

So given the present understanding of *M bovis* in NZ where can we apportion responsibility for the current situation? In my opinion the following need to look at themselves closely and examine their actions:

1. *The farmer in Winton* - The fact that there seems to have been no real veterinary presence on the farm for several years meant *M bovis* went undetected and has given it a good head start. If there were indeed numbers of sick cattle that went unreported and untreated for any length of time, this is a serious animal welfare concern

2. *The vet on Waiheke Island* who sold RVM's to a farmer 1600km away, without providing adequate follow up animal care. While maybe **nearly** complying with the letter of the law, their actions without doubt are morally and ethically dubious.

3. *ACVM Bureaucrats* - If you look behind 1 & 2 above, this situation has only been made possible by the actions of bureaucrats in the ACVM division of MPI back around 2003/04 in making distance prescribing allowable. So they perhaps need to take a good hard look at whether this is in the best interests of "NZ Inc".

4. As far as how *M bovis* got into NZ, there was a rumour that illegally imported vet medicines were involved. However it now seems that semen (imported legally) is a more likely source. If this is the case, the protocols for ensuring biosecurity around imported semen are seriously wanting.

I just learnt last week from a vet pathologist friend in the UK that *Mycoplasma bovis* can also affect deer so while the current "mess" continues it might pay for those of you with deer to keep them away from potentially infected cattle – which effectively means not grazing them in adjacent paddocks. We were always told at university that Mycoplasmas are very species specific but with the advent of new sensitive DNA based lab tests it would appear that perhaps this is not the case after all.

Finally on the *M. bovis* front for those of you rearing calves this coming spring:

- Source calves from as few farms as possible – and from trusted farms who don't trade a lot of stock.
- If feeding milk or colostrum brought from dairy farms, ask very careful questions about the status of all of the cows in the herd, as *M. Bovis* is spread very easily in the milk of infected cows.

I wrote an article recently for Countrywide Beef on basic farm biosecurity – concentrating on the practical more important aspects of farm biosecurity. If you don't get Countrywide & would like a copy just ask at the clinic.

## Promotion Winners

**Virbac Smartshot and Ovastim Promo** – The winner of a Go Pro Camera through his purchase of Smartshot B12 was Hamish Wilson of Clydevale.

## Retail Ramblings

The list of specials and promotions this month as follows:

- **Boehringer Ingelheim Cattle Drenches** – These include orals, injections and pour-ons. Receive R.M Williams belts, boots or bags on selected products.
- **Dectomax Injection** – With 2 starter packs you get a rugby top as well as 2 x 200mls free.
- **Boss Pour-on** – Receive a Nescafe Coffee machine with the 5lt or a Breville Scraper Cake Mixer with the 7.5lt. Limited stocks.
- **Zapp Encore 20lt** – received a Leatherman tool with each 2 x 20lt.
- **All Trace Boluses** – still in stock but supplies are limited.
- **Ridgeline Outdoor Clothing** – specials for adults & children in store.
- **Eclipse E + B12 & Se** – New Eclipse injection with B12 & Se - in store now.
- **LSD** - Remember this is the gold standard for preventing Vit E deficiency, especially in stock grazing winter crops.

John A. Smart BVSc

## 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
Ruth Andrews	BVSc
Anna Burrell	BVSc
Erin Caswell	BVetMed
Andrew Comerford	MVB
Andrew Roe	BVSc, MACVSc

### Milton Clinic

Peter Kalb	BVSc
Jillian Clark	BVSc
Sid Taylor	BVSc, MACVSc
Barbara Christensen	BVSc, MACVSc
Tom Wallbank	BVM&S
Martha O'Connor	MVB

# CLUTHA VETS SHEEP & BEEF FARMER NEWSLETTER



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## Clinic News

Latterly we have had a taste of winter with a bit of snow on the hills and some pretty low temperatures. By the time you read this newsletter most of you will have your stock onto winter grazing "arrangements". Remember to have fibre (in the form of baleage, silage, hay or straw) available for all stock on brassicas and fodder beet. It lessens problems in the form of unexplained deaths - especially in the first 2 – 3 weeks, and as the rumen needs fibre to digest efficiently, stock will do better while on these feeds through the winter.

This is the last newsletter I will write as "lead author". I retire from fulltime clinical work at the end of this month. I will still be around part time but in a non-clinical role – helping in the merchandise area, answering questions in the shop etc and also doing a bit of general farm calling, again just to chat, answer animal health queries etc. No doubt I will still contribute the odd article to the newsletter but Andrew Roe, who I introduced in the last newsletter, will take over the lead role. Think of him as a new me - only better!

I first started writing the newsletter back in 1977 initially co-authoring with Jim Mathieson and then Bruce Bissett until the late 80's when I mostly did the writing job on my own although there are plenty of other staff contributing to the production - typing, printing, folding, stuffing envelopes etc. The first newsletters were typed onto a stencil down at Haywards (accountants office) and then a Gestetner was used to print them – I still have a copy of those first efforts - a bit "fuzzy" to look at to say the least! These days the newsletter is typed up and printed in colour (with photos where appropriate) and this is all done in house – a far cry from the early production efforts.

So although I will still be around for a year or 3 yet this is probably the appropriate opportunity for me to thank you all for your support over the years. It is now not uncommon for me now to be dealing with the grandchildren of the first farm owner I dealt with and many of you have become friends. I have enjoyed my time at Clutha Vets, hopefully there weren't too many cock-ups although dealing with biologic systems we all have a few of those. All the best for your future farming in South Otago – it's actually not a bad spot in NZ, if not the world to be farming in.

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## Recent Animal Health Issues

**1. Internal Parasites in Lambs & Calves** - Given the circumstances over the summer/autumn (dry spell followed by moisture and warmth) we had very few cases of clinical parasitism however, not surprisingly there were a few cases in both lambs and calves. All I can do really is to reinforce that 2 - 3 weeks after a long dry spell breaks you have to be really on your guard as far as worms go. It is possible for lambs to die within 3 weeks of an *effective* drench when the larval challenge is very high – and what is more they may well have zero egg counts as well.

**2. Nitrate Levels** - While no cases of nitrate poisoning have occurred lately, we have been seeing some quite high levels when various feedstuffs have been tested. So if you want to be sure, get your feed tested. We can do this at the clinic.

## 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 just vaccinate 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 lifetime 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** - Some abortions will no doubt have 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 to go to the lab 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 \$6.90/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.

## Internal Parasite Control Developments

There have been a couple of small developments which are probably worth covering off here:

**1. Sheep** - The news here is not that great. In the North Island there have been a small number of cases of drench resistance to the triple combinations identified. The good news is, to the best of my knowledge we haven't reached that situation in South Otago. In fact I have yet to identify a case of abamectin resistance let alone in a combination with the other actives. However it should serve as a warning that this situation is lurking just over the horizon somewhere and you need to be:

- a) aware that this is a very real threat.
- b) and adopting best practice parasite management practices to delay what is probably inevitable. This includes utilising a knockout drench as described in the last (April) newsletter. This concept has been shown to delay the onset of drench resistance but despite quite a few years of recommending it, uptake has been slow to say the least.

**2. Deer** - All existing registered anthelmintics are only partly effective (so basically ineffective then!) in deer. For a few years we have been recommending an off label drench mixture which results in 2 - 4 times the sheep level of some of the anthelmintics actives. We now have another off label drench mixture that has been tried in deer that we can advise on. It is also off label but there has been a certain amount of work done to back up its use.

I have combined these 2 drenching recommendations into one fact sheet so if you would like a copy come into the clinic and ask for one. Being off label you need to speak to a vet so we can emphasize the relevant precautions etc. What I should say now though is that with either of those mixtures which result in higher blood levels of the actives, in reality this is only a temporary respite – the worms will catch up sooner or later!!

## Vitamin E Deficiency

This is especially common in stock (sheep & cattle) grazing winter crops and results in the birth of weak, dopey lambs and calves that then have a much lower chance of survival. LSD is the gold standard for preventing this. Depending on length of time on the crop either 1 dose pre-lambing/pre-calving or if on the crop longer than around 6 weeks then 2 doses, 1 mid grazing & the other pre-lambing/pre-calving is recommended.

There are a number of copycat products out there but often these have stability issues with the Vit E due to their poor formulation and/or packaging. One we had tested only had **7%** of the level of Vit E claimed. There is no doubt, due to its superior formulation & packaging that LSD is the one you should opt for.

## Mycoplasma bovis

While on the surface the situation with this disease appears to be getting worse, on closer examination it is not spreading like wildfire. My understanding (based on the limited information MPI are releasing) is that all cases so far can be linked to the movement of infected cattle or milk. The main problem is the head start the disease got before it was finally identified. MPI now think that the disease originated on a farm near Winton in 2014/15, quite a bit before it was diagnosed by a vet on a farm in the Waimate area in July 2017.

The main reason for the delay in diagnosis seems to be that the farm in Winton had no real veterinary oversight as the owners had chosen to deal with a vet on Waiheke Island (part of Auckland city!) who had an online selling platform. There had possibly been no effective real and regular veterinary presence on the farm for some years.

“How could that be and is it legal?” I hear you ask. Well, a number of years ago the Agricultural Compounds & Veterinary Medicines (ACVM) bureaucrats in MPI in Wellington felt the need to fix something that wasn't broken and amongst other things they made it possible to legally provide veterinary services and restricted drugs from anywhere to anywhere in NZ! However a condition of this is supposed to be that the distant vet (in this case on Waiheke Island) has to arrange for any emergency or follow up care to be done either by themselves (a joke in this case obviously) or by another veterinarian locally. In this instance no such arrangements appear to have been made.

It does make you question what the animal welfare could be like on farms that operate this way.

Good product stewardship and appropriate authorisation of medicines requires good knowledge of each farm's circumstances that can only come from regular contact between farmer and veterinarian.