

Sheep Farmer Newsletter June 2013

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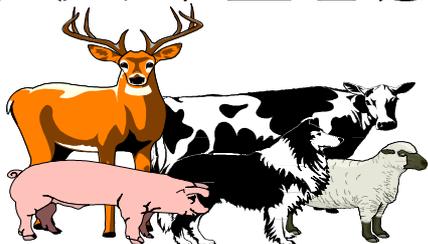
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CONTENTS

- Practice News
- Recent Animal Health Problems
 1. Salmonella Hindmarsh in Ewes
 2. Worms in General
- Reminders
 1. Salmonella Brandenburg Vaccination
 2. Ultravac Vaccination of Hoggets
 3. Clostridial Vaccination of Calves
 4. Abortion Submissions
 5. Bopriva (Agreeabull) Vaccination
- Calf Rearing
- Ewe Condition
- Grass Staggers in Beef Cattle
- Working Dog Corner
- Stock Outages
- Merchandise Matters
- Promotion Winners

Practice News

Well the rain did finally come – a bit late but better late than never. Luckily until the last few days the weather has on the whole been pretty mild for this time of the year and there has been some good growth which will help the feed situation going into winter.

As alluded to in the last newsletter there is a recently established research centre at Massey called the Centre for Service and Working Dog Health. Their work is focussed on the farm working dog and also

the service dog area – guide, police, drug detection dogs etc. There is some quite useful work coming out of this centre so depending on availability of space etc I will try and have an article in the odd newsletter about certain aspects of working dog health.

Staff wise Murray Gillies (who many of you may not have met since he mainly did dairy work) is returning to Canada this month so we will be in the usual position of being on the scrounge for another vet. Marc McElrea has started as a RAT (Vet Technician) in Balclutha.

The other practice news item is to do with changes to the way we handle travel or mileage charges. Previously we charged out the total distance travelled as the round trip from Balclutha or Milton clinics and if more than one farm was visited in a trip the total kms were split between the farms. The main problem with this was that the kms charged could vary greatly depending on the number of calls in a run.

So, as of now we will charge the one way distance each time from the nearest centre and your farm. An exception to this will be after hour calls where the total distance travelled will be charged from Balclutha or Milton. Occasionally the total distance travelled may still be split amongst the clients visited, for instance on most ram runs where calls can be arranged geographically very efficiently.

Within work hours Clydevale will also be a centre that distance will be calculated from as since the building alterations it is possible to have a vet stationed there.

Recent Animal Health Problems

1. Salmonella Hindmarsh in Ewes. This has received quite a lot of media publicity over the last few weeks which has possibly hyped the issue up beyond what it deserves. Fifteen years ago what has happened this season was basically routine and normal. When Salmonella brandenburg came along the immunity developed because of the high challenge from brandenburg was also reasonably protective against hindmarsh so, for 12 years or so we never had a case of this. However in the last 2 - 3 years it has 'crept' back in. So below is a summary of the main facts.

Clinical Signs - Occurs in late summer to early winter, generally in good condition two-tooth's or mixed age ewes (virtually never hoggets). Ewes are depressed lethargic and not eating and die in 24 - 48 hours, or you may just find them dead. There may be evidence of a khaki coloured scour - it may be just a dribble so look carefully. They can die before developing a diarrhoea.

Diagnosis - Veterinary autopsy. Where ewes are being fed baleage it is important to get bacteriology done at the lab as enteric Listeriosis and Salmonella hindmarsh look identical on autopsy.

Treatment - Rapid antibiotic treatment will save the crook ones if you get to them in time. Penicillin is **not** effective – contact the clinic for a suitable antibiotic.

Control - 1 dose of Salvexin+B in the face of an outbreak is very effective. Deaths usually cease pretty quickly but this could take up to 7 - 10 days.

2. Worms in General. I've headed this Worms in General because it hasn't just been, say worms in lambs. We've had cases (deaths) recently from lungworms in calves and fawns, internal parasites in hoggets & also ewes affected by internal parasites.

Basically the long dry summer followed by (eventually!) rain & mild weather along with some pretty tight feed supplies has all combined to result in higher than normal worm challenges such that we have seen clinical parasitism (meaning illness and deaths) cases out there. For younger stock (lambs, calves, fawns) this challenge should be coming to an end as the colder weather kicks in and, depending on the recent drenching history a drench round early June should be the last needed, at least until spring.

For the likes of ewes you will need to keep a close eye on these right through the winter, especially where feed is tight as this makes them more susceptible to what worm challenge there is. If you are concerned about your ewe condition at any time then get some FECs done ASAP – sample bags available at the clinic.

Reminders

1. Salmonella Brandenburg Vaccination: The incidence of Salmonella brandenburg waxes & wanes on what looks like, when perusing the records, about a 5 year cycle. The last couple of years we have had a lower than usual number of cases so if history is anything to go by we might be in for a bit of an increase this year.

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 vaccinate everything is to vaccinate these, especially if you had an outbreak in the mixed age ewes last year.

The basic vaccination programme is 2 doses to unvaccinated stock 4 - 8 weeks apart. The second dose is best given around late June - mid 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 very rarely get the disease it's probably not worth vaccinating them.

2. Ultravac Vaccination of Hoggets: By now the hoggets should have received their two 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 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 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 & 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: 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 increase your chances of getting the cause diagnosed:

- **Don't** send samples in off the first 1 or 2 cases – they could just be one-offs.
- Send in **fresh** aborted fetuses – preferably two from two 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* three supermarket bags. We don't appreciate S. brandenburg organisms being dripped on the floor as you walk through the building.
- 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: See the last newsletter (April 13) for all the details about this.

Calf Rearing

If you intend rearing calves this spring then now is the time to be getting organised. The important things to be thinking about this far ahead are:

Facilities - Many problems (scouring, pneumonia etc) are the result of inadequate facilities. On a cold day can you stand in you calf pens in a short sleeved shirt and feel reasonably comfortable? If the answer is no then your facilities are not up to scratch.

Source of calves - the other major cause of scours is a lack of adequate colostrum in the first 24 hours of life. To this end you need to:

- Source calves from a dairy farmer whose calves have done well for you in the past & avoid those whose calves haven't.
- Source calves from a dairy farmer who vaccinates their calves against Rotavirus and E coli. If (& it is a big if) the calves then got adequate colostrum this goes a long way to preventing the major causes of calf scours. We

know from testing that up to 50% of calves do not receive enough colostrum.

We are more than happy to inspect your calf rearing facilities ahead of time & offer any suggestions as to how they could be improved – contact the clinic to arrange this. Also, a calf rearing club is being started with a regular newsletter, Calf-Link, being emailed throughout spring with tips & advice on calf rearing. If you wish to get this newsletter, please send your name & email address to Elspeth (edunne@cluthavets.co.nz).

Ewe Condition

After the dry summer/autumn many of you will have ewes below optimal body condition (CS 2.5 - 3.5). As ewes can put weight on in early – mid pregnancy if feed is available, now is the time to act. Half a condition score relates to approx 3.5kg body weight. If we aim to put on 3.5kg (0.5 CS) then we need a growth rate of 100g/day for 35 days which is 1.5 x maintenance or equivalent to the feeding level of twin ewe 4 weeks pre-lamb.

The benefit of lifting ewe condition is that ewe performance increases up to CS 3 especially under poorer feeding conditions, and ewes in better condition can buffer under conditions of poorer nutrition. Don't forget the light ewes could be "wormy" so as alluded to above (on page 2), a FEC should also be considered.

If you would like someone to help you get your hand in re condition scoring please give us a ring.

Grass Stagers in Beef Cattle

This can be one of the bigger animal health issues with beef cows on some farms & you may not even know it is a problem. If you have gone around your cows and calves in the roughly 2 - 8 weeks period post calving and found a dead cow then it is a very high possibility that she died of hypomagnesaemia or grass staggers.

In the beef situation options are more limited than on dairy farms where pasture dusting and water line/trough supplementation are available options. Probably the best control option is plenty of feed – as Mg cannot be stored in the body a constant adequate daily intake is essential to provide sufficient Mg. With this season looking like feed supplies could be a bit tight through winter & early spring grass staggers could be more of an issue than usual.

The best method of providing additional Mg in the beef situation is to give the cows a Rumevite Magnesium capsule (recently renamed from Rumentrace) 7 - 10 days prior to calving. These last 3 months which is sufficiently long to get past the problem period - quite a few farmers use these now & all that I have spoken to are very pleased with the results. They aren't the cheapest thing you will ever buy (however a price drop is possible apparently)

but saving one cow will pay for a lot of Rumevite capsules.

Working Dog Corner

This first "semi regular" working dog section will basically try & answer – "Should you neuter your working dog(s)?" Obviously the huge disadvantage of neutering is that if the dog turns out to be an absolute superstar then future breeding options are somewhat limited so for those of you who gain a lot of pleasure out of breeding dogs maybe just skip to the next topic.

However just like most horses will never make the Melbourne Cup let alone win it, many dogs are never going to be the start of a great dynasty. A lot of farmers prefer to buy in young dogs than mess around with breeding.

The benefits from neutering include:

- Neutered dogs live longer than their entire counterparts.
- No chance of unwanted pregnancies.
- Bitches aren't off work 'locked up' while on season.
- No pyometras, caesarians, prolapsed vaginas and fewer mammary cancers.
- No expense of misalliance injections (some are very expensive and others can have undesirable side effects) or drugs to delay/stop oestrus.
- Castrated males have no prostatic problems and therefore less likely to suffer from constipation.
- Reduced interdog aggression.

The disadvantages include:

- Inability to breed as outlined above.
- Cost and risk (small) of surgery and downtime.

The perception that neutering will make them soft, lazy and fat is almost certainly an old wives tale as far as working dogs go. Their genetic 'herding' instinct & effects of training are too strong to be lost with the ovaries or testicles. If you want to know more please contact the clinic.

Stock Outages

No newsletter at this time of the year seems to be complete without a list of the various pre-lamb products that are going to be unavailable. The ones we know about at present that are likely to be out of stock or in limited supply this season are:

1. Prolavax – There will be no Prolavax Ewe at all this season. However we do have a limited supply of lamb Prolavax + Se available (this has a full dose of 5 in 1, half a ewe dose of B12 and a lamb dose of Se).

2. Eweguard - There are 3 Eweguard products:
a) Plain – very limited stocks.
b) Selenised – none available.
c) Se & B12 – unconfirmed but at best limited stocks.

3. Dextrose 20% - No supplies this year – we will only have what we carried over. I am really annoyed

about this & have been moving heaven & earth to secure supplies but to no avail. Once supplies are exhausted the only option will be to dilute down the 40% product, like in the old days!

4. Spectrablock - No supplies this year however Alleva (a fairly new company) is in the process of manufacturing a copy & I am pretty confident of having it on the market in time for next year. It is really good of them to take up the slack here after Spectrablock was taken off the market. If you wish you could show your support by purchasing their combination cattle anthelmintic – Boss Injection.

Merchandise Matters

This month's list is as follows:

- **Bionic Capsules** – Purchase 2500 Bionic capsules and receive a top quality Amphibian jacket.
- **Eclipse E Injection & Eclipse Pour-on** – With 4 x 500ml injection & 2.5 or 5lt of pour-on receive "The Angus Book", a glossy colour book celebrating 150 years of the Angus breed in NZ.
- **Eprinex Pour-on** – Buy 3x5lt & get another 5lt free.
- **Genesis Pour-on** – Purchase 2x2.5lt and get the third 2.5lt free
- **Dectomax Injection** – Receive an electric knife sharpener or a high quality sheath knife with every 2 starter packs.
- **Boss Cattle Injection** – A new combination injection of ivermectin, eprinomectin & levamisole for cattle from Alleva. Also effective against lice.
- **Magnum 20lt Pour-on** – All purchasers go in the draw for a 1 in 10 chance to win a 10 pack of wool fadges/bales.
- **Cydectin Pour-on** – Receive an extra 10% free.
- **Combat Topline Pour-on** – only \$468.21 nett incl. GST or \$2.34/500kg cow.
- **Meaty Bites Working Dog 20kg** – Currently on special at \$60.70 nett inc GST.
- **Milligan's Calf Milk Powder** – Our price for this season will be \$92.67 nett incl GST for a 20kg bag. Get your orders into retail now to secure supplies at this price.

Promotion Winners

There have been three promotions drawn recently. Winners of these are:

Merial Ancare Complete Shimano Fishing Package - This package, consisting of lots of fishing paraphernalia, for which purchasers of their cattle drench products went in the draw, was won by Garth Mitchell of Outram.

Magnum Pour-on Woolpacks - The winner of the first set of 10 woolpacks was Vawn Wrigley of Waitepeka.

Meaty Bites Working Dog Makita Chainsaw - This was won by Max Harrison of Newhaven.

John A. Smart BVSc.