# Sheep Farmer Newsletter June 2011

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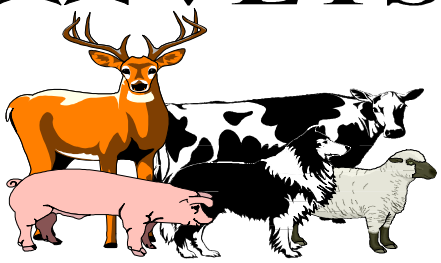

## Animal Health Centre

**Balclutha**

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| Bruce Bissett* | BAg, BVSc. |
| John Smart | BVSc. |
| Jason Darwen | BVSc. |
| Suzanne Craig* | BVSc. |
| Rob Mills | BVSc. |
| Teresa O'Riordan* | BVM&S. |
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| Steven Butler | BVSc. |
| Alice Lee | BVSc. |
| Peter Heslip | BVSc, MACVSc. |
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**Milton**

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|---|---|
| Peter Kalb | BVSc. |
| Jillian Clark* | BVSc. |
| Roo Wijey | BVSc. |
| Sid Taylor | BVSc, MACVSc. |
| Barbara Christensen | BVSc, MACVSc. |

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## Practice News

Most of you will be aware that the practice is now being run under a new management structure after the upheavals of earlier last year. Jason Darwen, Rob Mills, Sid Taylor and I have contracted to run the practice. Apart from continually looking for ways to improve our services etc this change should be hardly noticeable on the outside as far as you, our clients are concerned. We welcome any comments, suggestions, brickbats or bouquets. Jason is primarily in charge of

clinical services so in the first instance any concerns of a clinical nature could be addressed to him.

Roo Wijey has tendered her resignation. Roo has been based at Milton for the last 2.5 years. She is heading back to family overseas (Singapore then the U.K.) so we wish her all the best for the future. We are currently looking for a replacement for Roo which is proving to be the usual difficult process.

## Recent Animal Health Problems

***1. Internal Parasites:*** **-** As I indicated in the last newsletter, this season has been a very "wormy" one. Recently several cases of ewes & two-tooths not doing as well as they should be, have been brought to our attention & these have been due to parasitism.

If you suspect your ewes could be suffering from a worm burden – say they're not in as good a condition as you would expect given their feeding, then do check their egg counts promptly rather than "wait and see". If you do adopt a wait and see approach when egg counts are perhaps a bit elevated, what can then happen is part way through the winter when the pressure comes on more they can really pack up then. So the moral is, especially this year – a bit of FEC screening could be well worthwhile.

***2. Salmonellosis:*** **-** I mentioned this in the last newsletter & we have had more cases since in ewes. This is not Brandenburg, it is enteric (gut) salmonellosis caused by a different strain of Salmonella. If you suddenly find good condition ewes dead (or severally off colour) this disease is always a possibility. Don't dally around - contact the clinic for advice. See the April 2011 newsletter for more info on this. If you don't keep back copies of the newsletter these can be found on our website.

## Reminders

***1. Salmonella Brandenburg Vaccination:*** - Once again, last year saw a reasonable number of farms affected by this rather contagious cause of abortion. If I had to pinpoint a worst affected area, the West Waitahuna / Greenfield area was probably it last year.

The basic vaccination programme is 2 doses to unvaccinated stock 4 - 8 weeks apart. Don't worry about in-lamb hoggets – they rarely get the disease. The second dose is best given around the end of June / early July with the first dose the appropriate time ahead of that. In previously vaccinated ewes the sole booster dose should be given late June, early July. Ewes can have a 36 hr "off colour" period after their booster vaccination.

The higher value of lambs & ewes now makes the economics of vaccination more attractive. The cost is 76c/dose. While not as effective as virtually all other vaccines you are used to, it does reduce the incidence (by around two thirds). Two-tooths are more at risk so a reasonable compromise if you don't want to do the lot is to vaccinate these. This is especially so if you had an outbreak in the older ewes last year.

***2. Ultravac Vaccination of Hoggets:*** - By now the hoggets should have received their 2 doses of Ultravac 5 in 1 or 6 in 1, 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 Calves:*** - 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 through 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 chance (but not the cost) of getting a diagnosis.

***5. Bopriva (Agreeabull) Vaccination: -*** Bopriva is the anti-testosterone vaccine that is very effective in reducing bull's undesirable behaviour - fighting, mounting, fence wrecking etc. There is no adverse effect on growth rates. The recommended course is 2 doses 3 - 8 weeks apart giving, depending on the interval between the doses, 12 (3 week interval) to 20 (8 week interval) weeks duration of effect. Winter is often when the worst effects of bull behaviour are seen. There is a special gun to administer it with - let's just say you don't want to inject yourself! For more info enquire at the clinic.

## Sheep Measles (Taenia ovis)

Many of you have your dogs on our monthly Droncit mail-out programme, so provided you actually give these to your dogs (and don't store them in a shed somewhere) your dogs will be protected. If you don't dose your dogs there is a blood test available now to check if your dogs (or anyone's dogs that might be on your property) are carrying this tapeworm.

## Distemper & Parvovirus in Dogs

Like wise there is a blood test available that will indicate your dog's immunity to these viruses. Following vaccination immunity will decline with time to the point where they become susceptible – the time taken for this varies depending on a number of factors, the vaccine used, the dog itself, contact with the virus. There has been a slight change to the recommended vaccination protocols for dogs. After the initial pup programme & booster a year later the vaccination interval recommended is now 3 years (up from 2). We are aware that some of you are a bit casual about keeping your most valuable farm workers vaccinated so the blood test for immune status to distemper and parvovirus would be useful for these properties.

## Cattle and Deer Drenching

The articles on this in the last (April) newsletter have created quite a bit of interest/discussion which is good. However, some of you missed these - there is too much detail to produce this again so refer to the last newsletter or there are copies of past newsletters on our website. If you farm cattle or deer you need to be aware of the issues raised in these articles. It is no longer good enough to simply be throwing a pour-on at cattle or deer, especially the cheap nasty "me too" pour-ons. You need to be aware of the issues / problems with their use and ways around these.

The clinic staff (retail & vets) are being kept abreast of the latest developments in this area so please feel free to ask for advice in their increasingly complex area. See the new product section later in this newsletter for an important new development for cattle drenching.

## Winter Brassica Crops

Brassicas 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 using these.

## Stock Outages

The last 12 months have been the worst I have ever known for various products and drugs being out of stock. We do our best when we know there is a problem looming but often the first we know about it is when an order fails to turn up. Because many farm use products are seasonal and often the season here is a month or so later than in the North Island, if for any reason there is a shortage we are more likely to wear it than those further north.

Prolavax has been unobtainable for several months now – hopefully it will be back before the pre-lamb period when there is a burst in use of it. Copper injection has also been erratic lately - the major supplier of this had some batches that failed their quality control check and the other suppliers have struggled to keep up with the demand.

## Pre-Lamb Procedures

It seems a bit early to be talking about these now but by the time the next newsletter comes out at the end of the first week of August some of you will already be well into these, especially the anthelmintic options.

As far as these go the story hasn't really changed. They are a major contributor to the development of drench resistance, but at the same time can have production benefits. Hence we still advise "circumspect" use if you are going to use either capsules or any of the versions of moxidectin (Cydectin) injection. In other words select ewes to treat based on need - condition, singles vs. multiples etc & certainly avoid blanket treating the whole lot.

Having just written about stock outages we have been advised that Eweguard Plain will be in limited supply this year however Eweguard + Se + B12, which was unavailable last year, will have good supplies this year. Bionic capsules should be OK.

HOWEVER, from past experience I would suggest that as soon as you know how much you might want of any pre-lamb product it might pay to contact the retail team & get your requirements allocated. That way hopefully no one will miss out.

## BVD Infection in Cattle

Should you be concerned about this? Jillian Clark has written the following brief explanatory article.

BVD infection is the cattle equivalent of Hairy Shaker Disease in sheep. 40-60% of dairy & beef herds in NZ are infected. It can cause scouring in calves but more importantly if heifers/cows become infected over the mating period it can cause increased empty rates and a spread calving, abortions, birth defects, the birth of persistently infected poor doing carrier calves as well as normal looking carrier calves. BVD virus is shed in saliva, tears, mucus, semen, blood urine and faeces. Practices that increase the risk to a herd are:

- Buying BVD untested bulls.
- Buying/using BVD unvaccinated bulls.
- Buying in/leasing cattle e.g. in-calf cows, heifers, weaned calves, store cattle.
- Having dairy grazers.
- Contact with neighbour across boundary fences.

A simple blood test can be used to find the status of your herd and your herd can be protected by vaccination. For more info contact one of the vets!

## New Product

***Eclipse E Injection: -*** In light of the recent revelation about the effectiveness (or lack of) of the pour-ons this product couldn't come soon enough. I indicated in the last newsletter it was due in May – well it is now in stock.

It is a combination injection for cattle of eprinomectin (Eprinex) and levamisole (clear) drenches. As such it will be the only combination injection on the market. As I have indicated there are problems with the reliability of pour-ons & the injectable version of the same chemical used as a pour-on gives much superior blood levels. This, along with the fact that the inclusion of levamisole overcomes the Cooperia limitations of many of the mectins, plus the fact that combinations are superior to single actives in delaying the onset of resistance, really means that Eclipse E should be your main option for cattle drenching where oral drenching is not practicable. With any reasonable facility, injection should be just about as quick as a pour-on to administer.

Eclipse E must be kept refrigerated & administered by sub-cutaneous injection. Withholding time is 21 days, but if you give it in the muscle, the withhold is 91 days. Dose is 1ml/35kg so each 500 ml pack would do 35 x 500 kg cattle. There is a starter pack available which includes 4 x 500ml packs, an applicator gun, application sleeve and a chilly bag. Cost/dose it will be similar to the other mectin injection/pour-ons.
So in brief:

- When possible, especially with calves, use Matrix C orally.
- If oral drenching is impractical use Eclipse E.
- If you want to use a pour-on, Eclipse Pour-on would be the pour-on of choice as it is a combination of abamectin and levamisole.
- Definitely avoid any ivermectin based pour-ons.

## Merchandise Matters

The list this month is as follows:

- ***Genesis & Eclipse 2.5 & 5lt Pour-ons*** – Receive an oilskin vest or stormbuster jacket – only while stocks last.
- ***Dectomax Injection & Pour-on*** – All purchases go in the draw to win a Yamaha Quad Bike - Big Bear 400.
- ***Startect Drench 15lt*** – Receive a free back pack worth $100.
- ***Combat Topline Cattle Pour-on*** – Super special – only $716.83nett incl GST for 7.5lt. Will treat 300 x 500kg cows for $2.39ea.
- ***Cydectin Pour-on –*** 17lt pack only $1646.35 nett incl GST. Nil milk, nil meat withholding.
- ***Meaty Bites Working Dog 20kg*** – Special price of $61.25 nett incl GST.
- ***Tux Dog Biscuits*** – Each purchase goes in the draw for a 1 in 14 chance to win a Sony digital 10.1mp camera.
- ***Tempor Cattle Lice Pour-on*** – Receive a Powerbuilt grinder with every 2 & 5lt.

John A. Smart B.V.Sc