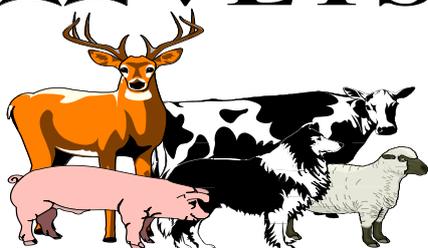


# Sheep Farmer Newsletter April 2015

Clutha Vets Animal Health Centre  
**Balclutha Clinic**  
Phone (03) 418-1280  
Merchandise Direct (03) 418-1281  
Email: admin@cluthavets.co.nz  
**Milton Clinic**  
Phone (03) 417-8032  
Email: milton@cluthavets.co.nz  
**Clydevale Store**  
(03) 415-9121  
Email: clydevale@cluthavets.co.nz

*clutha*  
**VETS**



## Animal Health Centre **Balclutha Clinic**

John Smart	BVSc.
Jason Darwen	BVSc.
Rob Mills	BVSc.
Hamish Moore	BVSc.
Catherine Copland	BVM&S
Peter Heslip	BVSc, MACVSc.
Annie Jackson	BVSc.
Steven Butler	BVSc.
Elspeth Dunne	BVSc, B.Ag.Sc.
Isobel Topham	BVSc.
Bevan Topham	BVSc.
Ruth Andrews	BVSc
Bridget McCauley	BVSc.
Marek Misiewicz	BVSc.

## **Milton Clinic**

Peter Kalb	BVSc.
Jillian Clark	BVSc.
Sid Taylor	BVSc, MACVSc.
Barbara Christensen	BVSc, MACVSc.
Keara Brennan	BVSc, MRCVS.

## **Practice News**

You could perhaps describe the past summer and early autumn seasons as rather patchy. Rainfall was geographically quite variable across the region. As a consequence some of you are a bit short of feed and the ewes and lambs are not quite where you would like to see them, and others have a good amount of feed to flush the ewes on. If you are one who is a bit short of flushing feed, perhaps consider feeding out some grain or sheep nuts for a short while to help ensure ewes are gaining

## CONTENTS

- Practice News
- Recent Animal Health Problems
  1. Salmonella Hindmarsh in Ewes
  2. Internal Parasitism in Lambs
  3. B12 Levels
- Reminders
  1. Salmonella Brandenburg Vaccination
  2. Ultravac Vaccination of Hoggets
  3. Ultravac Vaccination of Calves
  4. Brassica Grazing
  5. Weigh Ewes Pre-tup
- Cattle Pregnancy Testing
- Hogget Mating Management
- Merchandise Matters
- Promotion Winners
- Those Welsh!

weight as it is a well known fact that better ovulation (and therefore scanning) rates are achieved when there is live weight gain leading up to, and in the early stages of mating.

The big bit of news concerning the practice is that after a good two years of preliminary planning work is about to commence on the redevelopment of the Balclutha clinic building. In fact, by the time you receive this newsletter, building work will have likely commenced. The tender of Amalgamated Builders Ltd (ABL) has been accepted and work is

due to start on April 8<sup>th</sup>. The last redevelopment of the clinic building was more or less exactly 20 years ago in 1995. At that time the veterinary staff at Balclutha numbered 5 and the support staff 7. Currently the staff at Balclutha number 14 vets, 4 techs and 15 support staff - close to a 300% increase since then! Hence it is little wonder that we are somewhat bursting at the seams! Also the building is cosmetically getting a bit tired.

The 1995 redevelopment took 5 - 6 months and as possibly the only person here who can recall that period, it was a pretty frustrating time having to work to the accompaniment of jack hammers, concrete cutters, power saws, drills etc. Well I'm afraid to say this time around will be twice as bad as the projected build time will be twice as long at around 11 months.

We will do our best to minimise the impact on you, our clients, but I suspect there will inevitably be some. At times we might have trouble finding items, the internal communication system could get a bit disrupted at times and staff no doubt could appear a bit frazzled on occasions. For the inevitable disruption, I can only apologise in advance but it will be a classic example of the old proverb "short term pain for long term gain".

As we have to continue to operate in the building while this is going on, the project is being staged with the initial construction of the retail managers new office beside the chiller (to give some immediate new office space for other temporarily dislocated staff. Then all the initial work will be at the other (western) end of the building, both upstairs and downstairs. Hence the retail shop end should initially be minimally affected. Parking for clients will remain the same as at present. In other words for merchandise park at the eastern end and for the small animal clinic park out the front facing Clyde Street.

Ah well, onward and upward – it will be good when it is finished!!!

## Recent Animal Health Problems

**1. Salmonella Hindmarsh in Ewes** - New cases of this are still occurring. In fact this is turning out to be the worst season for this condition in a long time. For some reason South Otago seems to be being particularly hard hit compared to down in Southland, so be on the lookout for ewes suddenly off colour (or found dead) sometimes with evidence of a khaki coloured diarrhoea. This is often evident as just a bit of a dribble out their backside so you need to look closely to spot it. Not all ewes that have this condition will show evidence of diarrhoea as some die before the "evidence reaches the outside". If you suspect this contact us

immediately as prompt action as far as treatment (antibiotics – but not penicillin) and prevention (vaccination with Salvexin+B) goes can reduce the losses due to this. There is a more detailed account of this disease in the last (Feb 2015) newsletter, copies of which can always be found on our website if you have binned the paper copy.

**2. Internal Parasitism in Lambs** – A number of farmers have been caught out lately either losing a few lambs to worms or suddenly realising much of the mob is losing condition and/or getting a bit dirty at a great rate of knots. Once again it is probably the classic explosion in challenge that often occurs 2 - 3 weeks after the first rain following an extended dry period. One difference this time is that these worm explosions are less synchronised than often happens. I suspect this is due to the quite variable rain patterns through the district this season - as alluded to in the opening paragraph of this newsletter. Anyway, keep a close eye on the lambs for any signs of a high worm challenge - losing condition, getting a bit shitty etc. When the larval challenge on the pasture is high this can occur even if the previous drench was as little as a month ago

**3. Vitamin B12 Levels** – From testing on lambs at the works I have noticed a bit of a drop off in B12 levels on a number of farms lately so this is something else to keep an eye on. Contact the clinic to arrange liver sampling at the works - any works – it doesn't matter which one.

## Reminders

**1. Salmonella Brandenburg Vaccination** – The vaccination programme is two doses to the two-tooths (or previously unvaccinated stock) 3 - 6 weeks apart. In previously vaccinated stock one booster dose is required. This booster dose and the second booster dose in two-tooths is best given around the end of June or mid July at the latest. In the two-tooths the first dose can be given prior to mating or post mating as suits, taking into account timing of mating and the vaccine programme timing. In many instances I suspect giving the first dose post mating will work best for most people.

Unfortunately vaccination against *S. Brandenburg* is not close to 100% effective like most/all other animal health vaccines. However trial work has shown it does reduce the impact of the disease by around two thirds.

Those of you who had cases in the mixed age ewes last year should consider vaccinating this year's two-tooths as we know those are more at risk of contracting the disease in the year following an outbreak. My advice would be to not bother

vaccinating in-lamb hoggets - while they can get the disease it does seem to be pretty uncommon for that to happen.

**2. Ultravac Vaccination of Hoggets** – Pretty shortly the hoggets (if they haven't already) should have received their two doses of Ultravac 3 – 6 weeks apart so that they will be fully protected against blackleg etc prior to going onto winter crop, as well as being correctly set up for their lifetime programme of annual boosters pre-lamb. Note that depending on your incidence of Pulpy Kidney these doses can be given much earlier if needed – right back to before weaning if necessary.

Remember there is a 6 in 1 version of Ultravac available which is an option where you have had sudden deaths in stock that have had the correct 5 in 1 vaccination programme but the deaths still look like Clostridial/blood poisoning type deaths. Ultravac 6 in 1 covers a sixth Clostridial organism, *C. sordellii* which is a cause of sudden death we see occasionally in sheep and cattle often when they are on “high octane rocket fuel”. Ask at the clinic if you suspect this. Unfortunately proving it can be a bit problematic as any autopsy has to be done very quickly after death.

**3. Ultravac Vaccination of Calves** – It is not uncommon to have the odd sudden death in young cattle, especially through the winter period, due to Clostridial disease – Pulpy Kidney, Blackleg etc. Most of these can be prevented by Ultravac 5 in 1 vaccination. In a few instances these deaths are due to a strain of Clostridia not in the 5 in 1 vaccine and in those cases we prescribe the 10 strain Covexin10 vaccine. This is the classic example of “prevention is better than cure”. One death prevented will pay for many, many years of vaccinating.

**4. Brassica Grazing** – I won't repeat the brassica grazing “rules” here. These have been written on several occasions – see April 2011 newsletter for the list of these rules. Suffice it to say I have noticed a reduction in the number of deaths we used to see 5 – 10 days after the start of grazing brassicas since I started publishing these rules. Previously we would have dead hoggets brought in for autopsy and these deaths invariably seemed to be due to an assortment of vague causes.

The basic underlying problem causing these deaths though, is the sudden change in diet from grass to brassicas causing a resultant acidosis which damages the rumen wall and allows a vague assortment of various “bugs” to enter the bloodstream which can then result in the death of affected animals. Allowing an acclimatisation period and feeding extra fibre (baleage, hay, straw) helps reduce the likelihood of this occurring.

Fodder beet is not a brassica however the same rules apply; only an acclimatisation period is even more important. Fodder beet is much more prone to causing an acidosis (like when sheep eat too much grain) when it is first grazed. Stock need to be transitioned onto it **very very** carefully over at least a 10 - 14 day period. More information is available at the clinics.

**5. Weigh Ewes Pre-tup** – Weigh a sample of around 100 two-tooths and 100 mixed age ewes just prior to the start of mating. If you do this each season then:

- You will know exactly where the ewes are at compared to other years and it will help you appreciate the influence of bodyweight at mating.
- You will be able to, once you know your scanning or fertility index (which is scanning % ÷ average pre-tup weight), reasonably accurately predict your likely scanning % from each year's pre-tup weight (av. pre-tup weight × fertility index = scanning %). If there is a significant departure from the predicted % then this is an indication that something else isn't quite right and maybe you should be giving us a call.

### Cattle Pregnancy Testing

These days most pregnancy testing is done by ultrasound scanning although all suspect empty cows are verified by manual pregnancy testing as despite the electronics looking “gee whiz and fancy” the old manual method with the arm is still the ultimate determination. We have at least 8 scanning machines in operation with a number of experienced vets, so should be able to accommodate your needs.

The best time for pregnancy testing is a minimum of 6 weeks after the bull has been taken out of the mob. Scanning any earlier than 6 weeks can mean that late pregnancies are missed although if you were intending to cull these late ones anyway I guess that doesn't matter. Also, it is easier to accidentally abort very late pregnancies with the introduction of the ultrasound probe or arm for that matter.

If however you are wanting an idea of the stage of pregnancy or an indication of late pregnancies don't leave the testing too long past 6 weeks after the bull is removed. Once cows are over 3 - 4 months pregnant it is harder to determine the stage so aging is way less accurate and it is really only possible to determine pregnant or empty.

If you would like your cows pregnancy tested on a specific day (say they are handy to the yards for TB testing) ring ahead of time to organise this as it

will then be more likely we will be able to fit in with you.

## Hogget Mating Management

Hogget mating is not without its challenges and is certainly not for everyone. However it can be a great selection tool for ewe replacements as well as a way of increasing lifetime performance of the ewe flock. Choosing to mate hoggets requires extra feed to be budgeted as they are growing animals. As a rough rule of thumb, for every 10 hoggets mated allow 1 less ewe on the farm. Hoggets should be growing 100 - 150gm/day during mating and pregnancy (including pregnancy weight). Growth rates less than 100gm/day during pregnancy result in lower two-tooth weights and lamb weaning weights. Pasture covers should be at least 1400kg/DM/ha pre-grazing and above 1200kg/DM/ha post-grazing to achieve this. Only mate those hoggets that are at least 40kg - lighter hoggets can still get in lamb but are less likely to reach two-tooth targets of 60 - 65 kg thus affecting future performance.

Hoggets are shy breeders and less likely to seek out the ram so following are some mating guidelines:

- Use teasers (1:300 – 1:400) for 1 cycle prior to the start of mating. This will increase the number of hoggets that have reached puberty and cycle during mating. In fact even if you aren't wanting to mate hoggets, putting teasers out with them is a good idea as more will then cycle and it has been shown that ewes that have a heat as a hogget have a higher lifetime performance than those that don't.
- Use flatter, smaller paddocks.
- Fresh mature rams or mature rams that have only been with mature ewes are preferable to hogget rams – mate these at around 1:70.
- If ram hoggets are to be used a ratio of no more than 1:50 should be used. There have been the odd poor results using ram hoggets so feel free to use more (1:30 - 1:40).
- Breed - the same breed of ram as the hoggets or a smaller breed should be used to help prevent dystocia cases. Cheviot and Dorper seem to be good in this respect – Perendale & Southdown have also been used.
- Keep hogget mating to no more than 34 days to prevent too late a lambing and weaning dates and also prevent the hogget herself having trouble reaching two-tooth target weights.
- Use crayon harnesses to identify likely earlier pregnancies and preferentially feed these. Change the crayons after 17 days.

## Merchandise Matters

The list of promotions, specials this month is as follows:

- **Merial Ancare Sheep Drench Products** - Receive a Canterbury brand rugby jersey on selected products while stocks last. Only large sizes left now.
- **Merial Ancare Cattle Drench** - Receive a tough as guts Swannndri fleece jacket with qualifying products - oral, injection and pour-on.
- **Eclipse Pour-on or Injection** - With 12.5lt of pour-on or 4 x 500ml of Injection receive a Stihl Miniboss Chainsaw.
- **Eprinex Pour-on 5lt** - Buy 3 x 5lt and get the 4<sup>th</sup> one free.
- **Kaiwaka Sealtex Wet Weather Clothing for kids** – Over-trousers, bib over-trousers and parkas. Sizes 2yrs - 16yrs. Prices start at \$20. Great value.
- **Startect, Cydectin and Dectomax Drenches** - All purchases go in the draw for \$4000 worth of Avanti or Scott bikes from Powerzone Suzuki Balclutha. Exclusive to Clutha Vets.
- **Cydectin Pour on for Cattle** - receive 10% extra free in the 2lt and 5lt packs. Also a 17lt pack for the price of 15lt. Nil meat withhold.
- **Dectomax Pour on 15lt Herd Packs** - Receive an extra 2.5lt free plus a Stoney Creek Recreational Jacket.
- **Dectomax Injection** - Purchase 2 starter packs (4 x 500ml) and receive an extra 400ml free, plus the Stoney Creek Recreational Jacket.

## Promotion Winners

### **The Clutha Vets Lawrence Farmarama Prize Winners.**

1. *Spot prize draw for a stainless steel garden spade and fork* - Ritchie McCorkindale, Waitahuna.
2. *Animal Health Quiz* - 1<sup>st</sup> prize travel pack - Amanda McHutcheon. 2<sup>nd</sup> prize Hunter clothing pack - Rob Girvan, Waiholo.

## Those Welsh!

A chap was driving along the M6 in England with his fairly blond girlfriend when she piped up.

"I think those people in the car in the lane next to us are from Wales"

"Why do you think that?" he asks

"Well the kids are writing on the windows and it says stit ruoy su wohs".

That's it for this newsletter folks!

John A. Smart B.V.Sc.