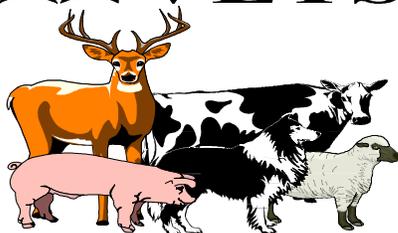


Sheep Farmer Newsletter June 2014

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Practice News

Well it is not news that conditions recently have got pretty wet underfoot. Luckily most of you have gone into the winter with plenty of feed on hand and stock in reasonable condition. While some of this feed has no doubt been somewhat trampled into the mud I would have thought we should be looking at an above average scanning.

The building project out the back of the Balclutha clinic alluded to in the last newsletter has, due to various red tape issues involving fire regulations and

consents, at the time of writing, has not started yet. These continual delays have meant that the retaining earthworks needed will, because of all this rain, create too big a mess, so we have had to delay this part of the job until it dries out a bit, presumably some time after winter. Rather frustrating but what can you do!!

Staff wise, once again it is pretty much steady as she goes. Steven Butler has indicated that once he has finished his OE in the UK (mid-Spring) he is keen to return to Clutha Vets – more on that nearer the time.

Recent Animal Health Problems

1. *Salmonella Hindmarsh* in Ewes – This will be the 3rd newsletter in a row where this condition has rated a mention. A small trickle of cases continues, although I suspect it has slowed down a bit. Keep an eye out for sudden deaths in good condition two-tooth or older ewes. These ewes may have evidence of a khaki coloured diarrhoea round the back end. If you see this give us a call immediately. If it turns out you are feeding baleage we will need to autopsy a suitable specimen as *S. hindmarsh* and enteritis due to *Listeria* from poor quality baleage look the same. Even on an actual post mortem the symptoms look identical and laboratory work (growing the relevant bug) is needed to sort this out. If baleage isn't being fed it is usually safe to assume the cause is *Salmonella hindmarsh*. There is a more detailed account of *Salmonella hindmarsh* in the Feb newsletter of this year.

2. *Milk Fever* in Ewes – A rather strange time to be mentioning this you might think and usually you would be right. However over the last eight weeks or so we have had a number of cases of ewes down and unable to stand following yarding for some procedure – shearing or whatever. Often the yarding time has through various delays, ended up being a bit longer than anticipated. Either in the yards or the next day when finally back out on grass some ewes are found down. These ewes have invariably responded to Glucalpos (mainly Calcium Borogluconate but also contains a bit of Magnesium and Dextrose). Blood samples taken (as well as the response to treatment) have confirmed that this is milk fever, or to give it its more correct name, hypocalcaemia.

Not sure why this complaint should be occurring at this time this year when it usually doesn't but presumably the generally lush feed conditions out there this season have something to do with it.

If you get some ewes down and you're not sure what's going on give us a call. We can try some intravenous Glucalpos and results can be spectacular (like on their feet in 2 - 4 minutes). Don't try i/v treatment yourself – too much and/or too rapid can have an opposite and very fatal result!

Reminders

1. *Salmonella Brandenburg* Vaccination: - The incidence of *Salmonella brandenburg* waxes and wanes on what looks like, when perusing the records, about a five year cycle. After a bit of a low the previous two years there was a slight rise in the number of farms affected last year so, if history is anything to go by, we might be in for a bit more of an increase this year.

While not as effective as virtually all other vaccines you are used to Salvexin+B has been proven to 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 two doses to unvaccinated stock 4 - 8 weeks apart. The second dose is best given around 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 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 four – six 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 lifetime vaccination programme.

A couple of instances of hoggets only getting one dose have been brought to my attention lately. To be fully effective most killed vaccines need a primer and a booster dose usually round 4 – 6 weeks apart and this is certainly the case with these Clostridial vaccines. Lambs will have no protection against navel ill due to Clostridial organisms and also you can still lose some ewes to blood poisoning round lambing if the ewes have not had a primer and booster dose at the correct interval. I thought I had managed over the years to eliminate this one dose "shortcut" but obviously not!

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 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 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 3 supermarket bags. We don't appreciate *S. brandenburg* organisms being dripped on the floor as you walk through the clinic 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

See later in the newsletter for a recent development in sheep abortion diagnoses.

5. Bopriva (Agreeabull) Vaccination: This is the very effective anti-testosterone vaccine for bulls that stops them fighting, turns them into pussycats etc. See the April 2013 newsletter for all the details about this. Back copies of all the newsletters are available on our website – www.cluthavets.co.nz.

South Otago Drench Resistance Levels

Recently, after the finish of the drench resistance testing season (using FECRTs), I analysed the results of our testing over the years and put these results into the table below. I should point out that where repeat testing has been done on the one farm only one set of results are included and I was missing the results of some of the later tests done at the Milton end of the practice. Never the less they give a very good picture of the current "state of play".

Drench	% of farms Showing Resistance			
	At ≤95% Level	At ≤99% Level	1 Species ≤95% Level	National Survey 2005 (≤95%)
Albendazole	61	82	85	41
Levamisole	25	56	59	24
Dual (Arrest)	8	22	20	8
Ivermectin	10	35	42	25

The columns in the table require some explanation:

1. The Column Headed "At ≤ 95% Level": For some obtuse reason a level of 95% for the drench overall has been accepted as the cut-off definition for resistance. This is complete and utter bollocks. While you might have a reduction of over 95% for the drench overall, quite often one of the five or so worm species that contribute to this overall result

could be reduced by a lot less than 95% - i.e. it is resistant. So how on earth can the drench then be considered to be effective?

2. The Column Headed "At ≤ 99% Level": This is one way of trying to get around the issue raised above – i.e. raise the bar somewhat.

3. The Column Headed "1 Species ≤ 95% Level": What this means is that if any of the worm species (*Ostertagia*, *Nematodirus* etc) egg counts were reduced by 95% or less then regardless of the overall result for the drench the result is considered a fail. This is really the more correct way of assessing the level of resistance so concentrate on this column – it is the most accurate reflection of what is going on. As you can see there is not a bad correlation between it and the ≤ 99% column.

4. National Survey 2005 (≤95%): This column contains the results from the national survey carried out nearly 10 years ago now but analysed like Column 1 – i.e. not really a true indication and so the levels are a gross under estimation of the true level of resistance.

So looking at the 3rd column of results. What this means is that on 85% of farms tested albendazole (white) drench has a resistance to it – in other words only on 1 in 7 farms is it fully effective. Over half (59%) of farms have a levamisole (clear) resistance, 20% (1 in 5) a dual white/clear resistance and so on.

The moral of the story is that it is extremely likely you will have some form of drench resistance on your property and by the time you notice it visually you will have lost a lot of money in lost production. Performing a FECRT will at least give you some advance warning of possible problems. Contact the clinic for more info.

Ewe Body Condition

Has the nasty spell of bad weather 10 days or so ago knocked your ewe condition around a bit? As you know ewe condition at lambing plays a huge role in lamb survival, milk production, lamb weaning weights and ultimately kg lamb weaned/ewe. A condition score of >3 is the goal. If some ewes are starting to fall behind you should still have time on your side to improve these by identifying them and feeding them preferentially. With ample quality feed ewes can gain in body condition up until the last third of pregnancy - after this you can't improve it although you can prevent it deteriorating further. Hence now is the time to act! Contact the clinic for further assistance with this.

Sheep Abortions – New Development

Going back to around the mid nineties we have had cases of abortion in ewes which had some characteristics similar to *Campylobacter* (but we could never isolate *Campy*) and these we then

thought were due to a particular bacteria which we then called *Fusobacterium*. This bacteria however proved impossible to grow in the laboratory and so we could never be absolutely certain if this was the actual cause or not. Getting this provisional diagnosis often involved multiple submissions, extra expense and since any diagnosis was in effect a "best guess" it was all rather frustrating.

Subsequent to this over the years we have had a number of farms with "suspect" cases culminating in a cluster about 3 years ago in the Lovells Flat, Lower Hillend area, the same general area where many of these suspect cases have occurred over the years.

Investigative work by Clutha Vets and Invermay at this time has finally culminated in the development at Wallaceville of a new diagnostic test for this bug, which incidentally, due to various reasons I don't have to fully understand has been renamed *Helicobacter rappini*. This test is what is known as a PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) test – effectively a DNA test which looks for the unique DNA fingerprint of the bug. This test gave a positive result in aborted lambs from the suspect farms and just as importantly gave a negative result in lambs off these farms that died of other causes – dystocia etc. So the scientists involved and I are pretty confident this test, a first in NZ, will result in a quicker, cheaper and more accurate diagnosis of this causative bacteria.

We usually get a diagnosis in about 75% of cases of ewe abortions. What this development means is that there will be a chunk (not sure exactly what size chunk) of the remaining 25% that will now be able to be diagnosed. You can assist the overall diagnostic "hit rate" by observing the abortion submission guidelines provided earlier in this newsletter.

Working Dog Training Day

Following on from the very successful working dog training day we held a couple of years ago this is being repeated. The enclosed flyer has the information but the essential details are that it is run by Lloyd Smith who many of you will know, either from the fact he used to farm here at Wairuna or from his dog trial successes or his book on training dogs, "From Pup Pen to Paddock".

Where - Telford Equine Centre (under cover arena).

When - Wed 18th June 10am - mid afternoon.

Cost - \$10 per person - includes BBQ lunch and refreshments.

RSVP - To Clutha Vets by Thurs June 12th.

Prolavax and Eweguard Supply

I am the bearer of good news. Ewe Prolavax both Plain and Selenised will be available this pre-lamb period which must be the first time in about 3 - 4 years that this has been the case. The selenised version has a Nov 14 expiry which is not a problem

for you as you will be using it in August. It does represent a problem for us – knowing how much to order so we have enough but not that much it lies around and goes out of date. So if you wish to be sure of obtaining Prolavax (either Plain or Selenised) please phone in your order ASAP so we can secure the appropriate amounts.

At this stage it looks like all versions of Eweguard (Plain, Selenised & B12) will be available. However I have lost count of the number of times we have been assured supply will be no issue with different products and then there turns out to be a shortage so phoning in your order ahead of time will help avoid this happening to you.

Price Reduction

All-trace Boluses have had a marked reduction in price. These are a long lasting (around 8 months) oral trace element and vitamin supplement for cattle over 150kg live weight (so ideal for beef calves at this time of year). They contain good levels of 7 trace elements and 3 vitamins – the most important being copper, selenium, cobalt, iodine and vitamin E. Those farms that have used them are invariably very happy with the results but price has often been an issue - the major price reduction goes a long way to remedying this.

Merchandise Matters

The list of specials etc this month is as follows:

- **Merial Ancare:** Pre-lamb promotions are about to start. On selected products (Bionic capsules, Exodus (moxidectin) injections etc) there are draws for 2 x \$10,000 travel vouchers, entry into the Wanaka Wine Tour and also a \$399 luggage bag to help get you there. Further details on the website and in-store in due course.
- **Merial Ancare Cattle Products:** Again a promo is soon to be announced so check the website or in-store shortly.
- **Eprinex Pour-on 5lt:** Buy 3 x 5lt, get the 4th one free.
- **Exodus 1% 500ml Injection:** New product from Merial Ancare equivalent to Cydectin Injection. \$275.52/500ml nett incl GST.
- **Startect Knockout Drench Pack:** Includes a 20lt of Startect, a drench gun and a backpack for the drench pack. Very limited supplies left.
- **Dectomax Injection:** With every starter pack of 2 x 500ml you get a free 200ml. With every two starter packs you get an emergency kit.
- **Cydectin Pour-on Packs:** Receive an extra 10% free.
- **Combat Topline Abamectin Pour-on 5lt:** Only \$2.34/500kg cow nett incl GST.
- **Kaiwaka Children's Wet Weather Clothing:** Come and see the over-trousers, bib over-trousers & parkas from size 2 up. These are particularly well priced.

John A. Smart BVSc.