

Sheep Farmer Newsletter December 2011

Clutha Vets Animal Health Centre

Balclutha Clinic

Phone (03) 418-1280

Fax (03) 418-1282

Merchandise Direct (03) 418-1281

Milton Clinic

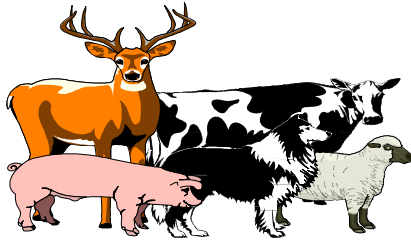
Phone (03) 417-8032

Fax (03) 417-8031

Clydevale Store

(03) 415-9121

clutha
VETS



Animal Health Centre

Balclutha Clinic

Bruce Bissett*	BAG, BVSc.
John Smart	BVSc.
Jason Darwen	BVSc.
Rob Mills	BVSc.
Teresa O'Riordan*	BVM&S.
Hanneke van Kooten	DVM.
Hamish Moore	BVSc.
Catherine Copland*	BVM&S, MRCVS
Steven Butler	BVSc.
Alice Lee	BVSc.
Peter Heslip	BVSc, MACVSc.
Annie Jackson*	BVSc.
Kate Loudon	BSc, BVMS.
Murray Gillies	BSc, DVM.

Milton Clinic

Peter Kalb	BVSc.
Jillian Clark*	BVSc.
Sid Taylor	BVSc, MACVSc.
Barbara Christensen	BVSc, MACVSc.

*Part time

CONTENTS

- Practice News
- Recent Animal Health Problems
 1. Enzootic Ataxia
- Reminders
 1. Teaser Rams
 2. Ram Runs
 3. ToxoVax Order Forms
 4. Optigrow Checks
 5. Drench Checks
 6. Check the Bulls!
- Abamectin Toxicity
- Internal Parasite Update
- New Product
- Merchandise Matters
- Promotion Winners
- Position Wanted

Practice News

Here we are at the last newsletter for the year - doesn't time fly when you're having fun! I don't know where the year has got to. All the best for Christmas & the New Year from all of us at Clutha Vets.

Over the last 5-6 years, and without even trying to do so, we have found ourselves doing an increasing number of trips and servicing an increasing clientele in the Lee Stream, Clarks Junction, Hindon and Black Rock area. Providing convenient access to routine animal health products for farms in this area had

become problematic. After a period looking unsuccessfully for a suitable location in Outram we have opened a small depot in a building immediately beside the Lee Stream School. This will be open from 8.45 - 9.45am & 2.30 - 3.30pm Mon - Fri during school terms. Outside of these hours arrangements can be made for collection by contacting Jenny Nichol on 027-489-1459. The commission paid will effectively act as a source of extra funds for the school so this should be a win win situation for all.

The community owned shop, Clinton Express Ltd is due to open shortly and Clutha Vets are pleased to be able to support this community initiative by having a supply of routine animal health products located in the building. The presence of a Clutha Vets Clinton depot has fluctuated a bit over the years as various businesses have come & gone. With good community support behind it Clinton Express Ltd should be there for the long haul. The depot hours will be the hours the shop will be open (unknown at the time of writing) and the phone number will be 415-7054.

We have a couple of staff changes coming up. Suzanne Craig who has been in the small animal clinic at Balclutha for 10.5 years has tendered her resignation. Suzanne was part time and her hours will be taken up by Catherine Copland, one of the other small animal vets who was also part time, increasing her hours plus this will also give the opportunity for some of the large animal vets to do a bit more small animal work and thus maintain their skills in this area.

Hanneke van Kooten has also resigned. Hanneke gets married in January and she and husband to be Karl are shifting to Christchurch because of employment opportunities for Karl. Hanneke was mainly involved in the dairy side of the practice and has been here for 4.5 years. We wish her all the best for the future and are currently looking for a replacement for her.

Recent Animal Health Problems

1. *Enzootic Ataxia (Swayback) in Lambs:* I mention this not because it is a major problem but because it is an old disease condition and we have not seen a case in the 35 years I have been here. It is due to copper deficiency in ewes in late pregnancy. Imagine the nerves in the spinal cord like an electric flex - wires in the middle that conduct (in this case nerve impulses rather than electricity) surrounded by insulation. In cases of copper deficiency the insulation material doesn't form properly and so you effectively get short circuits which result in hind end ataxia (swaying / bordering on paralysis), hence the term Swayback. In this case 200 out of 9000 lambs near Milton were noticed to be wobbly and swaying in the back end when yarded for tailing plus there were also a number of lambs with broken legs. In the previous season there had been about 10 affected

lambs. Both swayback and excessive numbers of broken bones are signs of copper deficiency.

Different breeds of sheep take up copper from pasture at different rates. Texels take it up very easily & are therefore susceptible to copper toxicity, most British breeds are intermediate, and Finns and East Friesians have a lower rate of uptake and are therefore more susceptible to copper deficiency. In this case the ewes were ½ Finnish Landrace and this is probably the main contributing factor in this case.

As I said above I mention this because of its interest factor. The last thing I want you to do is rush out and supplement sheep with copper. The condition is very rare. Those of you with a well stabilised Finn influence could always check some liver coppers in lambs at the works like you might for cobalt or selenium. The rest of you - I wouldn't bother spending money on lab fees checking for it.

Reminders

1. *Teaser Rams:* Many farmers have found the use of teaser rams an inexpensive tool to achieve better performance, especially over the two-tooths. They can advance what would be ewes being mated later in the cycle, thus advancing the mean lambing date which should result in more lambs away early, plus each cycle a ewe has before being put with the ram increases the likelihood of twinning.

Teasers need to be operated on by 9 weeks prior to the start of mating so they need done over the next 2 or so months. They should be put out with the ewes 17 days before the "real" rams are put out at a ratio of 1:300 - 1:500. The timing is important - a 20-21 day period with the teasers would mean many ewes will have cycled just before the flock rams are put out meaning the actual mating date could be delayed.

2. *Ram Runs:* *Brucella ovis* - an important cause of infertility - is under very good control in South Otago. As a result some farmers are neglecting to get their rams checked. There are, however, other causes of infertility & we regularly come across these when checking rams - examples would be other causes of epididymitis, testicular atrophy (small balls), scrotal mange and hernias. An infertile dominant ram can have quite an impact on your flock scanning so get your rams checked. Fill out the enclosed form and return it promptly. This enables us to organise the runs more efficiently saving on time and mileage.

3. *Toxovax Order Form:* This is also included in the newsletter with the ram run form. As you may be aware we have been doing some blood testing of wet & dry ewes for Toxo (& Campy) serology over the last few years. From across the country there is not one farm yet where Toxo has not been present at

some point. Just 1gm of faeces from a cat that is shedding the bug contains enough Toxoplasma organisms to cause 2000 ewe abortions!

The single life time dose of Toxovax should be given at the latest 6 weeks, (preferably 8 weeks), prior to the first mating. As it has about a 10 day shelf life from the time of arrival in the clinic, pre-ordering is essential and this should be done at least 4 weeks ahead of when you require it.

Incidentally, figures provided by Vet Services Hawkes Bay (who scan hundreds of thousands of ewes every year) have shown an increase in scanning over the last 5 years ranging from:

- 4.3 - 11.3% in MA ewes where Toxovax is used (as a two-tooth).
- 3.1 - 12.5% in 2th ewes where Toxovax is used.
- 6.8 - 11.4% in MA ewes where CampyVax vaccine is used (as a two-tooth).
- 6.9 - 14% in 2th ewes where CampyVax is used.

With the increase in value of lambs it makes more sense than ever before to be using **both** vaccines.

4. Optigrow Checks: Telephone either clinic to arrange this prior to dispatch of the stock to any works. In lambs selenium and cobalt should be checked, & in cattle and deer - selenium and copper. Prior to the first draft blood tests in lambs can provide useful information on cobalt and selenium status.

5. Drench Checks: Irrespective of which drench is being used you should check on its effectiveness at least once a season, preferably after one of the earlier lamb drenches of the season. Take samples off 10 lambs 10 - 12 days post drenching (keep samples separate). Counts should all be zero – if not there is a problem that may, or may not, be drench resistance & further testing will be needed to sort this out.

6. Check the Bulls! You should spend some time watching the bulls when they are first put out with the cows. Things to watch for are mounting but not obviously serving, and a number of frustrated cows hanging around an inactive bull.

Abamectin Toxicity

This subject has received a bit of publicity through the country lately as there has been the odd case of toxicity occurring, so I thought it was worth mentioning here. Prevention is better than cure.

In quite young calves and lambs there is not a great margin for error with abamectin, more so in calves actually. Deaths & nervous signs have been reported in young stock when given as little as 1.5 times the recommended dose – this applies to all forms of the drench – oral, injection & pour on. In young calves still on milk suckling stimulates the oesophageal

groove reflex mechanism which bypasses the rumen sending the liquid straight into the abomasum (4th stomach) where it is absorbed much more quickly creating a higher risk for toxicity.

So when using abamectin apply the following rules:

- Don't drench calves less than 4 months of age, or 120kg, with abamectin drenches unless you know their weight and are drenching them accordingly. Abamectin containing drenches include Matrix, Eclipse, Genesis, Alliance and Converge.
- Never mix any drench into milk or put it through a calfateria.
- Never swap drench containers. If decanting to a smaller container always label the container, or transfer back to the original container when finished.
- Double check the correct product is being used. Pour-on's given orally are lethal.
- Check the drench gun is measuring accurately.
- Weigh animals and split into groups if necessary. Usually we would recommend dosing to the heaviest in the mob however you do need to be careful with this approach in young stock.
- Don't drench the dog with abamectin – it is ineffective at killing worms but quite effective at killing dogs.
- Incidentally, levamisole - Nilverm, Levicare & it is a component of many combination products - has also got a fairly low safety margin in sheep and cattle (of any age) so care also needs to be taken with it. In effect you really have to take care with all drenches as there aren't many that don't contain either levamisole or abamectin or both.

Internal Parasite Update

As internal parasitism is, after nutrition, probably the most important animal health problem in terms of potential effects it is appropriate near the beginning of each new season to reiterate a few important points & provide an update on any new research etc (as I have done for the last few years).

As I said in the last (Oct 11) newsletter there is quite a lot of interest in conducting a FECRT to establish a farms resistance status & what drenches are fully effective. See this newsletter for the detail on setting up for one of these. Back copies of the newsletter can be found on our website if your desk is as messy as mine and you can't locate it or have thrown it out.

There is increasing evidence that larvae on pasture can burrow several cm down into the soil at times of adverse climate. They can survive there for several months if necessary, meaning that soil can be an important reservoir of infection and pastures may therefore not be quite as "clean" as you might otherwise think.

To effectively extend the life of the cheaper existing anthelmintics it has been shown by Dave Leathwick's computer modelling that one drench of Zolvix (a new unique chemical active) later in the season (round early April) can help achieve this. In other words one drench of a more expensive drench (when there are fewer lambs to drench anyway) will help ensure that you will be able to continue using the existing cheaper drenches for longer. However, that is not to say it can't be used at other times.

More people are now using drenches other than pour-on's on cattle & deer & there have been several favourable comments, particularly from deer farmers, over the improvements they have seen. Just to reiterate – in both cattle and deer there is a very high level of ineffectiveness with the mectin pour-on's. The "order of preference" for drenching is:

Cattle:

- 1) Oral drench (especially younger stock) with Matrix, Arrest or Switch from Merial Ancare or Scanda, Converge or Alliance from MSD.
- 2) Where that is not feasible or practical use an injection and Eclipse E (a unique combination) is the preferred option here by a country mile.
- 3) If a pour-on is going to be used then Eclipse Pour-on (a combination but not the same combination as Eclipse E injection) would be the preference over any other single action mectin pour-on.

Deer:

- 1) Oral drench with Matrix or Alliance. This is effectively a double combo of white & mectin as levamisole is ineffective in deer and there is no product on the market that contains just these two
- 2) Where an oral is not feasible/practical use an injection – Dectomax would probably be the preferred one here.
- 3) There isn't a third option really – all mectin pour-on's must be considered ineffective on deer.

There are "tweaks" to the above possible – e.g. you could use Arrest C orally combined with a mectin injection in cattle or Oxfen combined with a mectin injection in deer. See the clinic staff for more info.

Note: there are low dose formulations of Arrest, Switch and Matrix available, sometimes in both 1ml/10kg and 1ml/20kg dose rates.

New Product

Switch C: In response to the increasing evidence of pour-on ineffectiveness in cattle Merial Ancare have released a low dose version of the very popular Switch sheep drench for use in cattle. This gives another combination option for cattle (not deer as levamisole is not effective in deer). Dose rate is 1ml/20kg. Withholding time is 14 days for meat.

Merchandise Matters

This month's list is as follows:

- **Merial Ancare Sheep Drench** – The ever popular Xmas Ham promotion is back on again. Receive a high quality ham with each purchase of selected Merial Ancare drenches.
- **Coopers Sheep Drenches** – Receive a \$25.00 Prezzy Card on selected Scanda, Converge and Alliance drenches.
- **Merial Ancare Sheep Drenches** – All purchases of these qualify for an entry in the draw for places on the "Take a Mate Fishing to Stewart Island" weekend. There is a weekly draw until Xmas. See below for winners so far.
- **Merial Ancare Cattle Drenches** – As with the sheep drenches above, the purchasers of qualifying packs of injection or pour-on receive a Xmas ham and go in the draw for the Stewart Island fishing trip.
- **Cydectin & Dectomax Drenches** – Receive a \$30 New World voucher with selected Cydectin and Dectomax drenches
- **Merial Ancare Products** – All purchases of Merial Ancare products also qualify for a chance to win an outdoor barbeque package which includes a stainless steel barbeque, terracotta brazier, Icy-tek chilly bin, gas bottle, 2 deck chairs, cookbook, utensils, stubby holder & lamp
- **Alliance or Converge 5lt** – Purchase 2 x 5lt of these drenches and receive a drench gun and cattle drenching hook - only while stocks last.
- **Startect Drench 15lt** – Receive a free backpack worth \$100.
- **Cydectin Pour-on 17lt** – 17lt pack only \$1646.35 nett incl GST.
- **Cydectin Pour-on 2 & 5lt** – Get an extra 10 % product free.
- **Combat Topline Cattle Pour-on** – Super special – only \$716.83 nett incl GST for 7.5lt. Will treat 300 x 500kg cows for \$2.39 each.

Promotion Winners

Fishing Trip to Stewart Island: Winners of the weekly draw for this so far are Gordon Steel, Clinton; Peter Bloxham, Lovells Flat; Spencer Morrison, Taumata; and Stephen Harrison, Sandy Bay. There are still another 6 draws to go plus each winner gets to take a mate fishing with them.

Position Wanted

23 yr old German female looking for farm work over the summer. Experienced with sheep. Own transport. Living in East Taieri. Call/text Mia 022 040 5863.

John A. Smart B.V.Sc