

# Sheep Farmer Newsletter December 2014

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## Animal Health Centre

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## **Practice News**

Well here we are close to the end of the year already. Most shops now have their Christmas decorations up so the "silly season" is almost upon us. The later part of spring has turned out to be a bit frustrating really. Plenty of wind and rain and not much sun keeping things a bit cool. I'm certain most of you will be tight for feed, and lambs, with the lack of sunshine, won't just be doing as well as they could be. Hopefully the weather improves shortly.

By the end of this month the garage//parking area out the back of the clinic should be finished, which will

free up more parking around the rest of the building. The redevelopment of the Balclutha Clinic building is in line to start around May next year. At present detailed working drawings are being draughted.

Staff wise we are saying goodbye to Lewis Sparrow this month. He has taken a job in Darfield closer to where his girlfriend is located. Once again "love" gets in the way of a stable vet force! Regardless we wish Lewis well in his future endeavours. We have managed to get a replacement (two in fact) I will introduce them in the next newsletter.

## Recent Animal Health Problems

Apart from the later spring weather being cooler than normal meaning lambs aren't doing quite as well as they normally would, there haven't been too many specific issues really.

**1. Pulpy Kidney** – As is usually the situation at this time of the year there has been the odd case of Pulpy Kidney about, although to be fair probably less than usual. Again, this is probably related to the tighter than usual feed situation. If you routinely lose lambs to Pulpy Kidney prior to weaning then using Ultravac 5 in 1 (plain) or Prolavac at tailing would be the most practical way of preventing this. A repeat at weaning in at least the ewe lambs would mean they would then have had their sensitiser and booster shots to set up for their life time programme. If Pulpy Kidney is not an issue for you until after weaning then give the sensitiser at weaning or shortly after.

**2. Internal Parasites in Lambs** – There hasn't been any issues yet, not that I'm aware of anyway, however with stock right on top of the feed on most farms they will most likely be facing a higher worm challenge than normal (80% of worm larvae are in the bottom inch of pasture). So keep a close eye on them and check with FECs if necessary.

## 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, and 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, abscesses 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 at the plant is being stretched so adequate time with pre-ordering is increasingly essential.

Most farmers do vaccinate for both Toxo and 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 vaccinate, 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? Fill out the enclosed form & return it now – right now!

***Please remember to write your name on both sides of the form as these are separated and sent to different ends of the clinic for ordering Toxovax and sorting ram runs.***

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

**a) Sheep** - Pretty much steady as she goes. The rule is still to use combinations of effective anthelmintics and around the time of the 5<sup>th</sup> 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. Make sure you do a 10 day drench check on one of the earlier lamb drenches to ensure the drench you are using is 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 to an average of 500 – 1000 epg before starting the test.

We are often asked about the need or not for tapeworm drench in the lambs. There was a trial carried out roughly 15 years ago whereby lambs given 2 tapeworm drenches a month apart, and weights compared a month after the 2<sup>nd</sup> drench, had a 2kg liveweight advantage over those given the same drench but less the tapeworm additive. The significant results of this trial have never been able to be repeated but most trials do show a small advantage to tapeworm drenching.

If you are not sure whether to go to the extra expense of a tapeworm drench, come and get a small amount of suitable drench, give it to say 100 lambs, hold them in the yards for 3 - 4 hours and see how much tapeworms are left lying around. If there is very few, there's your answer, don't bother. If there's heaps then maybe you should. If you're going to drench for tapeworms it should be done in the early (first &/or second) drenches.

**b) Cattle** - Oral drench, especially younger stock, where you can with dual or preferable triple combinations. Matrix (a triple) is available in 3

different dose rates 1/5kg, 1/10kg and 1/20kg liveweight. When stock get a little bigger and oral drenching holds less appeal use a combination injection such as Eclipse E or Boss. If you must use a pour-on then use a combination pour-on such as Eclipse or Boss. Just a reminder that not all "similar looking" pour-ons are equal. See the October 2013 newsletter which demonstrates the relatively poor performance of Saturn Pour-on.

**c) Deer** - Fairly major developments here which I wrote about in detail in the last newsletter in October so I won't write it again. Back copies of our newsletter are available on our website if you haven't kept a copy. Remember **NO** pour-on use in deer.

### Scabby Mouth Vaccine Situation

There have been quite a few stories circulating, not all of them correct, with respect to Scabine vaccine. I sent a letter about 2 - 3 weeks ago to all Scabine purchasers outlining the facts as we know them. This is just a summary to keep you up to speed.

There are 3 batches, 132SL2, 132SL3 and 135SL2 that appear to have given variable results. Some farmers have had good results, on others there has been minimal or no takes. Retention samples of these batches have checked out okay at the manufacturer. 132SL2 also went to the North Island and there have been no issues reported up there. At this stage we (MSD and ourselves) don't know the reason for these erratically occurring poor takes. To me the only reasonable explanation seems to be to be a break in the cold chain supply somewhere between the manufacturing plant and the tailing pen(s), however this has not been established for sure - it is just conjecture on my part.

The main issue is where people didn't check for takes 8 - 14 days post vaccination and they used these batches, they have no idea whether the vaccine worked or not. There is no point checking now some 6+ weeks after tailing - the scabs will have dropped off. The only way to be sure is to get a bottle of another batch and scratch 20, 50 or whatever lambs and check their takes in 8 day's time. If you get no or minimal takes then presumably the earlier vaccination worked well (the lambs have immunity). However if you get good takes then sorry but it looks like the earlier vaccination hasn't worked. At least you will have an informed basis on which to make a decision to re-vaccinate or not. If re-vaccination is required the practical solution (not recommended in normal circumstances) would be to scratch them on the inside of the ear when they're up a drenching race.

This is the second time in 8 years Scabine has failed. Last time it was quite clear cut - there were distinct batch failures as a result of a small change in the manufacturing process. Scabigard has not been involved either time.

MSD has come up with a compensation scheme for farmers where revaccination is necessary. Space

precludes a detailed description of this but basically they will provide replacement vaccine free of charge plus 50c/lamb to cover the verifiable labour costs associated with revaccination. Contact the Milton or Balclutha retail staff or myself for further details.

### NAIT Tags

All farmers are now required to have their NAIT number with them when ordering NAIT tags. Due to changes (emanating from Wellington!) we have to use a different website to order and we can no longer do this by using your phone number or AHB number. To save you having to remember to do this, if you like you can ring the retail staff and give them your number, and they will record it in a file so it is always on hand here for when you want to place an order.

### Health and Safety

Apparently there are a new lot of regulations due out soon. I have always operated on the basis of common sense and personal responsibility but it would appear this isn't good enough anymore and common sense is being regulated out of existence! Could those of you with cattle yards that are maybe not as safe as they could be please ensure these are up to scratch. Replace rotten boards, ensure the walkway is slip-proof etc. If you are thinking of a new head bail then you still can't go past the **Drummond**, made in Five Rivers near Lumsden and designed by someone who used to work with cattle, not some wally in Auckland who only thinks he knows what's best! We have details here and a photograph if you're not sure what a Drummond Head Bail looks like (you'll know it when you see it). Their phone number is 03-248-7659.

### 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 a large number of our clients based on their turnover with us. The downside of this is that it disadvantages those smaller farm units who, while they may be very loyal clients, their turnover doesn't quite 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

The list of specials, promotions etc this month is as follows:

- **Merial Ancare Sheep and Cattle Drench Products** - The now famous high quality Xmas Ham promotion is currently running on selected products for as long as the stocks of ham last. At this stage there is a choice of on the bone or pressed. Also all purchases go in the draw for one of about 10 places on the "Take a Mate

Fishing to Stewart Island" trip. In addition to the ham and fishing, all purchases qualify for our Xmas in-store promotion of a choice of 1 of 3 packages - a Stihl Kombi pack plus a blower, a Powerbuilt tool chest including the tools, or a Shimano Fishing Pack with everything you need for a successful days fishing. These prizes are on display in the Balclutha shop - the Powerbuilt tool set is creating quite a lot of interest.

- **Zoetis Anthelmintics** - Startect, Dectomax, Vetdectin and Cydectin - receive a \$30 New World voucher on selected items.
- **Eprinex Pour-on 5lt** - Buy 3 x 5lt and get the 4<sup>th</sup> one free.
- **Genesis Pour-on** - Buy 2 x 5.5lt and receive the 3<sup>rd</sup> free.
- **Vetdectin Oral Drench** - Buy 20lt and receive 2lt free.
- **Cydectin Pour-on 5lt** - Receive a portable Bluetooth speaker with each 5lt.
- **Eukanuba Premium 20kg** - All purchases go in the draw to win a Palermo 4 burner BBQ.
- **Meaty Bites Working Dog Food** - All purchases go in the draw for a Jumbuck Chef 6 burner BBQ. This is on display in the Balclutha Clinic and exclusive to Clutha Vets. A bag is 62.59 incl GST
- **Tux Energy 25kg**- Super special price at the moment- \$51.67 incl GST.
- **Kaiwaka Children's Wet Weather Clothing:** Come and see the over trousers, bib overalls and parkas from size 2 up. These are particularly well priced. They would make a great Christmas present from the grandparents!
- While on the subject of Christmas presents, there is a great range of dog and cat toys in at the moment - just the thing for your best friend for Xmas!!

### Holiday Hours

Following in the table below are our holiday hours. Obviously though at all times 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.

Date	Balclutha	Milton	Clydevale
22 - 23 Dec	Normal Hours		
24 Dec	8am-3pm	8am-3pm	9am-3pm
25 - 26 Dec	Closed - Public Holiday		
27 - 28 Dec	Closed for the weekend		
29 - 30 Dec	Normal Hours		
31 Dec	8am-3pm	8am-3pm	9am-3pm
1 - 2 Jan	Closed - Public Holiday		
3 - 4 Jan	Closed for the weekend		
5 <sup>th</sup> Jan on	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 2015.

John A. Smart BVSc.