

## Sheep and Fodder Beet

Last year in a practice down South there was a case of ricketts in lambs born to ewes grazing fodder beet over the winter. The lambs were born with skeletal deformities and the total cost to the farmer concerned was considerable. So there are some lessons to be learnt from this episode. Basically ricketts can be caused by low phosphorous and/or low Vit D levels. Fodder beet is deficient in phosphorus so this is likely the main reason for the rickets in this case, however woolly sheep in winter in southern NZ can also be Vit D deficient so Vit D deficiency may also have contributed in this case. The ewes in this case had been on fodder beet only for 3 months, longer than would be the norm.

So to help prevent newborn lambs being born deformed from ricketts:

- Always feed pregnant stock a source of fibre (baleage etc.) as well. Never feed fodder beet as a sole diet. There are other valid reasons for this recommendation as well - specifically the low protein levels in fodder beet.
- All pregnant stock on fodder beet should get a dose of LSD (contains Vit A D & E ) pre-lamb even if the fodder beet grazing has finished. Any stock on fodder beet for >6 weeks should receive an additional dose of LSD in the middle of the grazing period. This should eliminate low Vit D as a factor causing ricketts, plus confer the usual benefits to newborn lamb vigour of additional Vit E which is deficient in bulb crops.

For more info on grazing fodder beet by sheep and cattle, especially the very important transition process, see the June 2016 newsletter. Back copies on our website if you don't keep your hardcopy of the newsletter.

## Promotion Winners

**Tux Retro Multimedia player** - through their purchase of Tux dog biscuits Victor Blaikie from Slopedown, and Simon McAtamney of Puketū have won one of these.

**Flexidine Pizza Ovens** - These were won by Hamish & Alyssa McDougall of Owaka Valley, and David and Jo Homer of Lawrence. John A Smart BVSc

## Retail Ramblings

**Startect Knockout Drench** - break the resistance cycle!

**Dectomax Starter Packs** - still a great price with a **FREE 200ml!**

**Cydectin Pour-on** now with bonus product - the **17lt Pack** is back

**Working Dog Food** - The bulk buy on Eukanuba (4 bags) & Royal Canin (2 bags) has been removed. You now get a single bag at the bulk buy price!

**Vet LSD** the super stable formulation for Brassica feeding and lambing. It's not a powder for a reason!

**It's time to start thinking ahead!**

Long dark nights and short busy days make your time precious so the last thing you need are uninvited salesmen up your driveway making your day even longer

**We don't knock on your door - because ours is always open!**

Come in to one of our cosy stores and have a chat regarding what you may need for the season ahead - we can even make you a cuppa. But if you prefer your own cup at your own home we are more than happy to come and see you - just never unannounced! Give us a call and one of our vets or retailers will happily come out to see you. For guidance on pre-lamb or cattle drenching, minerals, vaccines and all your lambing beat supplies along with the best professional advice - Clutha Vets are your Animal Health Professionals.

**We don't knock on your door! Because ours is always open.**

### Balclutha Clinic

2 Wilson Rd  
Balclutha  
03 418 1280  
admin@cluthavets.co.nz

### Milton Clinic

106 Union Street  
Milton  
03 417 8032  
milton@cluthavets.co.nz

### Clydevale Store

Beside the bridge  
Clydevale  
03 415 9121  
clydevale@cluthavets.co.nz

## 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
Elspeth Dunne	BVSc, BAgSc
Bevan Topham	BVSc
Ruth Andrews	BVSc
Bridget McCauley	BVSc
Anna Burrell	BVSc
Martha O'Connor	MVB

### Milton Clinic

Peter Kalb	BVSc
Jillian Clark	BVSc
Sid Taylor	BVSc, MACVSc
Barbara Christensen	BVSc, MACVSc
Marek Misiewicz	BVSc
Tom Wallbank	BVM&S



**CLUTHA  
V.E.T.S.**

# CLUTHA VETS SHEEP & BEEF FARMER NEWSLETTER



June 2017



## Clinic News

Winter feels like it has well and truly set in now, with tupping drawing to an end and ewe pregnancy scanning not far away. The weather through autumn has set up most farms pretty well though, with stock in great order, more conserved feed than we have seen for years, and winter crops yielding well. The usual caution will need to be exercised transitioning stock of any type onto winter crop, if you'd like help or advice, please feel free to give us a call.

At the Balclutha clinic, we are loving being much warmer, drier, quieter and cleaner than we have been for many years. Smarty is missing out on that, because he is currently at the World Sheep Congress in the UK, in his role as President of the International Sheep Veterinarians Association. A number of other Milton and Balclutha staff are also setting off on winter breaks – heading to Britain and Ireland to try to drum up some more desperately-needed support for the Lions! And, we'll be saying farewell to Bridget McCauley shortly, who will be leaving to have her baby.

Bruce Bissett (former vet & CEO) did the honours at the official opening of the refurbished clinic in April. If anyone was unable to attend but would like to have a look around just call in and someone will be happy to give you an 'unofficial' guided tour.

## Recent Animal Health Issues

**1. Salmonella Hindmarsh in Ewes** - We have had one case of this cause of diarrhoea and death in ewes this season, which is a lot less than what has become the norm in recent years. It can occur through into the start of winter so keep an eye out for sudden deaths in ewes, often with evidence of a khaki coloured scour round the hind end. If you see this contact the clinic immediately. Be aware that if you've started feeding baleage then enteric listeriosis can look identical and lab work is needed to confirm whether Salmonella hindmarsh or Listeria is the cause.

**2. Nitrate Poisoning** - I had a case of nitrate poisoning in hoggets recently. These had been held for close to two days off feed for shearing, then let out onto a fairly new and lush ryegrass and white clover pasture of around 2400kg DM/ha, and from memory had one previous grazing. Within about 6 hours there were several dead hoggets as well as some that were down and couldn't stand. The pasture had had no prior nitrogen fertiliser applied. In

## In This Issue

- Clinic News
- Recent Animal Health Issues
  - Salmonella Hindmarsh in ewes
  - Nitrate Poisoning
- Reminders
  - Salmonella Brandenburg vaccination
  - Ultravac vaccination of hoggets
  - Clostridial vaccination of calves
  - Abortion submissions
  - Bopriva (Agreeabull) vaccination
- Vaccination Do's & Don'ts
- Sheep & Fodder Beet
- Promotion Winners
- Retail Ramblings

[www.cluthavets.co.nz](http://www.cluthavets.co.nz)

this case the main predisposing factor was the time off feed (2 days), and so when they were eventually let out onto the pasture they were ravenous and even although the nitrate level in the pasture was at the higher end of normal because of the large amount of pasture eaten, it was enough to result in some cases of nitrate poisoning.

The reason I mention this is not so much the case of nitrate toxicity although that is interesting (to me, maybe not the farmer!) but to highlight the effects of the length of time off feed. I think two days is too long - 24 hours, maybe 36 hours maximum is long enough for non-pregnant stock - obviously in-lamb stock and close to lambing need to be a lot less. While I can sympathise with the shearers wanting stock well emptied out don't go too overboard with this - stick to the minimum necessary. Lambs don't grow well when being starved!!

## Reminders

**1. Salmonella Brandenburg Vaccination** - The incidence of this nasty disease waxes and wanes somewhat over the years. Last year we didn't have a great number of cases. Whether that means we will have more this year who knows - my crystal ball is a bit cloudy! While not as effective as virtually all other vaccines you are used to, Salvexin+B against *S. Brandenburg* does reduce the incidence by around two thirds. Two-tooths are more at risk than mixed age ewes so a reasonable compromise if you don't want to vaccinate everything is to vaccinate just them. This is even more important if you had an outbreak on the farm last year.

The basic vaccinating programme is two doses to unvaccinated stock 4 - 8 weeks apart. The second dose is best given round late June / early July with the first dose the appropriate time interval ahead of that. In previously vaccinated ewes give the sole booster shot late June / early July. As hoggets rarely get the disease I wouldn't be too concerned about vaccinating them. A side benefit of vaccinating against *S. Brandenburg* will be that although the timing is not quite right for *S. Hindmarsh* it should reduce somewhat the chances of this occurring next Summer/Autumn.

**2. Ultravac Vaccination of Hoggets** - By now the ewe hoggets should have received their 2 doses of Ultravac 5 in 1 (or 6 in 1) 4 - 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. Remember, to be fully effective, a sensitiser and booster dose is necessary - none of the old 1 dose shortcut please.

**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 these 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 that covers sudden deaths due to *Clostridium sordellii*, which can occur in cattle doing really well on "rocket fuel". 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 is 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 offered by Ultravac 6 in 1. See the Oct 09 newsletter for more detail on Ultravac 6 in 1.

**4. Abortion Submissions** - Abortions will have no doubt started before the next newsletter (unfortunately) so following are some hints on what to do to ensure the best chance of getting a diagnosis:

- Don't send samples off the first 1 or 2 cases - they could just be one-offs.
- Send in fresh aborted fetuses - preferable 2 from 2 different abortions - not a set of twins.
- Black mummified fetuses 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 diagnosis as far as the lab is concerned.
- Put fetuses in something leak-proof e.g. at least 3 supermarket bags.
- No samples after 1.30pm on a Friday otherwise they have to wait until Monday which reduces the chance (but not the cost) of getting a diagnosis.
- Preferably bring them in by 1pm each day and they will be about a day quicker getting to the lab than if you were after 2pm.

As mentioned last year there have been some recent developments in the sheep abortion lab testing area. We now have PCR tests (basically a DNA test) for Toxo, Campy and Helicobacter. These are very sensitive and accurate and last year I found them a great improvement over the previously available tests, and as a result we had a higher rate of diagnosis than what was previously the norm.

**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. and hence gives you a very effective management tool. In fact, once Bopriva is working, you can safely mob up strange mobs of bulls which provides a saving in time and labour. It is **not** a hormone or a growth promotant; it is simply a vaccine and as such doesn't even have a withholding time.

Trials have shown no adverse impact on growth rates - while there may be a growth rate reduction from

removal of testosterone this is balanced out by the fact that bulls spend more time eating and less time fighting etc. so the net effect is that growth rates are not affected.

Bopriva is given twice (1ml under the skin) - the timing of the second dose can be altered depending on the length of the effect you want. Pfizer have produced a very useful slide rule calculator to enable you to plan the time of the injections in relation to the time of effect you require. These are available at the clinics.

Cost is round the \$6.59/dose incl. with 2 shots required. It is administered via a particular safety type vaccinator - let's just say you don't want to inject yourself!! Contact the clinic if you require more info. It is an RVM (or PAR) so you will need to speak to a vet about it if you haven't previously done so.



## Vaccination Do's & Don'ts

Poor vaccination technique has the potential to be quite costly down the line - carcass downgrades, abscesses, deaths.

Following are some pointers which should help avoid this as well as ensuring the vaccine, especially any remaining at the end of the job, will be OK for use next time it is needed. Maybe show this article to any staff who vaccinate sheep for you.

1. For subcutaneous (under the skin s/c) vaccination in ewes use 18 x 3/8" needles. In lambs 18 x 1/4" would also be OK. 18 x 1/2" are longer than necessary for s/c injection, and more likely to result in intramuscular (i/m) injection.
2. For intramuscular vaccination 18 x 1/2" or 18 x 3/4" needles should be used.
3. Locate the needle on the gun so when the needle is inserted the bevel lies parallel to the skin surface and facing inwards - less likely to do an inadvertent i/m injection this way.
4. Shake the vaccine well. If for any reason the pack is put down, even for a short time like 5-10 mins, give the pack a good shake and check for any settling out in the draw off tube. If there is settling out in the draw off tube follow point 13 below and that should flush the settled out part back into the pack. If it doesn't squeezing and

releasing the pack a few times so that vaccine goes back and forward past the settled out vaccine will flush and re-suspend it.

5. Inject into the upper half of the neck (in other words below the ear as opposed to nearer the shoulder).
6. For s/c vaccination hold the gun at roughly a 45° angle to the skin - even slightly closer to parallel to the skin than that so that with a 3/8" length needle the vaccine should end up s/c. For i/m vaccination the gun should be perpendicular to the skin surface.
7. Unless the wool is quite long, in which case you can pull on some wool with your non-vaccinating gun hand to tent the skin to aid s/c placement, it is probably best not to tent the skin as it is too easy to jab yourself. If the wool is long the hand pulling on the wool to tent the skin should be a sufficient distance away from the needle so as to make injecting yourself pretty difficult to do.
8. Avoid any dirty (shit covered) areas when injecting.
9. Don't vaccinate wet sheep. By wet I mean wet to the skin - a bit of light dampness on the wool surface is OK.
10. Have spare needles sitting in a pottle of meths and change the needles semi-regularly - maybe every race full or something like that. Just chuck the used one in meths and it will be sterilised by the time you come to use it again. An exception here is with Toxovax - a live vaccine. Don't use meths as this could inactivate the first dose or two of vaccine (until the meths disappears). Have a pack or two of needles sterilised by boiling and use these.
11. If the needle gets a burr on the end discard it.
12. If the needle inadvertently ends up in contact with some "grubbiness" change it for a clean sterilised one.
13. At the end of vaccinating pull the gun off the tube and let the vaccine run back into the part pack. Discard the dose in the gun itself - don't inject it back into the vaxipack. Replace the gun on the draw off tube. Those canny vaccinators can always remove the draw off tube from the gun after the last sheep is done but before releasing the plunger and so avoid drawing in a dose and therefore wasting it.
14. Store part and unused vaccine at fridge temperature (2 - 8°). Note - any fridge malfunction that results in freezing of the vaccine will **immediately** ruin the vaccine.
15. Don't pierce the vaccine pack rubber bungs with used needles for any reason. The draw off tubes should puncture the bung without the need for pre-piercing with a needle. If the point of the draw off tube is bent over and won't pierce the bung replace it with a new one - there is a new one in every pack.