

Sheep Farmer Newsletter October 2013

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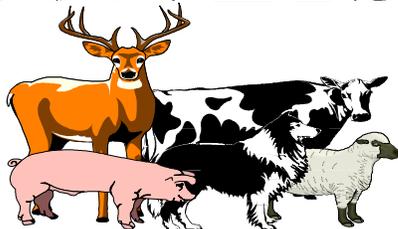
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Practice News

It has been a busy without being hectic spring here. The relatively kind winter and early spring meant most of you went into lambing with plenty of feed, but wouldn't you know it – lambing starts and the weather cools down. Grass growth has slowed again and in many cases the surplus of feed has disappeared.

On the staff front it is all pretty stable - as mentioned in the last newsletter we have a couple of locums, Andrew and Felicity helping us out at present.

Recent Animal Health Problems

1. Salmonella Brandenburg – We had more cases of ewes aborting and getting ill due to this than for the last couple of years. The Catlins, an area that to a large extent has escaped being too badly affected by this disease was one of the worst affected areas this season. If you wish you can keep affected ewes that survived - on the whole they seem to get in lamb at a more or less normal rate the following year. Farmers that had the disease this year should consider, at the very least, vaccinating their two-

tooth next year as experience tells us these are at a higher risk of getting the disease.

2. Worms (again!) – As mentioned in the last newsletter this past autumn - winter has been marked by a very high worm challenge and this is still continuing. Keep a close eye on your ewes and do a FEC if unsure.

While on this subject - because of the high worm challenge this autumn/winter it is likely that on many farms the lambs will be faced with a higher than usual worm challenge this spring. Don't be caught out - keep a close eye on your lambs from about 6 weeks of age onwards looking for signs of parasitism and check with FEC's if necessary. If lambs get checked by worms early in the growing season you never really seem to recover the lost growth no matter how well they are fed.

Reminders

1. Tailing Staff: In the last year or three there has been the odd horror story (some from South Otago, some in Southland) of lamb injuries and deaths following tailing. After investigation in virtually all cases the fault has been from the occasional 'rogue' staff member employed by the odd tailing contractor whose work practices are simply sloppy if not downright negligent. For example wildly jabbing anywhere on the body (ribs, hind end, and spine) products that should only go under the skin on the side of the neck, intra-wool or air shots – obviously these won't be effective but at least they won't cause deaths! Poor scratch technique is another common complaint - the list goes on. The reason I mention this is that you should keep an eye out for this sort of person as they can cost you a lot of money and send them packing (or use another contractor) if they won't get their act together.

2. Scabby Mouth Vaccination: Just a reminder to check for takes 8 – 10 days post vaccination. There should be a raised angry looking scab along the scratch line. And don't succumb to the temptation to vaccinate by punching a hole in the ear with the applicator prongs – if you have a problem there will be no comeback. Make sure tailing contractors do what you tell them - not the other way round.

3. Long Acting B12 Products: There are two products in this category (Smartshot and Prolaplan) although by the time you read this we may be out of Prolaplan - it has been taken off the market. We bought up all the spare stock in New Zealand but are just about out of it. This just leaves Smartshot B12 plain or selenised. A ½ ml dose of this will last for 3, possibly 4 months and 1ml about 8 months. To avoid wasting product in lambs that will soon be off to the works one option is to give all lambs a ½ ml dose at tailing and then repeat the dose 3 - 4 months later just in the ewe lambs (and odd later works lambs if you want to). This avoids wasting

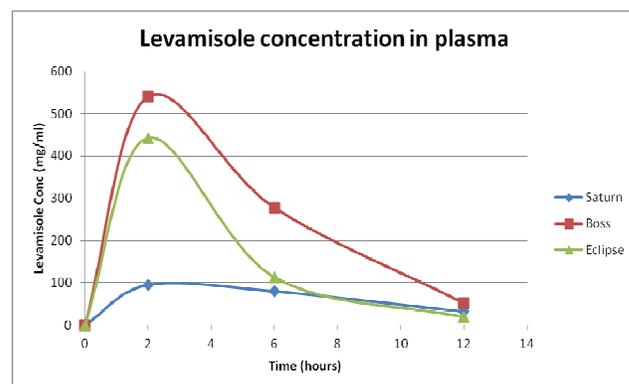
product / money on lambs that will be off to the works fairly promptly.

4. Lamb Drenching at Tailing: No you don't need to do this – any worm burden they have is so infinitesimally small that a drench is a waste of time and money. The only exception to that would be if for weather reasons tailing was delayed so that lambs were up around 6 – 8 weeks of age. Then in those circumstances it could possibly be considered.

Pour-on Product Comparison

Recently I came across some quite interesting data from some studies carried out comparing (what appears to be on the surface identical) combination pour on formulations in cattle. The products, Eclipse, Boss & Saturn are all levamisole - abamectin pour-on formulations containing exactly the same concentrations of each active.

Looking at the blood levels achieved, Boss and Eclipse Pour-on's achieved far higher blood levels of levamisole than Saturn. In fact their levels were more than 4 - 5 times higher than Saturn. See the graph below. There was a similar picture with abamectin levels only not quite as great a difference – Boss's blood levels of abamectin achieved were roughly twice that of Saturn's.



The differences can be explained by the different solvents and additives used in the various pour-on's which make a huge difference to the ability of these pour-on's to be absorbed even though they contain identical levels of the same actives. Obviously this has major implications for not only the actual effectiveness of these products in killing worms and lice, but also it has implications down the line for resistance development as the poorly absorbed one will be resulting in a higher degree of under dosing.

All sorts of factors come into our decisions on product selection, but manufacturers' reputation and expertise in the chosen field is high amongst them. Fortunately we chose not to stock Saturn, a choice well and truly vindicated by its rather poor performance in this study.

So when someone tells you about a product "it's just the same" (as the lead or name brand) – well quite possibly it isn't! LSD is another example where

those that claim to be just the same are, in most instances, actually inferior.

Abamectin Toxicity

As we head into the spring and summer drenching season it is timely to remind you that abamectin (Genesis) and a number of other 'me too' products can be toxic especially to young poorer condition calves and some dogs. While it is more of a young dairy calf thing you do need to be careful with the dose rate and drench accurately. Also beware of any spilled abamectin pour-on as dogs can easily lick up a toxic dose and there is really no treatment available for an overdose.

While I would be pretty confident that this doesn't apply on beef farms but just in case some of the calf rearers amongst you are ever tempted - don't ever chuck some drench in their milk. Putting extra 'things' in milk is just bad practice.

Also, just a reminder that levamisole (clear drench) which is now a component of many combination anthelmintics can be toxic once you get to more than a 2 – 3 times overdose so you need to be relatively careful dosing with products containing it as well.

Useful Website

MSD Animal Health has developed a website which contains some useful information on various animal health topics. While some of the content may be old hat to many of you, it will be useful to those 'newer entrants' to the farming scene and even the "old timers" should be able to glean the odd gem from it. The website is www.sheepvax.co.nz. There are a number of instructional videos and information sheets. One thing you may find useful is a planning link on the top right of the home page - if you click on this it will open up and you type in the day the rams go out and it will bring up the ideal Toxo and Campy vaccination dates for you.

B12 and Selenium Monitoring in Lambs

Vit B12 (Cobalt) and Selenium (Se) are two important trace elements involved in the growth of young lambs. Se is an antioxidant involved in several enzyme systems in the body and Vit B12 is involved in converting feed into an energy source that the lambs can use.

Many of you already use various Se and B12 products in your lambs at docking time and in fact most of you have Se well under control. Vit B12/Cobalt, because levels can vary from season to season and farm to farm can be a little more variable. Once lambs start going to the works, we can, as you are probably aware, monitor Vit B12 (and Se) by organising liver sampling at any of the works – just ring the clinic to organise this. However, cobalt deficiency can rear its head pre-weaning. Once lambs are 7 - 8 weeks of age we can blood test them to see what their cobalt/B12

status is which means you can act earlier should levels become deficient.

In pre-ruminant lambs their major energy source is glucose much like a monogastric animal. Once the rumen develops at around 7 - 8 weeks of age then what are known as volatile fatty acids are the main energy source and Cobalt/B12 is required to metabolise these. So 7 - 8 weeks of age is the earliest we can check Cobalt/B12 levels. This is a straight forward job - we just need to blood test 10 lambs to get a picture of the Cobalt/B12 situation.

Working Dog Corner - Nutrition

Continuing our series on working dogs, this time I will cover off the basics of nutrition. Good nutrition is vital to enable hard working sheep dogs to perform well. The average distance covered by a working dog per day is 10 - 20km regardless of property size. This is an average however and some will do more and some less. The correct balance of fat, protein and carbohydrate is needed to provide energy and for muscle repair. Many diets are too low in fat and high in carbohydrate which reduces the dog's endurance. A diet high in fat and low in carbohydrate increases the amount of fat stored in the muscles and increases endurance. Low protein diets have been shown to increase the rate of soft tissue injury as protein is needed for energy and muscle repair. If protein is deficient then as muscles fatigue they are less able to prevent excess strain on bones and joints thus increasing the risk of injury. As well adequate levels of essential vitamins, minerals, amino acids and fatty acids are needed to support the immune system in fighting disease and infections.

We recommend that all active dogs should be fed a quality dog food. Eukanuba Premium Performance is the best priced of the quality dog foods and an increasing number of farmers now feed this to their working dogs and many of you have commented on how much better the dogs look and how much more stamina they have.

A recent article in the *Countywide* Magazine called 'Dogs on the Run' gave a pretty good synopsis on feeding dogs. If you take the time to read this article, (details below about where to access it) as with a lot of things you will see there is more to the subject than meets the eye and it can be hard to compare "apples with apples". In this article the cost of feeding Eukanuba to a 25kg highly active dog is worked out at \$2.15 per day. Interestingly when you compare the price of feeding the lower quality but still fairly popular Pedigree Meaty Bites Working Dog, it works out identical - \$2.15 per day even though the same weight bag of Meaty Bites costs less. This is because you need to feed a more of the lower quality less digestible feed. A side benefit of feeding the more digestible Eukanuba is the dogs produce a lot less s**t!

If you go to our website www.cluthavets.co.nz there is a copy of the *Countrywide* article there. Click on "Dogs on the Run" article about halfway down the homepage. Also below that there is a link to an article titled "Update on Working Dog Nutrition" written by Catherine Copland, one of our small animal vets - this expands on what I have written above as space constraints here precluded providing a full report on the topic.

Wanted to Rent:

A farm cottage within 15 minutes of Balclutha is required for 2 of our new vets who start in January. Please phone the Balclutha Clinic and ask for Sue McNutt if you have something that might be suitable.

Merchandise Matters

This month's list is as follows:

- **Merial Ancare Sheep Drenches** – Receive a free pair of merino working socks on qualifying drums of oral drenches.
- **Merial Ancare Cattle Drenches** – Receive an LED headlight on qualifying products.
- **Eclipse E Injection** – Purchase 3 x 500ml packets and get the 4th packet free.
- **Eprinex Pour-on** – Buy 3 x 5lt and get another 5lt free.
- **Scanda, Alliance & Converge Sheep & Cattle Drenches** – Buy a 10lt drum of these and go in the draw to win a sleeveless vest.
- **Boss Cattle Injection** – A new combination injection of ivermectin, eprinomectin & levamisole for cattle from Alleva. Also effective against lice.
- **Dectomax Injection** – Receive a G Shock watch or Outback hat with every 2 starter packs.
- **Combat Topline Pour-on** – only \$418.21 nett incl. GST or \$2.34/500kg cow.
- **Meaty Bites Working Dog 20kg** – Currently on special at \$60.70 nett incl. GST (while stocks last).
- **Milligan's Calf Milk Powder** – Our price for this season is \$92.67 nett incl. GST for a 20kg bag. For tonne lot purchases the price works out at \$90.61 nett incl. GST. Get your order in to retail now to secure supplies at this price.

Other Retail Snippets

There are a couple of other retail type issues:

1. **Prolavax Supply** – Supply of this range of products has been a problem for several years now and some of you are understandably grumpy about it. To save you from grizzling at the retail staff, what we have been told is the issue is that the vaccine component is made for the manufacturer (Bayer – was Bomac) by a third party who compete with Bayer in many other areas and so apparently put them on the "back tit" as far as supply of the vaccine

goes. This is the same reason why Eweguard from Zoetis (was Pfizer) is also often unavailable.

Anyway by the time you read this supplies of plain Lamb Prolavax should be in but I'm sorry – selenised Lamb Prolavax is unavailable!

2. **GST** – There seems to be an increasing trend amongst many of our competitors to quote prices ex GST. Please just be aware that all our prices include GST.

Promotion Winners

1. **Merial Ancare Wanaka Wine Tour** – This trip which involves 2 nights wining and dining in Wanaka with the Saturday spent leisurely sampling the products of several Central Otago wineries has, through their purchase of Merial Ancare anthelmintics been won by Stephen and Evelyn King of Hillend, Richard and Abby Hore of Beaumont, Tony and Sarah Homer of Waitahuna, Murray and Sandra Marshall from Wangaloa and Mark and Melissa Sheppard of Romahapa. They will be hosted by David and Lynette Dodge from Merial Ancare and our own resident wine drinkers (sorry, I mean connoisseurs') John (Pihi) and Vicki Neave.

2. **Calf Link Calf Rearing Photo Competition** – Unless you are involved in rearing calves you may have missed this. This year, run by Elspeth Dunne we started a weekly email newsletter to all people we knew about who reared calves covering hot tips, current conditions, reminders etc. This was mentioned in the June edition of this newsletter. In the calf rearing newsletters were details of a photo competition where the weekly winners went into a grand final draw for overall honours. The winner of the overall competition was Julie Wendelgelst of Waiwera South – photo below.



Thanks to MSD Animal Health (suppliers of Rotavec) for sponsoring prizes. Incidentally, if you rear calves and somehow missed the notification about the calf rearing newsletters, they are all on our website and can be read and/or down loaded - click on the picture of the Calf Link Newsletter on the home page of our website www.cluthavets.co.nz

John A. Smart BVSc.