

Sheep Farmers Newsletter February 2010

Clutha Vets Animal Health Centre

Balclutha Clinic

Phone (03) 418-1280

Fax (03) 418-1282

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. Rape Scald
 2. Ovine Interdigital Dermatitis (Scald)
- **Reminders**
 1. Abortion Vaccines
 2. Flexidine Iodine injection
 3. Teaser Rams
 4. Androvax/Ovastim Vaccination
 5. Uddering ewes
- **Sheep Book – New Edition**
- **Cattle Pregnancy Testing**
- **Internal Parasite - Upcoming Issues**
 1. Quarantine drenching
 2. FECRT's
 3. Zolvix Use
- **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
Catherine Copland*	BVM&S, MRCVS
Ali Maw*	BVSc
Peter Heslip	BVSc, MACVSc
Alice Lee	BVSc
Steven Butler	BVSc

Milton

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

(*Part time)

Practice News

By the time you receive this newsletter we should have had 2 new graduates start with us at the Balclutha

clinic, Alice Lee and Steven Butler. It looks like quite a long list of vets when you see it printed above but as you can see quite a few are employed very much on a part time basis.

At long last the weather seems to have improved. All the rain earlier in January and the warmer weather now should mean plenty of grass & clover growth. Keep an eye on the internal parasite situation in your lambs as the weather lately will have been pretty much to their liking - unlike the last couple of years where conditions had got a bit dry by now and worm development/survival on pasture was drastically slowed.

Recent Animal Health Problems

Nothing in particular stands out really. On the whole animal health seems to have been quite good. There were a few lamb growth issues pre Christmas with almost a green (or cold) drought occurring. I was going to mention Vit A, D & E supplementation to help boost lamb growth as this seems to help in dull years however the recent change to better weather probably makes this superfluous now.

A couple of conditions that have cropped up lately are:

- a) **Rape Scald:** This can be seen when brassica crops such as rape are fed in the immature state. Rape should be fed when the leaves have developed a slight blue tinge and only for ½ - 1 hour at a time until lambs become used to it. Signs of rape scald include a thickening of the ears and neck and sometimes also along the midline of the back. Recovery is rapid when the lambs are taken off the crop and put into shade. You can hold severe cases in a darkened woolshed and allow animals to feed and water at night.
- b) **Ovine Interdigital Dermatitis:** Otherwise known as scald, this is common where underfoot conditions are wet and there is a heavy stocking rate. You all know pretty much what it looks like so I won't go into that. Nothing has really changed as far as treatment and control goes. Mild cases can recover spontaneously if the flock can be moved to drier pastures – obviously this can be easier said than done. Otherwise foot bathing with 10% Zinc Sulphate is still the main treatment/control method. Ideally a contact period in the foot bath of at least ½ a minute is desirable and following this they should stand in a dry area to let the Zinc Sulphate dry on the feet.

Reminders

1. **Abortion Vaccines:** Both Toxovax and CampyVax 4 vaccines should be being used by all sheep farmers who are serious about profitable lamb production. Both give worthwhile proven benefits and make economic sense to use. Over

the last few years we have done a reasonable amount of screening (by blood testing ewes) for the presence of these diseases. In the case of Toxo every farm checked (100%) had evidence of exposure to Toxo and in the case of Campy it was 84%.

In the case of Toxovax if you have not ordered it yet you will need to do so promptly as ideally it should be given to the first lambers *at least* 6 weeks prior to the ram going out. No order - no vaccine and you need to allow 3 weeks from order to delivery.

CampyVax 4 should be given twice pre-tup with a 4 - 6 week interval between the doses. Try and ensure the second dose of CampyVax 4 is given at least 2 weeks pre-tup. It is OK to give Toxovax and the first CampyVax 4 at the same time (but on opposite sides of the neck). If you give CampyVax 4 to the hoggets they should get one booster dose as a two-tooth. Provided they are well grown (>40kg at 1st injection) a booster dose of Toxovax as a two-tooth is not needed.

2. **Flexidine Iodine Injection** – This popular form of iodine supplementation should be given to all ewes by at least 6 weeks pre-tup and in fact anecdotal reports from the odd farmer, if accurate, would indicate longer (6 - 8 weeks) might be better. It should improve the scanning % by 4 - 6% on average & also result in a variable but sometimes quite large improvement in lamb survival.

Those of you who supplement iodine by oral dosing with Pot Iodide should give the correct dose (280mg) of this 1 – 2 weeks pre-tup – watch out for the usual “snake oil” products doing the rounds at this (or any!) time of the year with insufficient levels of the various ingredients in them. If you use Pot Iodide then at the very least you will need to give the ewes another dose **6 weeks** pre-lamb.

3. **Teaser Rams** – A useful tool, especially over two teeth to increase the number mated earlier and also over hoggets to stimulate oestrus & hence increase the number that get in lamb. Because hoggets are usually mated later than two-tooths and mixed age ewes you can often use the same teaser rams twice. Because they need their little “snip” 6 weeks prior to use (which is 17 days prior to mating) time is rapidly running out to get these done.
4. **Androvax/Ovastim Vaccination** – There are certain instances where the use of one or the other of these products to increase the number of lambs

born by (20 - 25%) can be useful however if you are scanning more than 160 - 165% then these are definitely **not** for you. The programme is:

- *Previously unvaccinated stock:*
Androvax - 1st dose 9 - 10 weeks pre-tup. 2nd dose exactly 1 month later.
Ovastim - 1st dose 6 - 9 weeks pre-tup. 2nd dose 3 weeks later at 2 - 4 weeks pre-tup.
- *Previously vaccinated stock:*
Androvax - 1 dose 5 - 6 weeks pre-tup.
Ovastim - 1 dose 2 - 4 weeks pre-tup.

5. **Uddering Ewes:** This can and should be done anytime from **at least 1 month** after weaning. Doing it at or shortly after weaning means you:
- Miss the significant number of cases (perhaps around a half) that only occur at or shortly after weaning.
 - Are actually likely to cause more mastitis cases by yarding ewes with full engorged udders in grubby dusty yards.
 - Will have trouble feeling the udders anyway as they are so distended with milk.

If you are not sure what is normal or abnormal etc, mark all you doubtful ones and we can check them for you and show you what is what etc so that, in the future you won't be throwing out perfectly good ewes or vice versa keeping some old bag (no pun intended) that would be better down the road!

Sheep Book – New Edition

This book, actually entitled “The Sheep: Health Disease and Production”, written for NZ conditions was first released in 1993 and a second edition appeared in 2002. The updated 3rd edition of 477 pages has just been released and it continues with the practical style of the previous editions. It is written for veterinarians and sheep farmers alike.

Some of you might have a copy of the Farmers Vet Manual – well this is a sheep version of that but covers areas other than just specific diseases (for example investigating reproductive problems and internal parasite issues) and covers these & the various diseases in more detail. The book costs \$120.00 +GST so if you would like a copy please put your name down for one at the Balclutha clinic and we will place a bulk order in a month or so. If you would like a look at the book first there is a copy at both Balclutha and Milton.

Cattle Pregnancy Testing

This is best done at least 6 weeks after the bull is removed. Young pregnancies can be missed and there can be quite a high rate of embryonic loss up until 6 weeks so for these reasons we don't like to confirm any pregnancy much less than 6 weeks. A cow can't be definitely called dry or empty if she's had contact with a bull within the last 6 weeks. Testing between about 6 - 10 weeks after the bull has been removed means that we can identify the late calvers (as well as the empty ones).

Internal Parasites – Upcoming Issues

As I indicated in the start of this newsletter this season is shaping up to be a bit more “wormy” than has been the case in the last couple of years. As a result of questions I've fielded lately I wish to emphasise the following points:

- **Quarantine Drenching** – This is a must with any stock (sheep, cattle or heaven forbid goats!) coming onto your property. One of the easiest ways to acquire a drench resistance problem is to import it onto your property. There are only 2 suitable quarantine drenches at present.
 - A triple combination containing abamectin – e.g. Matrix – **not** one containing ivermectin.
 - Zolvix (the new drench family from Novartis)

Dual combination drenches have been around for a while now and there is a low level of resistance to these so as you can't be certain that they will be effective in this particular situation, they **should not** be used. Ideally stock should be drenched on the farm of origin before departure as this lengthens the effective “hold time” post drenching but I fully realise that this won't usually be practical. So drench them on arrival and hold them for 12 - 24 hours (the longer the better) so they get rid of as much of the worm eggs being deposited as possible then put them out on a small sacrifice paddock for a couple of days. Any eggs shed in this time (and there will be some as it can take around 72 hours for egg laying to effectively cease following an effective drench) will go onto this sacrifice paddock and not infest the rest of the farm.

- **FECRT's** - It should be a little easier this season to get the FEC levels required to conduct this test to determine your drench resistance profile. We need 80 odd lambs with counts of between 500 - 1000 to conduct this test so those of you setting these up contact the clinic when you reach this point. The sooner these are done now the better - after the end of March is really too late as Nematodirus and Ostertagia (two of the more important worms from a resistance view point) can

become hard to find. See Nov 08 or Oct 09 newsletter for more details on FECRT testing.

- **Zolvix Use** - Recent computer modelling carried out in NZ has indicated that substituting one of the later lamb drenches of the season with Zolvix should slow the rate of resistance development to the regular drench(s) used - in other words to the BZ's, levamisole and the mectins.

Taking into account local parasite dynamics I would suggest that on most farms here that this drench of Zolvix should be given in the late March/early April period. By this time a lot of the works lambs should have gone so you are not using what is a more expensive drench on lots of lambs. Using Zolvix in this way not only slows down development of resistance to the other actives as mentioned above but also represents very responsible use of this new drench family, hence helping ensure it isn't "buggered" any sooner that it needs to be.

Merchandise Matters

This month's list from the retail dept is as follows:

- **Merial Ancare Sheep Drench** – Purchase 2 x 20lt Arrest or 1 x 20 lt of Genesis, Switch or Matrix and receive a free Swannndri Pahia short sleeved navy shirt.
- **Merial Ancare Cattle Drench** – Receive a choice of various Powerbuilt cordless power tools (angle grinder, skill saw, drill, reciprocating saw & torch) with any qualifying purchase of Genesis, Eclipse, Eprinex or Matrix C 20lt.
- **All Merial Ancare Drench Purchases** - Qualify for a draw to win the "Mutt Hut", a dog motel with a difference. There is one on display at the Balclutha Clinic.
- **Dectomax Injection/Pour-on** – Purchase 2 starter packs and receive a slaughter set consisting of knives, steels and scabbard.
- **Meaty Bites** - Working dog flavours and puppy biscuits are all on special for the month of February.
- **Tux Energy 40 kg** - \$89.95 while stocks last.
- **Purina Performance Farmers Deal** - Buy 6 x 17 kg bags of Performance Formula dog biscuits (for the busy working dog) and

receive the 7th bag free. \$104.73/bag nett inc GST. Can split the charges.

- **Converge, Scanda & Alliance** – Low dose combination drenches from Schering Plough available here.
- **Vetdectin Sheep Drench** - 0.5lt free with every 10lt.
- **Expo Pour-on for sheep** – Instant lice knockdown, no with-holding, only 38c/dose nett inc GST
- **Kaiwaka Childrens Wet Weather Clothing** - 50% off shop stock only. Final Clearance.
- **CampyVax 4** – All purchases of CampyVax 4 will go in the draw for one of four places on a hosted trip for two to Danseys Pass where you will be wined, dined, go curling and have a nights stay at the Danseys Pass Hotel.

Promotion Winners

There are several promotions that have been finalised lately.

- **Take a Mate Fishing to Stewart Island 2010** - The winners of this promotion (through their purchase of Merial Ancare products) to be held on the 6 - 7th March are Fraser Darling, Milton; Maurice Judson, Awamangu; Bradley Dodds, Warepa; Kevin Chalmers, Stirling; Michael Budge, Barnego; Dave Wardell, Greenfield; Steven Bamford, Warepa; Ian Halder, Tuapeka West; Ross Agnew, Kaihiku and Ross Williams, Kaiwera. They and their lucky mates will get to enjoy 2 days fishing, BBQ lunches and refreshments on our private charter plus a night at the South Seas Hotel being wined and dined.
- **Danseys Pass Weekend** – The winners of this trip through their early order of Toxovax (not to be confused with the similar promo mentioned above for CampyVax4) are Ron Howie from Moneymore, Greg Ramsay from Awatea and Neville Lindsay from Hillend.
- **Merial Ancare Outdoor Entertainment Package** – The winners of this great package worth \$3500 and including flash BBQ, table and chairs, portable bar fridge and gas heater were long standing clients Hamish and Doreen Anderson of Stirling. Until recently I doubt the package had probably had much use - the weather really had been somewhat ordinary!!

John A. Smart B.V.Sc.