

Sheep Farmers Newsletter June 2010

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Practice News

Well a lot of water has passed under the bridge since the last newsletter. Actually my apologies – the last edition of the newsletter (due in April 2010) did not get done. What with all that was going on the last

thing on my mind was writing newsletters. Anyway as most of you will be aware a number of the more senior vets (me included) had tendered our resignations. As a result of actions by the board subsequent to this, and the departure of the CEO, these resignations have been rescinded. This means

that even taking into account Teresa being on maternity leave, (yes its congratulations to Teresa and Matt on the recent arrival of a daughter), with the addition to the team in January this year of two new veterinarians, Steven Butler and Alice Lee, and a locum at Milton, vet numbers or vet hours/week available for clinical work will actually be slightly ahead of a similar time last year.

I know from phone calls and talking to many of you that you were quite concerned about the staffing situation and the ability we would have to cope in the spring period and beyond. We are now all extremely confident that we have sufficient vets, and not only that but experienced vets as well, to provide the usual high standard of service and that any fears you may have had in this regard can be put to rest.

In the interim while the board works on a review of the business structure Clutha Vets will be run by a management team of some senior vets with input from the chairman and vice chairman of the board. I trust this and other communications you have received recently will help allay any concerns you may have had - if you have any other concerns please feel free to contact any of the board or senior veterinary staff. Hopefully this puts an end to what has been a very stressful period and we can all focus on the future with renewed optimism.

Recent Animal Health Problems

Acute Internal Parasitism in Lambs/Hoggets: A few of you have been caught out by this recently and sometimes it has only been a month or so since they were last drenched. Toward the end of Autumn if conditions (sufficient warmth and moisture) are suitable and there has been earlier, heavier than usual worm egg contamination of pasture, then you can get the situation where there is a sudden massive larval challenge available to the grazing lambs/hoggets and these stock can very quickly go from normal to heavily parasitised with very rapid loss of condition, diarrhoea and death. At this time of the year the worm culprit is usually *Trichostrongylus*. Prevention really consists of good stockmanship (keeping a close eye on them) and maybe a bit of thought about the choice of paddocks lambs graze on now and what was grazing those paddocks earlier in the season and the likely resultant parasite contamination.

Scald: A few cases of scald are being reported at the moment. See the Feb 2010 Newsletter for a brief discussion of this condition.

Reminders

1. **Salmonella Brandenburg Vaccination:** Last year saw a bit of a rise in the number of affected farms

with the area from Romahapa through to Wairuna being the worst affected area. The basic vaccination programme is two doses to unvaccinated stock 4 - 8 weeks apart with the second dose given by the end of June/early July. An annual booster is then needed to maintain a reasonable level of protection. Hogget's can, but rarely do, get the disease so don't worry about vaccinating them. The vaccine (Salvexin + B) is, unfortunately, not fully effective but extensive work has shown it reduces the impact of disease by a good two thirds. A reasonable compromise if you want to reduce the overall work and cost is to vaccinate the two-tooth's each year as they often seem to be the more at risk mob. This is especially so in the year following an outbreak so I would advise those who had Brandenburg in their ewes last season to consider vaccinating at the very least, this years two-tooths. We know from bitter experience that these will be more at risk.

2. **Ultravac Vaccination of Hoggets:** By now the hoggets should have received their two doses of Ultravac 3 - 6 weeks apart prior to going on to winter crop. They will then be protected against blackleg etc as well as being correctly set up for their life time vaccination programme.
3. **Clostridial Vaccination of Cattle:** Although less common than in sheep, cattle can still die from Clostridial diseases – pulpy kidney, blackleg etc. The odd sudden death in cattle through the winter period is not uncommon and they can look a bit like a bloat death. Most of these can be prevented by Ultravac vaccination. Because of the relative economics with cattle as opposed to sheep I would recommend routinely using Ultravac 6 in 1 which covers sudden deaths due to *Clostridium sordellii*. Those of you who are using Covexin 10 should continue to use this as it covers another strain causing sudden death in cattle and it would be silly to change if it appears to be doing the job. I am just suggesting for an extra 20c/head those who routinely use Ultravac 5 in 1 should shift to the extra protection for minimal extra cost offered by Ultravac 6 in 1. See the Oct 09 newsletter for more detail on Ultravac 6 in 1.
4. **Abortion Submissions:** These will have no doubt started before the next newsletter (unfortunately) so following are some hints on practices to ensure the lab gets samples in the best condition and hence increases your chances of getting a diagnosis of the cause.
 - Don't send samples in off the first 1 or 2 cases – they could just be one-offs.
 - Send in fresh aborted foetuses – preferably two from two different abortions (not a set of twins).

- Black mummified foetuses are no use at all.
- If possible include some placenta (afterbirth).
- Make sure they haven't been scavenged – seagulls can sneakily remove gut contents through the navel and stomach contents are an important sample for the lab.
- Put foetuses in something leak proof – e.g. *at least* three supermarket bags. We don't appreciate S. Brandenburg organisms being dripped the entire length of the clinic.
- Preferably bring them in by 1pm each day and they will be almost a day quicker getting to the lab than if you are after 2pm.
- **No samples after 1.30pm on a Friday.** Late samples have to wait until Monday which reduces the chances of growing bugs & getting a diagnosis (but the cost doesn't reduce).

Prolapsed Rectum in Lambs/Hoggets

At one time or another most of you will have struck the odd case of a lamb “with its ring hanging out”. That's fine if it's only a very one off. However, I have a bit of a gut feeling that on some farms it is more than a one off condition. A few people see several of these a year and it represents an admittedly small (but rather annoying all the same) source of waste. A recent enquiry on this subject from a farmer prompted me to check the new edition of the sheep diseases book in case there was something new on the condition - the previous editions had been distinctly unhelpful. To my surprise there was a report of a trial in America relating the incidence of rectal prolapse to tail length at docking. A total of 1227 lambs on six farms were randomly allocated to three tail docking lengths:

1. *Short* – removal as close to the body as possible.
2. *Medium* – removal midway between the attachment to the body and the attachment of the caudal folds to the tail.
3. *Long* – removal at the attachment of the caudal folds to the tail. This equates roughly to the end of the V where pink skin meets woolly skin. The incidence of rectal prolapse was as follows - short 7.8%, medium 4.00% & long 1.8%.

Over the numbers of lambs in the trial these differences are quite significant implying that docking tails too short is strongly implicated in the occurrence of rectal prolapse. I have previously gone on about the disadvantages of taking tails off too short - increased risk of spinal abscesses and probable dirtier back ends. Here is yet another reason to maybe just slightly increase the tail length left at docking.

Eweguard Shortage

This spring there is going to be virtually no Eweguard containing Se & B12 available. Also there is no

guarantee we will get all the plain or selenised Eweguard that we order either. As you can imagine this is creating huge problems in forecasting what farmers may, or may not, decide to use. It will probably impinge on other companies products - for example if a lot of farmers NZ wide decide to go with say Cydectin and Prolovax instead, Bomac (makers of Prolovax) won't be able to cope and there will be stock outages there as well. While it is early days yet, and you should not be forced into an early decision on what if anything to use, the retail dept would appreciate some indications of what you think you may decide to use so they can do their best to have the right product mix on hand. Unfortunately it looks likely there will be product outages so if you know what you want now it might pay to get your order in.

Winter Brassica Crops

Brassicacans can produce high yields of very digestible feed with good ME levels (12-13 MJ/ME/kg DM) however they are invariably lacking in fibre, vitamins and some trace elements. Lack of fibre leads to less efficient digestion in ruminants so always ensure straw, hay, silage etc is available to stock on brassicas – they will self select to balance their diet. Also an acclimatisation period of 7-10 days when stock are first introduced to brassicas is advisable – there should be less of a growth check and unexplained sudden deaths if this is done.

The vitamin mineral imbalance is best corrected by supplementation with Vet LSD. For up to 3 - 4 weeks brassica grazing one dose at the end of grazing should suffice. Where stock are on brassicas for 6 - 8 weeks, two doses - one in the middle and one at the end of grazing - will be required.

Be aware that the “snake oil” cons continue. There are several products that claim to be the same as LSD however we have yet to analyse a copycat product that even comes close. Due to either poor packaging resulting in product instability and declining nutrient levels, and/or insufficient nutrient levels to begin with, we have found levels only 2 - 25% of what they should be - a waste of time even bothering to use these.

Copycat Drug Formulations

In recent years the patents have gone off one or two drug actives, or by a change in the formulation, companies have been able to get around existing patents. It is important to realise when choosing a product such as an anthelmintic that of at least equal importance to the actual drug (say abamectin or eprinomectin) is the formulation of the product – how it is made, what solvents, emulsifiers, stabilisers etc are used in its manufacture. Even though the same base active ingredient may be present, the activity and

efficiency of the final product can be quite different. Along with the animal species and the route of administration the formulation of the product can alter the pharmacodynamics (how and what the body does to a drug) i.e. how it is released, the extent and rate of absorption, how it is distributed in the body, how it is broken down and how it is excreted.

Hence generic formulations aren't necessarily the same as the original even though the base chemical on the label may appear similar. What is more the regulators in Wellington are not necessarily all that concerned with whether a product actually works well or not, or does what it claims. They are more concerned with issues of food safety, residues etc. It would only be if a particular product caused animal welfare concerns that they might get involved. You should seek advice from us as to what product/formulation is best for your situation.

New Products

1. Bopriva: You may have seen the "agreeabull" ads for this. Effectively this is an anti-testosterone vaccine for bulls that results in a temporary reduction of testosterone and hence a reduction in undesirable behaviour – fighting, mounting, damage to pasture, fences, gates etc., and dominance and territorial behaviour. Bopriva appears to have no effect on growth rates and yield - what you lose from a reduction in testosterone levels is more than compensated for by the fact that bulls spend more time feeding and less time fighting. I have been involved in trialling this product on several local farms and can report that in every case it worked very well and farmers were pleased with the results.

The recommended course is two doses 3 - 8 weeks apart with the longer interval giving a longer duration of effect of up to 16 - 20 weeks. Cost is \$5.50/dose and contrary to the company literature which says the bulls improved behaviour should be noticed within 1 - 2 weeks of the booster dose, in my experience the improvement in behaviour occurs within 24 hours of the first dose – hard to explain but it definitely does. As over the winter is one of the worst times as far as bull behaviour goes the time to use it is now. There is a special gun to administer it with – let's just say you don't want to jab yourself with it!! For more info enquire at the clinic.

2. Zapp Encore: Insect growth regulators (IGR's) have been on the market for over 10 years now. While IGR's (such as Magnum & Zapp) offer effective and persistent lice control one disadvantage of their use is that they did not affect adult lice – they have to die of old age – old age being 4 - 6 weeks. Hence lice infected sheep treated

with IGR's take some time to realise the benefits of treatment. In addition there is evidence emerging (from Australia - haven't seen it here yet) that resistance is developing to some actives.

Zapp Encore combines an IGR with another chemical which has a rapid knockdown effect on all stages of lice and maggots – in effect combining rapid action and a persistent affect. Although licensed for use on wool lengths up to 6 months post shearing please try and avoid using it on the longer wool lengths as in my opinion it is the use of pour-ons pushing the boundaries of effectiveness on longer wool lengths that is responsible for the gradual creep of resistance to pour-on insecticides - remember the Cypor, Wipeout days? Use Zapp Encore as soon after shearing as possible to get the best result. Cost for a 75kg ewe is 72c/head. There is a lower off-shears dose that works out at 49c/head but I would be a bit lukewarm about the long term advisability of this. At the most this lower dose should be used on the day of shearing only.

Clutha Vets Golf Day

The 18th annual CVA golf day is to be held at the Owaka Golf Course on Friday June 11th. Usual format - food and drinks supplied, everyone gets a prize and your golfing ability is completely irrelevant. You should have already received a flyer in the mail or you can check details on our website. Phone the clinic (418-1280) to register your interest. A ballot will be held if numbers exceed places.

Merchandise Matters

The list from the retail team this month is as follows:

- **Merial Ancare Cattle Pour-ons** – Purchase any 2.5lt or 5lt size of Genesis, Eclipse or Eprinex and receive an extremely bright LED Lenser Headlight. Purchase 10 or 20lt and receive either a Typhoon all weather jacket or pants.
- **Tempor Lice Pour-on** – Receive 1lt extra free with every 5lt container.
- **Expo Sheep Pour-on** – Buy 10lt & get an extra litre free.
- **Dextomax Herd Packs**- The purchase of 15lt of cattle pour-on gets you either a 20kg bag of Eukanuba Premium dog biscuits or a Ridgeline Mt Cook jacket.
- **Cydectin Pour-on for Cattle/Deer** – Purchase 15lt of pour-on and receive either a Proton Air 45 piece Tool kit or a Sunbeam Home Vacuum Packaging System.
- **Meaty Bites Working Dog 20kg** – Special price of \$61.88 inc GST. Now normally \$72.00.
- **Proplan Performance Premium Dog Biscuits** – 17kg for \$109.

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