

Sheep Farmers Newsletter August 2010

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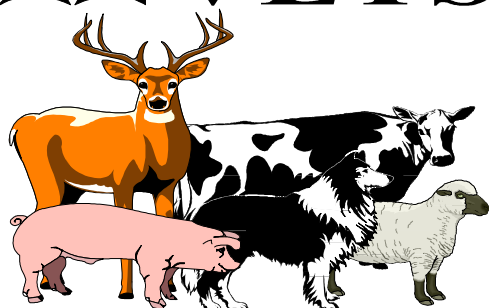
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Practice News

It's all been fairly routine since the last newsletter – things are ticking along. The spring rush will be descending anytime. At the time of writing the winter,

while it may have been a bit cold at times, really hasn't been too bad. Hope I'm not tempting fate by saying that!

The extensions/renovations at the Milton clinic are progressing well. It was hoped they would be finished before the spring rush of work started but at this stage it looks like it will be later in August before they are completed. Apologies for the inconvenience, especially if you've had to travel to Balclutha with a dog/cat so it can be seen but I'm sure you appreciate that we can't examine or perform surgery on animals when skill saws and hammers are going flat out and the rooms aren't secure.

Recent Animal Health Problems

1. Listeriosis. As usual we have seen some cases of Listeriosis in sheep this winter. This occurs when baleage (can also be silage but baleage is the main culprit) has not reached a sufficiently low pH – this needs to be <4.8. If the pH is above this, 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.

Treatment of listeriosis is possible – contact the clinic for more info on this.

2. Pneumonia. A few cases of this have occurred in hoggets recently. Almost certainly the origins of the problem started back in the summer period.

3. Salmonella Brandenburg. At the time of writing we have had a number of farms (geographically scattered but with a bit of a cluster in the West Waitahuna area) that have had ewes aborting and either off colour and/or dying afterwards. The first case was on July 9th (so is a bit earlier than the last few years) but over the next two weeks there were only another two farms affected. However in the last couple of days (I am writing this at home on Sat 31st July) several more cases have come to my notice so I hope there is not going to be a sudden surge in the number of affected farms through August. Note that in some cases the ewes have not appeared to be too unwell so the fact that aborted ewes might be only slightly off colour does not rule out S. Brandenburg as the cause. We have handouts available and heaps of experience (unfortunately!) with this disease so contact the clinic with any queries.

Reminders

The main driver of sheep farm profitability is kg of lambs weaned/ha. Hence any little improvements in the various aspects affecting lamb survival can add up to considerable improvements in profitability. The following pre-lamb “activities” all have an influence on lamb survival.

1. Clostridial Vaccination. The pre-lamb booster shot should be given to the ewes 1-3 weeks pre-lamb. Normally there are various options however the supply situation of many this year is diabolical so read below carefully. It might be wise to contact the troops in the merchandise dept and forward order your requirements just to be sure. The stock situation is as follows:

- **Ultravac 5 in 1 plain & selenised** – no supply problems – 500ml packs are a bit short but there are plenty of 250ml packs.
- **Prolovax + Se (B12 + 5 in 1)** – **out of stock.**
- **Prolovax Plain** – we can supply but it is short dated so you need to pre-order it from us.
- **Nilvax (levamisole + 5 in 1) Plain** – **out of stock.**
- **Eweguard (Plain, Se & B12)** – **all out of stock.**

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 (if it's available!) so that the newborn lamb starts 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 fawnish 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. Also, if anyone does come across one of these, I would appreciate a digital photo of it for my disease picture library please.

Apologies for the dire supply situation of many of these products but it is totally out of our control.

2. Trace Elements. The two important ones are selenium and iodine. Se, if necessary, can be administered with Ultravac, Prolovax etc. (if you can get it!!). Unless Flexidine was used pre-tup (in which case further iodine supplement 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 so called mineral mixes containing iodine 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. This timing is important – many farmers, because of convenience factors, administer it at the same time as they give Ultravac etc. – this is too late (and six weeks is too early for Ultravac). For improved lamb survival iodine supplementation is important in South Otago.

3. Vitamin E. A deficiency of Vit E in particular can also result in poorer lamb vigour and survival. This deficiency is practically guaranteed where stock

(sheep, cattle and deer) have been on brassicas, but it is also likely on other winter feed as Vit E is low in stored feed (hay, baleage etc.) and in mature grass.

Various factors determine 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 enquire at the clinic. LSD liquid represents the gold standard for quality, and more importantly, stability. As I have previously warned, beware the crap copycat powder products where all ingredients are packaged together in a plastic container. One of these local products we had analysed had just 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 in the last 12 months and the story around their responsible use has not changed for several years now. Some selective use of these products, based around factors such as pregnancy status (1, 2 or 3), ewe condition, age etc. is fine (in fact in triplet ewes that need all the help they can get it is to be encouraged). Conversely single bearing mixed age ewes should rarely, if ever, need treated. Avoid routine whole flock use as this does accelerate the development of drench resistance.

The products are:

- *Capsules (3 types)* - all in stock and the usual delay charge terms apply.
- *Cydectin Inj., Cydectin LA and Dectomax Inj.* - all in stock and in addition, although the supply company isn't, we are offering deferred charge on these products – charge Dec. - pay Jan.
- *Eweguard* – as mentioned above all Eweguard products are out of stock.

Contact the clinic for more detailed advice on the relative merits of these products and the best option for use on your farm.

5. Lambing Kit. Get this organised – disinfectant (Vetacide); lubricant; penicillin (plus syringes and needles); energy drench (Headstart); Glucalpos; iodine spray; 20% Dextrose; Watery Mouth treatment etc.

Arthritis in Dogs

Arthritis is very common in middle aged dogs (>7 years for heading dogs and >5 years for huntaways) but dogs of any age can suffer joint damage that results in arthritis.

Arthritis can be a gradual insidious onset so that you may not realise that your dog(s) aren't working to their full potential. We commonly see evidence of arthritic change on the x-rays of all ages of working dogs

affecting hips, knees, elbows, wrists and backs. Often this is without them being obviously lame or sore.

Arthritis is a progressive disease which is irreversible but there are many treatments available that can slow the process, and prolong the working life of your dogs. These treatments are always more successful when started early in the course of the disease.

Signs that may indicate a dog has arthritis are:

- Swollen or thickened joints.
- Stiffness when first coming out of the kennel.
- Reluctance to jump in the ute or on the four wheeler.
- Reluctance or inability to jump gates or fences.
- Less keen to work or run freely, particularly towards the end of the day.
- Stiff the day after hard work.
- More aggressive towards people or other dogs.
- More withdrawn or less willing, to obey commands.

We are offering free arthritis checkups with our experienced nurses from 16th – 27th August. If you think any of your dogs would benefit from a check up please contact the clinic. Perhaps I better get myself checked – some of those signs listed above could apply to me!

Lamb Survival Workshops

Jillian Clark and I are running a series of seminars/workshops over the next fortnight, the topic being lamb survival and optimising this as much as possible. We will be covering quite a range of issues starting from around mid-pregnancy and going through to about the tailing period.

The times and venues are as follows:

- Tues Aug 10th - Moneymore Hall - J Clark.
- Thurs Aug 12th - Clarks Junction Hotel – J Clark/J Smart.
- Tues Aug 17th – Owaka Community Centre – J Smart.
- Tues Aug 17th – Lawrence Golf Club - J Clark.
- Wed Aug 18th – Clinton Golf Club – J Smart.

All start at 1.30 and should run till around 3.30. Both Jillian and I will be at the Clarks Junction one as we are expecting to also cover aspects of the Brucellosis eradication scheme I have proposed for that area. Cost is \$35/head or \$50/farm (not \$60/farm as originally advertised). Please RSVP for catering purposes by four days prior to the seminar you wish to attend.

Calf Rearing

Just a couple of points for those of you considering rearing bobby calves this season. Surveys have shown that many dairy calves do not receive adequate colostrum which makes them far more prone to

disease problems. There is a simple blood test we can carry out on the calves to determine colostrum status – it should be done before 10 days of age.

Also there is a vaccine (Rotavec) available which given to the cows 1-3 months pre-calving immunises the calves against three of the major infectious causes of calf scours **PROVIDED** the calves receive adequate colostrum in the first 24 hours of life.

If you can find a dairy farmer who vaccinates their cows with Rotavec, and ensures the calves receive adequate colostrum, then he/she is worth their weight in gold – look after them. At the very least I would offer to pay an extra \$5/calf (the cost of the vaccine) as this would be well and truly worth it in terms of the less trouble and expense you should have to go to in rearing these calves.

AGM

The AGM will be held on Tuesday 10th August at 8pm at the Henley Hall. The guest speaker will be Graeme Gale from Helicopters Otago, which as well as general aviation work also operates the Otago Rescue Helicopter.

Scanning Results

There appears to be a bit of variation between farms on last years results - some up, some down, which probably reflects the autumn feed situation. Overall the average might be up a fraction – really a bit early to say yet.

New Product

Startect Sheep Drench – I recently attended the world launch (in Christchurch, not Monte Carlo or New York unfortunately!) of Startect, Pfizer's new sheep drench. This is not just another “me too” drench – it contains a unique new anthelmintic active known as Derquantel which is a member of what is known as the spiroindole chemical family. No doubt this will be shortened to the SI family. This represents the second new drench active to become available to NZ sheep farmers in a little over a year - Zolvix from Novartis was the first. This has provided some respite to sheep farmers in the ongoing battle against drench resistance. However, as I said before about Zolvix, it is absolutely imperative that these new actives are used responsibly otherwise they will rapidly go the same way as the older chemicals.

Startect is actually a combination drench so that fact alone means resistance to it will take longer to develop than if it was produced as a single active. It is a combination of abamectin (the existing chemical as found in Genesis) and the new Derquantel.

As we also were with Zolvix, we were involved in trialling Startect on a local farm (with some existing resistance issues) 18 months ago where it gave 99.9 - 100% control of all worm species.

Startect will be available by Sept so in plenty of time for the new season. It will be available in 5 & 15lt packs, has a dose rate of 1 ml/5kg, and at this stage looks like it will cost about 10c/ml. While on the subject of drench costs I neglected to mention earlier this year that Zolvix reduced in price by about a third.

Merchandise Matters

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

- **Merial Ancare Cattle Pour-ons** – Purchase any 2.5 or 5lt Genesis, Eclipse or Eprinex & receive a very bright LED headlight. Purchase the 10 or 20lt & receive either a Typhoon all weather jacket or pants. In addition there is a delayed charge – charge Sept - pay Oct.
- **Eprinex 5lt** – Alternatively if you buy 3 x 5lt Eprinex you get a fourth 5lt free (effectively a 25% discount).
- **Expo Sheep Lice Pour-on** – Buy 10lt & get an extra litre free.
- **Dectomax 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** – Purchase 15lt of pour-on & receive either a Proton Air 45 piece tool kit or a Sunbeam Home Vacuum Packaging System.
- **Glucalpos Bottles** – The 500ml bottles for milk fever treatment are available again.
- **Bionic Capsules** – Purchase 2000 and receive either a Typhoon Jacket or pants (plus delayed charge as mentioned earlier).
- **Meaty Bites WDF** – Special price of \$61.88 inc GST.
- **Tux Energy 40 kg** – Only \$99.00 at present.

Promotion Winners

- **CampyVax Danseys Pass Weekend** Steve Sanders (Te Houka), Paul Stephens (Tahakopa), Ken Rishworth (Tuapeka Mouth), Johnny Bennett (Te Houka) and Anthony Nichol (Clarks Junction) and their wives won the places for this trip which took place last month.
- **Merial Ancare Mutt Home** – The winner of this “fancy” dog kennel was Ken Campbell of Taumata.
- **CVA Golf Champion 2010** – The winner of the inaugural CVA trophy for the most stablefords at the recent CVA gold tournament at Owaka was Ian Willocks of Owaka Valley.

John A. Smart B.V.Sc.