contaminated and none can be called antibiotic free and attract the premium.

Version 2: CMP. If one lamb is treated with antibiotics you ear tag it to identify it. The rest of the mob are still antibiotic free and can attract the premium.

Version 1 obviously defies commonsense and could result in some distinctly welfare unfriendly practices if lambs that could be treated with antibiotics are left to suffer and/or die. Version 2 does at least constitute a slightly more rational and sensible approach. NZVA has made some approaches to the Meat Industry Assn about this issue to see if some common sense can be introduced. Apparently the MIA has no real power so I'm not holding my breath.

Take a 3000 lamb flock as an example. The extra premium is \$1500 - \$1750. At \$85/lamb you only have to save 17 - 20 lambs with antibiotics to be ahead. Many of you would have cases of watery mouth, navel infections, arthritis etc far exceeding this number so you are better off to treat the lambs rather

than let them suffer and die. Hopefully common sense will prevail in due course!

Boys Will Be Boys

Accidental mating of bitches on farms has always been a problem and it has been common practice to give a single injection (or a course of smaller injections) of oestrogen hormone soon after mating to prevent pregnancy. This is no longer possible as this whole class of drugs is no longer available. Oestrogens were never ideal drugs for this purpose though as they could cause severe uterine infections requiring speying and occasionally fatal bone marrow or liver failure.

Several years ago a new drug (Alizin) became available. It is more effective and can be given safely and effectively up to 5 weeks of pregnancy. It is significantly more expensive (\$240 for a 20kg dog, \$340 for a 30 kg dog).

If a bitch is mismated the first thing to decide is whether you wish to breed from her again. If the answer is no then consider speying her. This is a one off cost and the situation will never arise again. If you do wish to breed from her, she should come in at 28 days post mating for a pregnancy scan, as not all matings result in a pregnancy. If pregnant then you have the option to abort her using Alizin or allow her to go to term.

If you have any queries please contact either of the clinics or speak to the vets on farm.

New Product – Ultravac SD 6 in 1

Typically the usual 5 in 1 vaccination programmes provide adequate cover for the standard Clostridial bacteria found on NZ farms. However on occasions sudden unexplained deaths can still occur. In some cases this has been shown to be due to another Clostridial bacteria, *Clostridium sordellii*. The existing 5 in 1 vaccines do not provide protection against this. Diagnosis of sudden death due to *Clostridium sordellii* in sheep and cattle can be quite difficult due to the sporadic nature of the infections, speed of the disease, the similarity of symptoms to other Clostridial infections as well as the need to culture the organism within hours of death as this and other clostridial organisms rapidly invade the carcass after death. Here in South Otago we have diagnosed *Cl sordellii* as a cause of sudden death in yearling cattle and I have also had a small number of sporadic cases in sheep.

A 10 in 1 Clostridial vaccine (Covexin 10) has been available for a few years and it has successfully prevented this problem in cattle. I would advise anyone successfully using Covexin 10 not to change to Ultravac 6 in 1 as in the 10 in 1 is protection against

another Clostridium, *Cl perfringens* Type A which has also been shown to be a cause of sudden death in cattle in NZ. Protection against *Cl perfringens* Type A is not conferred by Ultravac 5 in 1 or 6 in 1. Those of you who have read the labels (all of you!!) will note they cover *Cl perfringens* Type D – that is the cause of pulpy kidney (enterotoxaemia). Type A is a different beastie and there is no cross protection.

I know there are a few farmers about who have had the odd unexplained Clostridial looking sudden death in sheep despite a correct vaccination programme with the existing 5 in 1 vaccine. By Clostridial looking I mean sudden deaths that go off & blow up rapidly, fizz, froth etc. Some of these we have not been able to get to the bottom of (due to the difficulties in diagnosis listed above). If you are in this category it could be worthwhile considering using the 6 in 1 to see if the problem resolves itself. If it doesn't you can always go back to using the 5 in 1. To move over to 6 in 1 you would need to either:

- Do all sheep twice, a month apart to introduce it quickly.
- Or do your hoggets twice, a month apart and then an annual booster with 6 in 1 to gradually introduce it so that after 4 or so years the whole flock is covered for the 6 Clostridial diseases.

So you can do the sums and work out what you may or may not like to do, following are the product prices.

	Sheep	Cattle
Ultravac 5 in 1	15c/dose	30c/dose
Ultravac SD 6 in 1	25c/dose	50c/dose
Covexin 10	49c/dose	99c/dose

There is no selenised version of 6 in 1 available, just plain. Contact any of the vets if you would like more information, particularly on introducing 6 in 1 to your flock.

FECRT Testing

This is the test used to determine the drench resistance profile on your farm. While we don't conduct these until late December at the earliest, the preparation for these needs to be underway before the next newsletter.

There is an ideal window in which to do these. In South Otago this is late Dec to late March with Jan and Feb perhaps being the ideal. This is so we have the best chance of finding all the worm species we want to test against. Also we want FEC's of 500 minimum (preferably nearer 1000) before we start. The ideal would be to hit the 500 - 1000 mark in the test lambs in Jan or Feb but due to the vagaries of climate this can be easier said than done. Certainly your test lambs should not receive a weaning drench. The issue is whether or not to give them a pre-weaning drench. In a drier season if a pre-weaning drench is

given to the “test lambs”, often it is getting a bit late in the season before they get high enough counts, whereas if they don’t get a pre-weaning drench and it is a wetter wormier type season they might have high enough counts earlier than ideal.

It comes down to drench dates and what the season is shaping up like. Those of you considering doing a FECRT and really most of you should (of the 16 or so done last year everyone had resistance issues with at least one drench type, many to 2 or 3!) perhaps contact me (or Jillian at the Milton end) when you’re about to do a pre-weaning drench and depending on the date, and the likely climate, we can make a joint decision on whether or not to drench the test lambs at that time. We may need to enlist the Moon Mans help as well!

Obituary

I thought the following obituary, in light of the article above on antibiotic use in lambs is particularly apt.

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, Common Sense, who has been with us for many years. No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape. He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as knowing when to come in out of the rain, why the early bird gets the worm, life isn’t always fair and maybe it was my fault. Common sense lived by simple sound financial policies (don’t spend more than you earn) and reliable strategies (adults, not children are in charge).

His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place. Reports of a 6 year old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate, teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch; and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition.

Common Sense lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job that they themselves had failed to do in disciplining their unruly children. He further declined when the Govt made this more difficult by making smacking a criminal offence. Commonsense declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer sun lotion or an Aspirin to a student but could not inform parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

Common Sense lost the will to live when criminals received better treatment than their victims, and it was decreed that giving an antibiotic to one lamb somehow tainted the rest of the flock. Common Sense took a beating when you couldn’t defend yourself from a burglar in your own home without the burglar suing you for assault or the police charging you.

Common Sense finally gave up the will to live after a woman failed to realise a steaming cup of coffee was hot she spilled a little in her lap and was promptly awarded a huge settlement.

Common Sense was preceded in death by his parents Truth and Trust, his wife Discretion, his daughter Responsibility and his son Reason. He is survived by his four step brothers, I Know My Rights, I Want It Now, Someone Else Is To Blame and I’m A Victim.

Not many attended his funeral because so few realised he was gone. If you still remember him pass this on. If not join the majority and do nothing.

Merchandise Matters

The list this month is as follows:

- **Merial Ancare Sheep Drench** – Purchase a qualifying drench and choose either a Judge Sabatier 44pc cutlery set or a 5pc knife set plus steak knife and fork sets.
- **Take a Mate Fishing** – All purchases of Merial Ancare Sheep and Cattle drench qualify for the draw beginning now. Take you and your mate to Stewart Island for a great 2 days fishing.
- **Genesis Pour on 5lt** – Buy 2x5lt and get 1x5lt free.
- **Eclipse Pour-on** – This top-line combination pour-on is now available in a 5.5lt for the price of a 5lt.
- **Converge & Alliance** – Low dose combination drenches from Schering Plough - available here.
- **Vetdectin Sheep Drench** – ½lt free with every 10lt.
- **Dectomax Injection & Pour-on** – Purchase 2 starter packs and receive a slaughter pack consisting of Victory boning and skinning knives, a Cambrian 30cm steel and scabbard.
- **Cydectin Pour-on** – Receive 10% extra free on the 2 & 5lt packs and get a 17lt pack for the 15lt price.
- **Tailing Rings** – A good selection available.
- **Expo Lice Pour-on** for sheep – Instant knockdown, no withholding, only 38c/dose nett incl GST.
- **Kaiwaka Clothing** – All lines of this wet weather clothing have 30% off (shop stock only).

Promotion Winners

Fort Dodge Wanaka Wine Tour – Winners this year were Cameron & Michelle Clark, Purakauti; Geoffrey and Deanna Dodd, Kuriwao; Peter & Glenda Cooper, Clydevale; Lynn & Barbara Murray, Lawrence and Greg & Sue Stott, Purakauti. These lucky clients will be taking a tour round some of Central’s great wineries and staying in the plush Edgewater Resort.

John A. Smart B.V.Sc.