

# CLUTHA VETS SHEEP & BEEF FARMER NEWSLETTER



October 2015

CLUTHA  
VETS



## Clinic News

Well it won't be news to anyone that this spring has been somewhat challenging. Following on from a colder than average winter the spring, up until late September anyway, has on the whole been colder than usual, resulting in many farms being pretty tight for feed. Taking the glass half-full approach though, bearings haven't been too much of an issue for most!

The clinic redevelopment at Balclutha is now, theoretically anyway, over halfway through, albeit somewhat behind schedule. However by the end of this month we are expecting that Stage 1 at the western end of the building will be completed. This will house the small animal clinic downstairs and a purpose built meeting room and further vet offices upstairs. When everyone decants into the new spaces Stage 2 will then begin. There will, later on in Stage 2, be some disruption in the retail area, but we will do our best to minimise the impact.

The original completion date for the whole job was to be March 7th, 2016. Stage 1 is currently about 7 weeks behind schedule however the builders are hoping to gain back some of that time in Stage 2. Realistically however it will be well into April before the whole job will now be completed.

Staff-wise there are no changes to report on. We have the services of a couple of English locums — Liz Howse and Chris Watson until the end of the year. This morning, along with Jason Darwen they are still in shock, England having been tipped out of the Rugby World Cup over the weekend.

To be honest this should probably be headed "A Lack of Recent Animal Health

## Recent Animal Health Issues

Problems" as things have been reasonably quiet on this front.

**1. Abortions** - We saw very few sheep abortion cases this season. There were a couple of Salmonella Brandenburg cases in the greater Waiwera area which is the least number in the close to 18 years this disease has been around. Apparently there were a reasonable number in Southland though so this disease hasn't gone away. We have also had abortions due to Helicobacter, Hairy Shaker Disease and Listeria.

**2. HT Swedes** – These continued to cause a few problems, mainly in cattle which showed photosensitivity due to liver damage. The underlying cause of the HT Swede toxicity has been identified – see later in the newsletter.

**1. Tailing.** In recent years there has been the odd horror story from South

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## Reminders

Otago and Southland of lamb injuries and deaths following tailing. Investigation has revealed that in virtually all cases the fault has been from the occasional 'rogue' staff member employed by some tailing contractors whose work practices are sloppy, if not downright negligent. You need to try and keep a bit of oversight of what goes on at tailing as this sort of thing can cost you a lot of money.

A reminder about the reasons for not cutting tails off too short:

- Really short tails mean lambs are more prone to ascending spinal canal infections which often result in hind leg paralysis.
- There is definite evidence of an increase in the incidence of rectal prolapse in very short tailed lambs.
- It also means they are likely to have dirtier hind ends through not being able to lift their tail stump properly out of the way when having a poo due to muscle/tendon damage at the base of the stump.
- There is less tissue to cut through and therefore less pain if tails are taken off slightly longer.

The ideal length is one where the tail stump covers the vulva in ewe lambs (and the equivalent length in ram lambs), which roughly corresponds to the bottom of the V where pink skin meets wool or where the two folds that come down either side of the tail from the back end merge into the tail. Apparently where these folds (called caudal folds) merge onto the tail is more consistent than where pink skin meets wool so maybe use that as your guide when tailing.

It is entirely possible that if taking off tails really short continues, then some turkey in Wellington will draft some possibly rather ridiculous regulations, so a bit of voluntary co-operation at this stage to simply slightly lengthen the tail stump could go a long way to ensuring common sense wins the day!

**2. Long Acting B12 Products.** With Prolaplan no longer on the market SmartshotB12 is the only product in this category now. If you haven't used these long acting products and find yourself repeatedly giving conventional B12 (Prolaject) injections then you should perhaps consider this option - read on.

There are two SmartshotB12 products - one plain and one selenised. These cost 62 and 71 cents respectively for a ½ml dose which will last 3 - 4 months. A 1ml dose will last 8 months but does increase the cost as those earlier lambs which go to the works have "unused" Smartshot sitting in them. One way around this is to give all lambs a ½ml dose at tailing, and then repeat the dose 3 - 4 months later in the ewe lambs and any later works lambs. This avoids wasting money on lambs that are going to be off to the works by round the end of January. There is also the option of a dose in between - a ¾ml dose at tailing for example. Contact the clinic for more info.

**3. Scabby Mouth Vaccination** – I always put a reminder in the October newsletter to check for takes 8

- 10 days post vaccination. However as became apparent last year following the Scabine "troubles" some people neglected to do this which, later on when the Scabine issues became apparent, meant they had no idea of whether the vaccine had worked or not. So always check some lambs for takes 8 - 10 days post tailing. There are often lambs that have poked through a fence & there is an opportunity to check these when you're putting them back. You can check up to 3 weeks post tailing but no later as scabs may have dropped off. Less than 2 weeks is best. Below are a couple of photos taken on day 8 of good takes.

**4. Lamb Drenching at Tailing.** Unless, for say weather reasons, tailing is quite delayed and lambs are 6 - 8 weeks old, giving lambs a worm drench at tailing is a waste of time and money. Any worm burden they have at tailing is so small that it will not make any significant difference to the



timing and/or need for a pre-worming drench.

Since mating hoggets became more common there have been cases through the country of abortions, sometimes in quite large numbers, occurring in hoggets. While at times the usual culprits have been diagnosed (Toxo, Campy etc.) there has remained a hard core number that, despite extensive investigation have

## Causes of Hogget Foetal Loss

remained undiagnosed and there is some thought that these are not necessarily infectious in nature but maybe more related to the size and/or maturity of the hogget - physiological rather than infectious if you want to put it that way.

A report in the latest NZ Vet Journal details investigations into a case in the Waikato that had a 7% level of foetal loss. Of interest is the finding that foetal loss was more common amongst ewe lambs whose:

- Pre mating liveweight was below the stock average.
- Growth rates during early – mid pregnancy were lower than the stock average. In this case 40gm/day lower than the recommended 100 - 150gm/day during this period.

This finding supports the theory that the cause in at least some hogget foetal loss cases may be physiological rather than infectious. The study also found an association with *Leptospira pomona* infection. We don't have this particular bug down here. We do have *Leptospira hardjo* however there is no evidence that this strain was involved.

Those Aussies mightn't be able to win the Bledisloe Cup but they are winners in other areas. They seem to lead the world in levels of drench resistance. Further to this, now there is news out of Australia that they have found cases of reduced drench efficacy (in

other words drench resistance) in sheep to Zolvix and Startect. I have just checked the back copies of our newsletters and the world launch of Zolvix was in NZ

## Drench Resistance News

in mid 2009 and Startect was launched in mid - late 2010. So in a very short time resistance to them has developed. Now I am not privy to the reasons for this rapid development – Australia does have some unique climatic factors that don't help in this regard but it would not surprise me that if, due to the fact that the existing anthelmintics weren't that effective, Zolvix and Startect have been hammered on some farms. It does illustrate just how rapidly, given the right circumstances that drench resistance can develop.

The moral of this story is that you all need to be aware of the factors contributing to the acceleration of drench resistance and do your best to mitigate them. We can assist you with this – feel free to ask.

As I have said on more than one occasion in previous newsletters, there are very few farms in South Otago or through NZ for that matter, that couldn't do better as far as the provision of shelter goes. At no time is this more critical than at lambing. This year we had a nasty storm the weekend of 5 - 6<sup>th</sup> September. Luckily this was before many of you had started lambing but it still caught out the early lambers who were in some cases badly affected. It is such a waste, let alone an animal welfare issue to have new-born lambs (and calves for

health problems (photosensitivity, ill thrift and death) may be worse in some seasons than others, but will always be worse in stock on H.T Swedes.

I know for those of you with a wild turnip weed problem HT Swedes have some advantages but it is my strong recommendation that you don't sow these. Sooner or later one season there will be more major animal health issues, possibly worse than 2014. The obvious signs (photosensitivity, death etc.), are probably the tip of the iceberg – ongoing ill-thrift, poor subsequent ongoing productive performance are more difficult to quantify but the hidden cost of these is likely to be considerable.

Something that is often overlooked with our modern anthelmintics is that some of the components have a fairly narrow safety margin. Levamisole in particular has a pretty narrow safety margin with a 2 - 3 times overdose being enough in the right circumstances to kill sheep or cattle. Abamectin can be toxic to lambs when overdosed though this issue is more commonly seen in calves. Because of their small size lambs and calves are most at risk from potential toxicity.

Large scale cases of toxicity are pretty rare but losing the odd lamb or calf after drenching may not be that uncommon. Lambs that collapse &/or show nervous

## Play it Safe

signs soon after drenching could well be showing signs of levamisole &/or abamectin toxicity. Most modern combination anthelmintics contain levamisole and abamectin, sometimes both and generally don't cause problems however appreciation of the risk factors for toxicity will help you avoid the potential for this to occur.

These include:

**Overdosing:** Estimate liveweights accurately (use scales) and resist the temptation to give that particularly skungy lamb a double dose.

**Dehydration:** This is often a common factor in levamisole toxicity. For example drenching in hot conditions following trucking or mustering, if lambs are scouring and yarding for too long can all result in dehydration.

**Rumen Bypass:** Drench is designed to be swallowed into the rumen. In very young lambs the presence of liquid on the tongue can trigger a reflex (the oesophageal groove reflex) which directs the drench straight to the abomasum (4<sup>th</sup> stomach) as happens when they drink milk. Drenches are, because they are more rapidly absorbed from the abomasum, then rendered more toxic. Although in most cases there is no need to drench really young lambs, (<6 weeks old) if you are, passing the drench nozzle right over the back of the tongue will help minimise rumen bypass.

**Insufficient Mixing of the Drench:** This can result in an inadvertent overdose of one of the drench components. Not all combination formulations are created equal and some do settle out faster than others. We do stock products that have better performance in this regard but never the less – shake the drum well before decanting into your backpack.

**Heat Stress:** On really hot days, muster in the cool

## Shelter

that matter) succumbing to inclement weather for the want of more or better shelter.

Conversely poorly designed plantings can make matters worse so it is important when considering tree planting that a good planning and design process is undertaken as the costs of establishing trees can be significant and it is important it is done right.

Beef + Lamb with input from NZVA and yours truly have produced a booklet titled Shelter – Maintaining the Welfare & Productivity of Sheep & Cattle on Drystock Farms. We have copies (free) of this on the counter at retail plus it is on the Beef + Lamb website although not that easy to find. The following link will take you to it: <http://wwwbeeflambNZ.com/document/Farm/Shelter.pdf>

I presume most of you saw the news a month or so back, that, after roughly 12 - 15 months delay the reason for the problems caused by HT swedes in 2014, and again this year, albeit to a lesser extent, has been found. It is **exactly** as I stated in the October 14 Newsletter. HT swedes contain higher levels of toxic glucosinolate compounds (that are found in all swedes or brassicas for that matter). In some seasons, depending on various climatic factors, these toxic compounds may be in relatively higher or lower amounts, but H.T swedes will always have higher levels

## H T Swedes

in the same season than other swedes. So the animal

of the early morning – you'll reduce your incidence of enzootic pneumonia as well.

This year Clutha Vets AGM will be held at the Rosebank Lodge on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2015, at 8pm. All members are cordially invited to attend. Prior to the meeting we hope to be able to show anyone interested round the completed (hopefully!!) part of the clinic redevelopment.

This year the board have decided not to post out printed copies of the Annual Report. There will be limited numbers of hard copies available to anyone who would like one. It will also be available on our website or by email. Please contact the clinic or email [smcnutt@cluthavets.co.nz](mailto:smcnutt@cluthavets.co.nz) to request a copy.

## Clutha Vets Annual General Meeting

## Your Vets

### 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
Elsbeth Dunne	BVSc, BAgSc
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

## Retail Ramblings

From Pihi and the team this time we have:

**Matrix and Switch 20lt Sheep Drench** – each drum gets you a Powerbuilt 2 piece ratchet spanner set (actually 8 spanner sizes in total).

**Eclipse 2.5lt Pour-on** - Each pack comes with a Powerbuilt 23 piece socket set.

**Eclipse 5.5lt Pour-on** – Receive 1lt extra free on top of the 0.5lt bonus product already in the pack.

**Eclipse E Injection 500mls** – A great deal here – buy 1 pack & get another pack free.

**Nexeptrin Microjet** – Buy 2 X 500ml of this eprinomectin injection get a third free; or put another way, treat 200 cows and get the next 100 free.

**Dectomax Injection** – Purchase 2 starter packs (4 x 500ml) and receive an extra 400ml free plus a free Bluetooth speaker.

**Cydetectin Pour-on for cattle** – Receive 10% extra free in the 2lt and 5lt packs. Also a 17lt pack for the price of a 15lt pack.

**Eukanuba Premium Dog Food 20kg** – All purchases go in the draw for 1 of 2 bar fridges full of goodies.

## Promotion Winners

**Merial Ancare Wanaka Wine Tour:** This trip which involves two nights wining and dining in Wanaka on the 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> November with the Saturday spent leisurely sampling the products of several Central Otago wineries has through their purchase of Merial Ancare's superior anthelmintics been won by: Don and Ali Maw, Taumata; McAtamney Farms, Greenfield; Lynley O'Connell, Kaiwera and Dick & Sue Collett of Greenfield.

They will again be hosted by wine "connoisseurs" David and Lynette Dodge of Merial Ancare and Vicki Neave and general p...head Pihi (John) Neave.

John A. Smart BVSc

### **Balclutha Clinic**

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### **Clydevale Store**

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