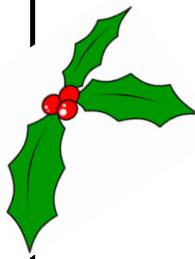




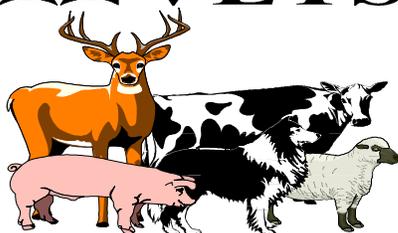
Sheep Farmer Newsletter December 2013



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



Animal Health Centre Balclutha Clinic

John Smart	BVSc.
Teresa O’Riordan	BVM&S.
Jason Darwen	BVSc.
Rob Mills	BVSc.
Hamish Moore	BVSc.
Catherine Copland	BVM&S, MRCVS.
Alice Lee	BVSc.
Steven Butler	BVSc.
Peter Heslip	BVSc, MACVSc.
Annie Jackson	BVSc.
Elsbeth Dunne	BVSc.
Lewis Sparrow	BVSc.

Milton Clinic

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

Locum

Andrew Cobner	BVetMed
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Practice News

Well, here we are at the last newsletter for the year already. The year just seems to have flown by. On the whole this spring has been one of the better ones and most people’s lambs seem to be doing well and there is adequate feed about. The few bits of rain lately have come just in time to help keep grass growth ticking along in the meantime.

As mentioned in the August Newsletter we have two Massey graduates, Bevan Topham and Isobel (Izzy)

Heyward-Civil starting soon - round the middle of the month actually. They are effectively replacements for Murray Gillies who went back to Canada and Alice Lee who is on maternity leave. Congratulations to Alice and Dale on the safe arrival of baby Jack last month.

Recent Animal Health Problems

1. Liver/Lung Abscesses in Lambs – This is usually a result of a navel infection in the first 2 or 3 days of life (but could also be subsequent to tailing wounds). Bugs get in the navel and into the bloodstream and can end up anywhere but liver and lung abscesses are a

common end point as are swollen joints from an infective arthritis. Deaths from these abscesses can occur up to about six weeks after birth - you often just find a lamb dead in the paddock, sometimes with a slightly full looking abdomen - it is full of pus and gunge, not milk. These lambs will be a bit slow before death and if you can spot them promptly enough and hit them with a hefty dose of penicillin you can save some of them. Prevention consists of spraying navels with iodine (often not practical but any newborn lambs you happen to handle, especially those going into mothering up pens, lamb warmers etc should have their navel sprayed) and attending to grubby bare dirt areas near shelterbelts by tree trimming, outrigger fencing etc.

2. Pulpy Kidney – Cases of this have been occurring earlier than usual on some farms. I think this will be due to the kind spring and abundant grass growth - the season is kind of 'early' and as a result there is more of a PK challenge than normal. Either get in and give the lambs a 5 in 1 vaccination as soon as possible (say at pre-lamb drenching) before you have an issue or act immediately you get the first case. Sudden death of a good lamb with it blowing up quickly after death and often foaming at the mouth is a pretty good indication of PK. The immunity conferred on the lambs by the pre-lamb vaccination of ewes will be pretty much gone by now in most cases. If you have used 5 in 1 on the lambs but still appear to be getting cases of PK you could try the 6 in 1 or even the 10 in 1.

In works lambs the one dose may well be sufficient but if you give any potential ewe lamb replacements another dose 4 - 6 weeks later this will set up the start of their lifetime vaccination programme.

3. Internal Parasites in Lambs – Just a warning that counts have risen on many farms in the last fortnight or so. As indicated in the last newsletter, because of the high levels of parasitism this last late autumn/winter period, I am expecting that on many farms the lambs will face a higher than usual challenge and perhaps a little earlier than normal too. So don't be caught out - keep a close eye on your lambs and if not sure then check with some FEC's.

Reminders

1. Teaser Rams: Many farmers have found the use of teaser rams an inexpensive tool to achieve better performance, especially over two-tooths and also in inducing more hoggets to come on heat. Work has shown that hoggets that show heat in their first autumn/winter have a higher lifetime performance, **irrespective** of whether they are actually mated at that age or not.

Used over 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 couple of 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: On the whole *Brucella ovis*, an important cause of infertility in rams is under pretty good control in South Otago & as a result some farmers are neglecting to get their rams checked. There are even some farmers who have never had their rams checked which is a bit of a risk – even apart from Brucellosis there are plenty of other causes of infertility and 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 it pays to 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 with this newsletter along with the ram run form. Testing of wet and dry ewes for Toxo (and Campy) serology over the last few years has yet to reveal a farm where Toxo has not been present at some point. In the case of Campy, 88% of farms tested have had some exposure to it. In the past on those farms who did not vaccinate, MSD (manufacturers of Toxovax and CampyVax) provided these (not inexpensive) tests free of charge. This service has now been withdrawn - the tests are still available but MSD will no longer be footing the bill.

The single lifetime dose of Toxovax should be given at least six 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 four weeks ahead of when you require it. Capacity of the plant is being stretched so adequate time with pre-ordering is increasingly essential. This season as an incentive to help advance the pre-ordering, MSD are providing two copies of the Sheep: Health, Disease and Production Textbook (worth \$120 each). All orders received by Christmas will go in the draw for one of those. Fill out the enclosed form and return it **now**, yes that's it – right now, this very minute!!

Most farmers do vaccinate for both Toxo & Campy as whether it's the small, unrecognised losses that continually undermine lambing performance, or sudden abortion storms, these diseases significantly affect productivity. However, for those of you who don't, have a look at the following figures from the Vet Services Hawkes Bay (who scan hundreds of thousands of ewes every year) database. Their figures show:

- A 4.3 - 11% increase in scanning in mature ewes, where Toxovax is used (as a two-tooth).
- A 3.1 - 12.5% increase in scanning in two-tooth ewes where Toxovax is used.
- A 6.8 - 11.4% increase where CampyVax is used (as a two tooth).
- A 6.9 - 14% increase in two-tooths where CampyVax is used.

Can you really afford not to use these 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 and 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 but preferably twice, early and late in the season. The reason for this is that the worm species present can vary through course of the season so one check either early or late could miss a particular species and if this happened to be resistant then you would miss it and effectively get the wrong answer. Take samples off 10 lambs, 10 - 14 (no more than 14) days post drenching. Keep samples separate – packs of plastic bags are available at the clinic for this purpose. Counts should all be zero. If not there is a problem that may or may not be a resistance issue. Further testing will likely be needed to sort this out.

6. Check the Bulls: 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 or a number of frustrated cows hanging around an inactive bull.

Internal Parasite Update

At this time of the year I normally provide an update on any developments over the last 12 or so months in this important area.

a) Sheep:

On the sheep side of things it is all pretty much steady as she goes. The rule is still to use combinations of effective anthelmintics and around the time of the 5th drench (late March/early April) throw in a drench of one of the new actives - Zolvix or Startect. This helps prolong the life of the existing cheaper drenches!

One or two of you have asked about pre-weaning drenching following an article in the November 2013 Countrywide Magazine which basically said in most cases it (pre-wean drenching) was a waste of time.

This was written by a vet from the Manawatu and might well be the case up there - I don't pretend to know about internal parasite patterns in the Manawatu (and wouldn't offer specific advice like that up there!) What I do know is that down here if you follow that advice it is highly likely you will (or your lambs will) come to a rather sticky end. On most farms in most years (and as outlined earlier, especially this year) a pre-weaning drench is crucial. If you end up with clinical parasitism in lambs pre-weaning they will be behind the eight ball all season - you may never really make up the lost ground. Also even in the unlikely event you get away with it you will end up with more pasture contamination which could mean a lot more drenching is needed in the autumn along with more growth rate loss. If not sure whether to drench or not then check by doing some FEC's.

As mentioned earlier do a 10 day drench check to ensure the drench you are using appears to be fully effective. For those of you wanting to really know what drenches are effective or not on your farm, a Faecal Egg Count Reduction Test (FECRT) is indicated. Contact the clinic to get more details on this, but basically the initial setting-up involves identifying round 100 ewe lambs at weaning, not drenching them and waiting until they get an average of 500 - 1000 epg before starting the test.

As far as cattle and deer drenching goes this last 12 months has seen confirmation of the increasing ineffectiveness of the various mectin pour-ons so some reinforcement of the current drenching recommendations is probably appropriate.

b) Cattle:

1. Oral drench where you can (especially younger stock) with triple or dual combinations. Matrix is available with 3 different dose rates 1ml/5kg, 1ml/10kg and 1ml/20kg so there will be a product to suit the class of stock and particular drench gun you are using. As a bonus Matrix is a lot cheaper than all the pour-on and injectable products anyway.
2. When stock get a little bigger and oral drenching holds 'less appeal' use a combination injection such as Eclipse E or Boss injection.
3. If a pour-on is going to be used then use a combination pour-on such as Eclipse or Boss. This is especially important in stock <15months old due to ineffectiveness of the mectin only drenches against Cooperia. As mentioned in last months newsletter not all apparently similar looking (on the surface) pour-ons are equal - note the relatively poor performance of Saturn Pour-on compared to Eclipse and Boss in achieving good blood levels.

c) Deer:

The deer anthelmintic situation has become particularly 'gloomy' over the past 12 months with more trial work showing that pour-ons are largely ineffective and even injections appear to be struggling to be effective on some (many?) farms. As a result of this then, current deer drenching recommendations include:

1. Oral drench where you can with a triple combination like Matrix. This is effectively a double combination of white and mectin as levamisole is relatively ineffective in deer, especially against lungworm. There is a possibility it may have some effectiveness against gut worms which are more important in elk/wapiti X animals so worth using over any other oral.
2. An alternative that would give a longer protection period against lungworm would be an oral drench of Oxfen C or Arrest C combined with a mectin injection like Dectomax.
3. Where an oral drench is not feasible or practical, then use an injection like Dectomax or Cydectin. I'm afraid there is absolutely no point using a pour-on.

Finally, don't forget about quarantine drenching when stock of any sort (sheep, cattle or deer) arrive on your farm. With the prevalence of anthelmintic resistance about there is a good chance of importing the problem if you don't use an effective quarantine drench. With cattle and deer in particular it might pay to check with us as to what a suitable quarantine drench product to use might be.

New Product

i-Pulse Drench Boluses: These are not really a new product but a re-launch of a product from 3 years ago that never really had much publicity or a decent effort put into its marketing.

i-Pulses are cleverly designed cartridges or capsules (covering different starting weight ranges) for drenching calves. They release 5 pulses of a combination of abamectin and levamisole at intervals of 4 – 6 weeks (so effectively a full dose of a combination drench is released at a 4 – 6 week interval meaning they last for 4 – 5 ½ months). The exact interval varies from animal to animal – in this way not all animals are effectively drenched on the same day creating in effect some refugia. In this respect then they differ from sheep capsules which release drench continually for 100 days - these are like 5 individual drenches spaced apart. All boluses deliver an increasing dose of both the actives over time to allow for growth of the animals. The cost of these has been reduced and they work out at \$20 – \$23/capsule for starting weights of 120 – 250kg.

Clutha Vets Calendar

Following on the heels of this newsletter the annual calendar featuring local scenes and a diary of animal health events will be sent out to quite a number of our top clients by turnover. The downside of this is that it disadvantages those smaller farm units who, while they may be very loyal clients, their turnover doesn't reach the trigger point. With our current computer system we have no easy way round this. If this is you please don't be embarrassed about asking for one - we keep quite a few spare expressly for this purpose.

Merchandise Matters

This month's list is as follows:

- **Merial Ancare Sheep Drenches** – As has become the norm for this time of the year- receive a Kiwi Banquet Honey Cured Ham (choice of on the bone or pressed) on qualifying purchases. This also gets you into the 'Take a Mate Fishing to Stewart Island' draw plus a chance to win an amazing package which includes a Powerbuilt tool chest and tools, massive sun umbrella, Cannon camera, iPad, iPod, Sodastream, woollen rug, lace Turkish tablecloth, plus more goodies to keep the whole family happy. This package is on display at the Balclutha Clinic.
- **Vetdectin/Cydectin Sheep Drench/Cattle Pour-on** – Receive a \$30 New World voucher on qualifying purchases.

- **Eclipse E Injection** – Purchase 3 packets and get the 4th packet free.
- **Boss Cattle Combination Pour-on** – Special price on a 5lt of \$1217nett incl GST. With a 1ml/20 kg dose this pack does twice as many animals as most other pour-ons.
- **Coopers Sheep and Cattle Drench** – Purchase 10lt and get a free 15ml sheep drench gun.
- **Meaty Bites Working Dog 20kg** – Super special price of \$55.56 nett inc GST (while stocks last).
- **Eukanuba Premium Dog Biscuits 20kg** – Fill in an entry form in December to go in the draw to win \$5000 on your 'summer wish list'.

Promotion Winners

Fishing Tip to Stewart Island: Winners of the weekly draw so far are Lionel Bugden, Waitahuna; Hamish Wilson, Rongahere; Maurice Judson, Awamangu and Doug Robertson from Arthurton.

There are still another 6 draws to go plus each winner gets to take a mate with them so it's certainly not too late to participate.

Holiday Hours

Again this season with the way the statutory holidays fall in the middle of the working week I am afraid there is a fairly messy timetable for the holiday hours. At all times though, a vet is available for urgent calls - just phone 418 1280. Milton clients who dial the usual Milton clinic number will automatically be put through to this number.



**BAA
Humbug!**



Date	Balclutha	Milton	Clydevale
23 Dec	Normal hours		
24 Dec	8am - 3pm	8am - 3pm	9am - 3pm
25-26 Dec	Closed - Public holiday		
27 Dec	Normal hours		
28-29 Dec	Closed for the weekend		
30 Dec	Normal hours		
31 Dec	8am - 3pm	8am - 3pm	9am - 3pm
1-2 Jan	Closed - Public holiday		
3 Jan	Normal hours		
4-5 Jan	Closed for the weekend		
6 Jan onwards	Back to normal hours		

As this is the last newsletter for the year, I will take the opportunity on behalf of all the staff here at Clutha Vets to wish you all a Merry Christmas and best wishes for 2014 - may your lambs be big and plentiful and the meat industry finally sorts its s..t out!

John A. Smart BVSc.