

CLUTHA VETS SHEEP & BEEF FARMER NEWSLETTER



Issue 202

Aug 2018



Clinic News

By Rob Mills

The perceptible amongst you may notice a subtle change in the tone and style of this, Clutha Vets latest Sheep and Beef Farmer newsletter. That's because for the first time in a very long time, John Smart has not been the primary author. Winston Peters rewarded Smarty with a gold card back in May, and that signals the start of a stepping back process for John from his role here at the vets.



Long Service

A couple of years ago, we celebrated John's 40 years of service to Clutha Vets. It wasn't all that long after he started here in January 1976 that he took over the role of author of the practice newsletter from Jim Mathieson, and started infusing it with his own, inimitable style. In the intervening years, every second month John has put pen to paper to advise, inform, admonish, amuse and occasionally compliment, not just the clients of this practice, but also vets from all around New Zealand who subscribe to our newsletter – in fact, we often see John's articles reprinted verbatim in other clinics' newsletters!

Other vets have of course contributed over the years, most notably Jillian Clark, but it is John who has made sure, time-after-time that "the post must get through". And over that time there have been many others who have taken on the task of turning his hand-written scrawl into something printable that fits neatly onto the allocated number of pages. He took some convincing in August 2015 that we should move away from black and green format to our more "shiny" current format – "shiny" has never been something Smarty has had a lot of time for, except in cars!

Continued on page 2

In This Issue

- Clinic News
- Recent Animal Health Issues
 - Worms in ewes
 - Salmonella outbreaks
 - Unusual case of hairy shaker disease
- Animal Health Planning
- Vitamin E Deficiency
- Action Network Groups
- New Product; Coglavax
- Reminders
 - Prelamb drenches
 - Trace elements
 - Clostridial vaccines
- Risks of using cattle drenches on dogs
- Retail Ramblings

Continued from page 1

John has now also reduced his hours of work, and enjoys a three day weekend, every weekend. He has relinquished his role on the management group of the practice (the "EMG"), but is still keeping a close eye on how the rest of us are getting on with the things he used to be responsible for. Clinically, don't panic, even if you ring the practice on a Monday, there are still a number of vets who will be able to answer your sheep, beef and deer questions, and possibly offer something a little more constructive than "just shoot the thing" with your horse questions!

Changing of the Guard

In Milton, all of our production animal vets have a wide world view – Jillian and Peter (both farmers themselves) have been assisted in the last couple of years by the arrival of Martha O'Connor and Tom Wallbank (who has particular interest in beef cattle). And we are pleased to announce that from this Spring, Bevan Topham will also be joining the Milton team. Bevan hails from Southland, and has worked out of the Balclutha clinic for the last few years.

In Balclutha, Erin Caswell came on board in January this year. She worked for about five years in the south of England, and has been in practice in southern New Zealand for another five. She has already taken a lead role in organising our series of winter sheep farmer meetings around the district, and is helping to reshape the way we prescribe RVMs for you to use.

In April, we were joined by Andrew Roe, a long-time friend and colleague of John's who had been working in Winton for the last 30 or so years. Between the two of them, and with the help of the Invermay pathologists, they cracked the emergence of Brandenburg when it turned up in the late 90's. Like Smarty, Andrew is a recipient of the Alan Baldry Award, which is presented by the NZ Veterinary Association to veterinarians who have made an outstanding contribution to the sheep and beef industry.

Andrew has been a facilitator of both Beef & Lamb and Deer Industry farmer groups in Southland, and is the editor of the biannual NZ Sheep and Beef Vets newsletter and their research review. So he is well qualified to take over the editorial duties of this newsletter. While we are all massively grateful to Smarty for what he has done over the last 40 years, he is passing the Clutha Vets sheep and beef service into very capable hands.

We'll continue to lean on John's vast experience and knowledge for a while yet, and we'll throw a proper farewell party for him nearer the time he hangs up his green overalls for the final time – and what a doozey that will be!!

Recent Animal Health Issues

Worms Having a Big Impact this Winter

By Jillian Clark

Worms, worms, worms...never under-estimate them. They are talked about all the time yet they still catch us out and this year more so than usual it seems.

Should we be surprised? Probably not! The early summer drought meant worms eggs sat on the pasture then exploded into infective larvae when the rain came. Despite the de-stocking that took place, on many farms there was still a period of feed stress for at least some classes of stock present until the grass grew. This resulted in elevated worm burdens in lambs, 2-tooths and, in some cases, even adult ewes, as they took in large numbers of infective larvae following the rain.

Following on from this we have seen more cases of worms causing ill-thrift and even significant numbers of deaths in both calves and lambs/hoggets particularly those on winter crops. It is important to remember that drenching stock onto crop does not mean they will remain completely clean for the rest of the time they are on crop. Even in paddocks with no rough gullies there is still grass around the edges, and all stock eat what they can through the fence too. You also shouldn't assume they are old enough to shrug off significant parasite burdens either. So if in doubt/unhappy with how your hoggets/calves are doing drop in some faecal samples and we can run an egg count. Alternatively we can come out and investigate.

Salmonella Rears its Head

By Erin Caswell/Andrew Roe

In recent years we have experienced a number of cases of Salmonella-related deaths in ewes during the summer and autumn. This year wasn't looking too bad initially but the start of winter saw several farms in the area experience a few sudden deaths.

Post mortem exams and subsequent lab testing revealed the cause to be the enteric (gut) species of Salmonella, including *S. hindmarsh* and *S. typhimurium*.

Both of these strains are included in Salvexin + B vaccine and, unlike in Salmonella Brandenburg cases, vaccinating ewes in the face of an outbreak usually works quite well to bring things under control. As with any vaccine, it takes a few days for the animals' immunity to build up, but after that the deaths typically peter out. Good response to vaccination was seen in the cases in question.

Hairy Shaker Disease.....in a calf !!

By Jillian Clark

A calf in our practice, described as “a poor doer from birth” was recently shown, using lab tests, to be persistently infected with the hairy shaker virus of sheep. HSD, also known as “border disease” is the “sheep type” of the virus that causes BVD (bovine viral diarrhoea) in cattle. Although it’s not a common occurrence, these viruses can infect, and cause disease in, their non-typical hosts.

Being persistently infected (PI) with HSD virus will have the same effect in cattle as being PI with BVD, including decreased “in-calf” rates, abortion, birth of stillborn/weak calves, birth deformities and birth of persistently infected animals which may/may not grow well and will also be infectious to any in-contact sheep.

In this case It is likely that the calf’s mother was exposed and infected with the hairy shaker virus during her first 120 days of her pregnancy. Vaccinating the rest of the herd with a BVD vaccine cannot be guaranteed to be effective in preventing more HSD infection.

TAKE HOME MESSAGE

Hairy shaker infection in a ewe flock can cross over to cattle, leading to a disease in a beef breeding herd identical to BVD, and vice-versa.

The BVD screening test we use will detect HSD as well as BVD virus.



Your Animal Health Plan: more than just a Calendar

By Erin Caswell

Most farmers would agree that having an animal health plan wall calendar in the office, wool shed or kitchen is useful to remind us when certain preventative measures are due. But the wall planner is only a small part of what an animal health plan can potentially provide. An animal health plan can be tailored to your individual farm and be made as simple or as extensive as you feel your farm needs and can include any of the following components:

Farm Targets/Goals

Kilograms of meat produced per hectare is one of the main drivers of profitability for most sheep and beef farmers. Looking at such key performance indicators can help you pin point areas where changes and improvements can be made to achieve your goals. This does however require recording data which is one area where an animal health plan can help; you can set some targets, record results and then review your performance by both comparing against your own targets and through benchmarking against national and regional averages. By looking at this data we can make information-based decisions which will help your farm be more direct in managing aspects of your farm performance.

Biosecurity Plans

With the recent developments around *Mycoplasma bovis* another hot topic has been biosecurity. Again, an animal health plan is an ideal opportunity to actually sit down with your vet and review your farm’s risks and the measures you do/can take to minimise the risk of introducing a new disease, as well as health and safety on farm. This doesn’t just apply to *Mycoplasma bovis*; these plans can incorporate drench resistant worms, BVD and any other potential risks that could affect your farm. These biosecurity plans can be completed separately or as part of a full animal health plan, depending on what the focus on your farm currently is.

Actions

The final step of an animal health plan is actually setting some actions to help achieve the goals set out, including the various animal treatments and preventative measures. Ideally you would then sit down with your vet a year later and review how the year has gone. Were plans achievable? Were targets reached? What improvements can be made to make things easier/better for the next year? Sometimes small changes can produce big results.

See overleaf for details of our exciting new on-line animal health planning tool

AHP: Our New Online Planning Tool

For those of you who like the traditional wall planner but would appreciate the ability to access it via your phone, as well as the opportunity to receive reminders by text or email, we have good news for you! Clutha Vets is excited to be one of the first vet practices in the country to offer its sheep and beef clients the new online Animal Health Plan (AHP).

As with the wall planner version the process starts with you catching up with your vet and planning the various animal treatments for each class of stock for the coming year. While a calendar can then be printed if required, the new AHP offers the following advantages over the old hardcopy system:

◆ Treatments Given on Time

Ensures treatments such as vaccines and drenches are given at the optimal time for best results

◆ Vital Information

All of the important product information (dose rates, withholding periods etc) is linked and readily available.

◆ Reminders

You receive email and/or text reminders when treatments are due (you set the timing of these)

◆ Flexible Plans

The plans are dynamic, with timing of treatments able to be changed, or new treatments added, if circumstances change

◆ Assistance with Compliance

The program records details such as the treatment dates, details of the animals treated and the person administering the products. By taking a photo of the barcodes on the products used, it will even populate your files with batch numbers and expiry dates, ensuring your records are always complete and up-to-date. Very handy when it is your turn to be audited by your meat company!

◆ User Management

You can allow any of your staff to run the app as well, improving communication and planning of animal health treatments.

To learn more about this exciting new tool check out the following website:
<http://animalhealthplan.com>

If you would like a demo of the AHP, have a plan developed for you, or just discuss the benefits of animal health planning in general, have a chat with Andrew Roe, Jillian Clark or Erin Caswell

Vitamin E Deficiency

By Andrew Roe

The impacts of low iodine and selenium levels on new born lamb survival are well known, with most farmers in this area providing some form of supplementation of both of these vital trace elements. What is not quite so widely recognised, however, is the importance of vitamin E at this time of year, and how a shortage of this vitamin in your ewe flock can lead to a very similar outcome to selenium deficiency, namely higher than expected death rates in newborn lambs.

Southern flocks tend to be at higher risk of Vitamin E deficiency due to our wintering systems, with brassicas such as swedes and kale, as well as autumn saved pasture, having lower levels than newer pasture. To make matters worse, stock grazing brassicas have a higher Vitamin E requirement due to the high levels of poly-unsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs) in these crops. Metabolism of PUFAs produce harmful "free radicals" which Vitamin E, along with selenium, neutralizes.

Act Now to Minimise Losses

The best way to top up your ewes' Vitamin E levels pre-lambing is to give them a drench of LSD. While a little more expensive than similar vitamin supplements, LSD is a stable formulation and you can be confident that the amount of Vitamin E in the product, along with that of the other active ingredients, will match the label claims. Unfortunately the same cannot be said for all livestock vitamin preparations, with recent testing revealing the level of Vitamin E in at least one product to be a only a fraction of what it claimed to contain.

Checking the Need for Vitamin E

For anyone interested in assessing the need for Vitamin E supplementation in their flock, Gribbles animal health laboratories have recently developed a commercially available Vitamin E blood test. Come and talk to us about the testing your flock if interested to learn more.



RMPP Action Network Groups

Got an area of your business that you would like to work on? Or maybe a particular aspect of farming that you would like to learn more about? Do you know other farmers who are grappling with the same issue? The Red Meat Profit Partnership (RMPP) has developed a program specifically designed to help you explore such areas of interest.

The Action Network was recently set up to fund small groups of sheep and beef farmers delve into whatever issues they believe could be beneficial to their operation. Action network groups consist of only seven to nine farms and, once formed, each group is allocated around \$30,000 to run the program and fund the use of outside expertise. At Clutha Vets we see this as a rare and fantastic opportunity for our farmers to move their businesses forward and we are keen to help our clients set groups up.

Both Andrew and Erin are approved to facilitate the establishment and running of action groups so if you have already identified a group of farmers keen to participate, or if you have a particular area you would like to focus on and you would like us to match you with others keen to explore the same topic, please give us a call.

The funding is only available for two years, so act now to avoid missing out.



New Product: Coglavax

Coglavax is a new addition to the Clostridial vaccine range and offers protection for sheep and cattle against eight species/strains of this family of bacteria that typically cause sudden death in livestock.

As well as the bacteria covered in the traditional "5 in 1" vaccines, Coglavax also covers a further three strains of *Clostridium perfringens*, types A, B and C. Some of these organisms have been shown to be present in this country and are known to cause disease overseas. *Cl perfringens*, type D is the cause of pulpy kidney and so is already covered in existing "5 in 1" vaccines.

Along with current products, Ultravac 6 in 1 and Covexin 10, we suggest Coglavax could be considered in those flocks/herds which continue to experience unexplained sudden deaths despite having a robust "5 in 1" vaccination program in place. Ideally we would like to help you narrow down the cause of death in such cases so that you can use the most appropriate vaccine for your situation. However the reality is that it is very hard to isolate the organism responsible in cases of Clostridial diseases because the carcass usually decomposes very rapidly and the causative agent gets swamped by a range of other invading micro-organisms.

For more information on Coglavax and the other Clostridial vaccines, and to help select the most appropriate option for you, please pop in and have a chat to one of the vets.

REMINDERS

1) Pre-Lamb Worm Treatments

If you haven't already done so, give some thought to your pre-lamb worming strategy for your ewes. There is no doubt that capsules and long acting injectable drenches can improve lamb weaning weights as well as the condition of your ewes at weaning. But due to the associated risks around drench resistance we need to find a balance between productivity and sustainability. To this end we encourage sheep farmers to move away from treating all ewes, every year and, instead, target those groups of animals that are likely to benefit the most, as well as those seasons where parasitism is more likely to be an issue. A complex area that we are very happy to give you some guidance with

2) Trace Elements and Vitamins

When it comes to mineral and vitamin deficiencies that can impact on your new born lamb survival, selenium, iodine and Vitamin E are the main players. Refer to the article on Vitamin E on the previous page. And if you have not given your ewes long acting selenium or iodine products this season consider topping them up with a pre-lamb drench of these minerals, or, in the case of selenium, choosing the selenised option for your pre-lamb "5 in 1" vaccine.

3) Clostridial Vaccines

And don't forget to get to maximise your tailing percentage by giving your ewes their pre-lamb clostridial vaccination 1-3 weeks before the start of lambing. For most people this will be the traditional "5 in 1" vaccine, but there are a range of other options (including a new "8 in 1" mentioned above) which may be beneficial on some properties.

Why We Should Not Use Cattle Drenches on Dogs

By Steve Butler

Recently we had five farm dogs from the same farm urgently rushed into the clinic one afternoon, after the owner had used an injectable cattle drench to worm his dogs. Within half an hour of being treated, all five dogs had collapsed and started convulsing. The owner had phoned the clinic as soon as the problem was recognised and immediately brought the dogs in for emergency treatment.

There is no antidote or reversal agent for the wrong drench given to the wrong species. The only treatment is to provide critical life support – in this case anticonvulsant medication for the seizures, intravenous fluid treatment to maintain circulation and – as it turned out – lots of cuddles from the nurses to keep the dogs calm!

Three of the five dogs responded successfully to the treatment. One dog died during the initial emergency phase and a second dog – although well enough to go home – became progressively worse over the following three weeks and required euthanasia. The drench in this case was a long acting product and toxic effects can be expected to persist for several weeks. Although, I dare say the dogs are very well de-wormed from the episode, it is a sore reminder for this farmer that label recommendations on all animal health products should be followed very carefully. If you are ever in doubt, it is best to check with a vet first!



Retail Ramblings

Boehringer Ingelheim Products

- ◆ Pre-Lamb and Cattle Drenches—WIN a spot on the Wanaka Wine Tour!*
- ◆ Bionic Capsules & Exodus LAI—Get a pair of Leupold Binoculars*
- ◆ Cattle Pour On —Get a LED Lensor Headlight on selected Pour Ons*

Zoetis Promotion

WIN a Family Spa with any Zoetis Product.*

This includes Ultravac 5in1, Cydectin Products and Dectomax plus many more!

Meaty Bites

Get some Malteasers with Meaty Bites for Fathers Day!

Boss Pour-On

Last chance for Coffee Machines OR Cake Mixers on selected BOSS Pour On

**While Stock Lasts & Conditions apply*

Your Vets

Balclutha Clinic

| | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| John Smart | BVSc |
| Jason Darwen | BVSc |
| Rob Mills | BVSc |
| Hamish Moore | BVSc |
| Catherine Copland | BVM&S |
| Peter Heslip | BVSc, MVM |
| Annie Jackson | BVSc |
| Steven Butler | BVSc |
| Ruth Andrews | BVSc |
| Anna Burrell | BVSc |
| Erin Caswell | BVetMed |
| Andrew Comerford | MVB |
| Andrew Roe | BVSc, MACVSc |

Milton Clinic

| | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Peter Kalb | BVSc |
| Jillian Clark | BVSc |
| Sid Taylor | BVSc, MACVSc |
| Barbara Christensen | BVSc, MACVSc |
| Tom Wallbank | BVM&S |
| Martha O'Connor | MVB |