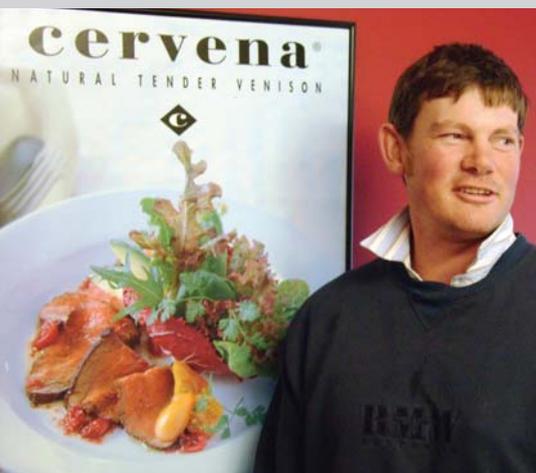




VET notes

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT ANIMALS ON YOUR FARM

NOVEMBER 09



Above Simon Wishnowsky

Introducing the Wishnowskys!

Drive along Mangaone Road, through a mixture of rolling downs and steep gully country north of Feilding, and you will pass the farming operation of father and son team Dennis and Simon Wishnowsky.

The stark mix of land types dictates a true blend of breeding and finishing stock; a substantial breeding cow herd complements the mixed-breed ewe flock, and all progeny are finished.

The Wishnowskys are the new Meat and Wool NZ Manawatu Breeding and Finishing Monitor Farmers.

"This was too good an opportunity to pass up", says Simon, who is also General Manager at Venison Packers in Feilding.

Maximising profitability and farm succession will be key focal points for Simon and Dennis whilst they are Monitor Farmers.

Totally Vets Presents: The Meat & Wool NZ Manawatu Monitor Farm Programme

Ginny Dodunski

Totally Vets are hugely excited to have earned the right to facilitate both of the Manawatu Monitor Farm Programmes for the next three years.

Headed up by Trevor Cook and Ginny Dodunski, and ably assisted by the tireless Greta Baynes, we will be presenting two programmes:

1. A 'traditional' one-farm Monitor Farm; where the focus will be on improving the profitability of a breeding and finishing unit by implementing and following through a three - year business plan.
2. A series of seminar-based opportunities for finishing farmers, presenting top-quality information and real life performance examples.

The farming community has expressed a desire to see a focus on profitability, as opposed to chasing high production for its own sake.

We are rapt that our long - time clients Simon and Dennis Wishnowsky are taking up the challenge of being the Breeding/Finishing Monitor Farm. In conjunction with the farmer committee we are putting together a

business plan that addresses their business and personal goals. From this will flow a calendar of targets and actions that need to happen for these goals to be achieved. Throughout the programme we will be referring back to this plan, refining it where necessary with input from the wider community, and celebrating the achievements along the way. Be part of the progress!

The date of the first on - farm day at the Wishnowsky's will be advised shortly.

The Finishing Farm Programme is purely seminar-based, which gives us the scope to put together a really exciting and challenging programme with speakers who are leaders in their respective fields.

The first of these is coming up in early November (see the advert page 8) and covers beef finishing. The aim is for everyone to leave with ideas they can immediately apply to improve productivity!

We look forward to a really successful and community driven programme!

For further information contact

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GretaMMF@totallyvets.co.nz or

Charmaine Robertson, (06) 323 6161

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Totally Vets current stock health

Have you ever wondered whether your stock require vitamin B12 or selenium? Totally Vets have a limited number of FREE laboratory tests to allow you to answer this question. Vitamin B12 tests are best carried out on liver and there is a fee for collecting these samples. The classes of stock most likely to benefit are calves at 4-6 months and lambs at weaning. Take advantage of this FREE

offer by calling Totally Vets.

We have attended cases of drench toxicity in calves in recent weeks. This raises a couple of issues. Most wormers have a wide safety margin. Levamisole's is not as wide as others. Overdosing with levamisole can cause salivation, muscle tremors, ataxia and collapse. While macrocyclic lactones have wide safety margins, both abamectin and moxidectin are



HA HA When I get to heaven

A little girl was talking to her teacher about whales. The teacher said it was physically impossible for a whale to swallow a human because even though it was a very large mammal, its throat was very small. The little girl stated that Jonah was swallowed by a whale. Irritated, the teacher reiterated that a whale could not swallow a human; it was physically impossible. The little girl said, "When I get to heaven I will ask Jonah".

The teacher asked, "What if Jonah went to hell?"

The little girl replied, "Then you ask him".

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Maiden ewe vaccinations

Greta Baynes

Although tupping may seem a way off, it is time to think about pre-tup vaccinations for young sheep.

Vaccine	How many injections	When to inject
Toxovax	1 injection for life	4 weeks pre-teaser
Campyvax	2 injections 4 weeks apart (option to boost annually)	Ideally finished before teaser out
5 in 1	2 injections 4 weeks apart, boost annually	Booster 10-21 days pre-lamb

TOXOPLASMOSIS

Toxoplasmosis causes abortion during early and mid-pregnancy. It is spread through cat faeces so controlling wild cats is important. This disease can also be spread through semen from infected rams or teasers so vaccination should occur four weeks before the teaser goes out.

This is a live vaccine, it is very fragile and is made to order. Order the required amount **at least** four weeks before you need it.

CAMPYLOBACTER

Campylobacter causes abortion at the beginning and end of pregnancy. Infection occurs through contaminated feed and water or by contact with aborted material. Dispose of any aborted fetuses and placentas.

It is advised to finish the vaccination programme before tupping begins. This vaccine can be given at the same time as Toxovax. Vaccination can be boosted annually pre-tup, however this is usually not necessary in ewes older than two-tooths as these have had true exposure to the disease and have sufficient immunity.

If you suspect a campy outbreak, contact Totally Vets for a diagnosis and options to control this disease.

CLOSTRIDIAL DISEASES

Vaccination for clostridial diseases should be boosted 10-21 days pre-lamb in all ewes to ensure there is protection for the lambs passing through colostrum. This is especially important to protect against pulpy kidney and tetanus which can cause sudden death early in life. Colostral transfer protects the lamb for up to 12 weeks, at which stage their 5-in-1 vaccination programme should begin.

Ideally all animals should have been vaccinated already. If not, begin this now.

Minimise other stresses at the time of vaccination as stress will reduce the immune response to any vaccine.



contra-indicated in calves and foals less than 4 months old because of low safety margins in these classes of stock. Signs of toxicity are depression, muscle weakness, blindness and death.

The instances of drench toxicity have been in calves less than 8-10 weeks of age and in very light condition. Though poor condition was why owners initiated treatment with drenches containing either abamectin or levamisole, it is improbable that worms would have been the

cause of the light condition. With the bulk of the diet being milk up to 8 weeks, it is highly unlikely that worms will be an issue before 12 weeks of age.

When worming calves, check their weight and get the dose as per label instructions. Adding drench to milk allows it to go directly to the abomasum where absorption is far more rapid, and dangerous. Question closely the need for worm treatment in calves less than 12 weeks of age.



After the first herd test

Greg Smith

Spend some time looking at the first herd test (HT) results.

The list of cows with the highest somatic cell count (SCC) identifies animals that are infected and either sub-clinical (most on the list), or clinical but not detected as such by the day of test. The target at the first HT is less than 15% of cows with an individual SCC (ISCC) above 150,000. Nationally the best 25% of herds will have 9% or less above 150,000 at the first HT. How do you compare?

The list can look a bit daunting, however, it is the cows above an ISCC of 500,000 that you need to be concerned with. The cows above 500,000 significantly increase the bulk tank SCC (BTSCC) and also carry the greatest risk of causing new infections in the herd. Cows above 500,000 should be singled out for a rapid mastitis test (RMT) and the following actions taken.

1. Any that have clinical evidence of infection i.e. clots in the milk, should be treated as per usual.
2. Cows with a sub-clinical infection (high ISCC but normal milk) should be managed according to their age and previous history.
 - a. Cows that have been treated in the 30 days before the HT are probably still recovering and can be left. Recently treated cows should be approaching 500,000 or less by 30 days after detection for a cure to be considered as the probable outcome
 - b. Heifers positive to the RMT should have the appropriate quarter/s treated

- c. For cows three years and older check their previous history
 - No previous history then RMT and treat affected quarters
 - High ISCC in a HT from a previous season but returned to a low ISCC before the most recent HT then paddle test and treat
 - History of repeated high ISCC then leave and drycow at the end of the season
 - History of repeated high ISCC and has previously been treated with drycow add to the cull list at the end of the season.

Where the daily consignment BTSCC is high, there is the temptation to treat as many high ISCC cows as possible. Unfortunately the cure rate is poor for mixed age cows with a previous history of high ISCC and clinical infections. At best there is a temporary improvement and the BTSCC is highly likely to return to the previous high levels within six weeks. **(Continued on page 4)**





After the first herd test

(Continued from page 3)

The best approach is to select candidates as outlined above for treatment and hold the remaining worst offenders out of the supply if the risk of grading is high. As the season

progresses, the BTSCC will most likely improve to more manageable levels, allowing cows to be returned to the supply.

Chronically infected cows are responsible for spreading infection within the herd. This risk can be minimised by consistent teat spraying (every milking for the whole of the season) and by ensuring rubberware is in good condition. Effective teat spraying requires that the barrel and the teat end are covered with

spray. If you are not using 1.5 - 2.0L of diluted teat spray per 100 cows at each milking then you are not spraying the cows well enough. In, around and out is the recommended approach.

Finally, rubberware should be changed at least twice per season. If the recommended 2500 milkings is followed, then rubberware is past its best after approximately 125 days or four months.

Early pregnancy testing

Joao Dib

A compact calving is the outcome of a compact mating and retained pregnancies. Early pregnancy testing (PT) is the most accurate way to determine which cows are pregnant and when they conceived, and involves testing groups of cows during and after the end of mating. The strategy eliminates the need for heat detection after the AB period.

The 6-week in calf rate (ICR) is the best indicator of herd reproductive performance, with a target of 78% plus. Early PT allows key mating performance indicators to be evaluated and actions taken while mating is still happening.

HOW DOES EARLY PT HELP?

- Detect cows mated early but not returning to heat (conceive to AI but the embryo dies). This can account for 15-20% of non-returning cows. Allows intervention and re-breeding of these cows within the mating period
- Conception rate and 3-week ICR are known early and assist in deciding your total mating length
- Identifies AB calves from terminal calves
- Measures early pregnancy losses. A normal pregnancy loss after PT at 16-20 weeks after MSD is around 2%. If higher than 2% a reason for abortion (e. g. BVD) should be investigated

- Make culling decisions when feed gets tight or cows start to dry off
- Dry off cows in time to build condition before calving.

WHEN TO DO EARLY PT?

- Test all cows 12-14 weeks after MSD
- Re-test all cows not confirmed pregnant 8-9 weeks after the first test. Also re-test suspect abortions
- If the second test is less than 6-8 weeks after the end of mating, then re-test cows that have not been confirmed pregnant 6 - 8 weeks after the end of mating. Also re-test suspect abortions
- To detect pregnancy losses between tests, all cows need to be tested twice.

Discuss a pregnancy testing strategy that suits your farm with Totally Vets.

What's the goss?

Favourable weather and ample feed in August and September resulted in one of the quietest springs in the living memory of our more senior veterinarians. This is great for farmers

and stock alike. Despite adverse press, it is really satisfying to see stock in better condition than recent years. An October cold snap will hopefully have little impact on a solid start to the productive year.

With lengthening days, many of the Totally Vets team are eagerly taking on physical activities such as twilight tennis, multi-sports

for the more enthusiastic and cycling seems to be particularly popular. So please be careful out there, that cyclist may be one of ours!

Johne's Management Ltd (JML) ran a two-day workshop in June on the management of Johne's disease in farmed deer under New Zealand pastoral conditions. **Barny Askin**, along with 30 other advisors attended and

The fabled 100kg weaner!

Ginny Dodunski

Young deer have their highest potential for growth in the first six months of life. All deer grow more slowly in winter, and some are affected more than others (Eastern reds slow down more than English and hybrids).

So the race is on from now until April to maximise the liveweight of fawns before we are beaten by shortening daylength.

The easiest time to get ahead on pre-winter liveweight in our pastoral system is in the first half of lactation. The energy density and amount of feed offered to hinds is the major driver of fawn growth rates at this time.

Suckling fawn growth rates rarely get above 400g/day on standard ryegrass/clover pastures, but up to 700g/day has been recorded in fawns reared by hinds on high quality chicory/red clover swards.

Recent work at Invermay has shown that fawns suckling hinds on a high energy ration (12.5 MJME/kgDM - comparable to very high quality spring pasture) are able to grow 100g/day faster in the early weeks of lactation compared to those on a lower energy diet (10.3 MJME/kgDM).

As we well know, pasture quality tends to be declining by the time hinds hit peak lactation (6 weeks after birth), but the above data show the gains that can be made by paying attention to pasture quality. Keeping fawning paddocks in a vegetative state, sowing late-heading cultivars and looking at options for alternative forages will all give gains.

It appears that feed energy content is the major driver of hind lactation. Hinds do not increase milk production in response to higher protein levels in feed. In fact 12% crude protein appears to be OK for lactating hinds - this would be too low for ewes or cows. This is useful information when faced with needing to supplement hinds in a dry summer where some of the available options may be low in protein.

Red hinds will increase their intake of feed when grazing lower quality pastures to ensure they meet their daily energy requirements for milk production and maintain condition. This finding is interesting because there is still that

effect of hind dietary energy on fawn growth rate mentioned above - mum can increase her intake, but baby is better off when she is offered a high energy ration.

And there is a limit to what a hind can do when offered rubbish grass or baleage. Poor quality feeds such as these pass more slowly through the gut and there is a point where intake cannot increase enough to get the required energy from the diet. Most baleage is only about 10 MJME/kgDM or worse - from the preceding information it is obvious that it's not a good option for lactating hinds, but one that is commonly seen!

As fawns start to graze, their growth rates become more highly dependant on the quality of the forage on offer, so maintaining feed quality just becomes more important.

All this comes back to what we have been banging on about for years - managing our pastures to maintain quality for as long as possible into the summer, looking at where high quality forage options can fit into the system, and the use of high energy supplements where indicated.

Despite the myth that deer thrive on a bit of rough tucker, when it comes to getting high fawn growth rates on mum, quality wins every time.



was provided with the latest information and software to assimilate all data associated with Johne's disease in deer. If you have concerns about Johne's disease in your deer herd, JML encourages you to contact one of the advisers. Barnya@totallyvets.co.nz or **06 323 6161**.

In November, Totally Vets is hosting two events of interest to sheep and beef farmers. The **Sheep and Beef Seminar** on November

25th and the **Meat and Wool New Zealand Manawatu Monitor Farms finishing farms seminar** series kicks off on November 11th. For further information on these seminars see page 7 and 8.

The **Christmas BBQ** for Totally Vets clients and their staff is scheduled for Friday, December 11th. Festivities start at noon at both Palmerston North and Feilding branches.

We would love to see you at some stage during the afternoon.

Our supplier **Leader Products NZ** has developed their website to allow online shopping with invoicing directed through Totally Vets Ltd. We encourage you to view the website at www.leaderproducts.co.nz and inspect the selection of ear tags and veterinary equipment available.



Bull soundness examination

Craig Dickson

For commercial beef and dairy farmers, ensuring cows get pregnant, stay pregnant and raise a healthy calf impacts directly on profitability. Fertile bulls are obviously an integral part of the getting-cows-pregnant phase.

Every year we have a number of farms that have a poor result at pregnancy testing time. Retrospectively, problems with bulls are found to be at least part of the problem, so let's get more proactive and identify these problem bulls prior to the start of mating.

There are a number of tests that can be performed on bulls aimed at identifying infertile/sub-fertile animals. Each of these testing procedures comes with its own strengths and limitations and the exact

tests used will vary depending on the farms requirements.

1. **General examination of health and soundness.** This typically consists of a visual assessment of general health and condition including soundness and conformation of the limbs and feet.
2. **Examination of the genitalia.** This includes palpation and measurement of the scrotum and examination of the penis, sheath and accessory sex glands by rectal palpation.
3. **Service test.** The bull is observed mating a restrained heifer or cow to ensure that mounting and intromission are performed appropriately. During this test an assessment of libido may be made by measuring the number of mounts in a given timeframe.
4. **Semen collection and evaluation.** A sample of semen is collected and the semen's movement (motility) and appearance (morphology) are analysed under the microscope. There are various methods of semen collection. At Totally

Vets we use an electro-ejaculator which uses a controlled voltage to stimulate ejaculation.

There have been some New Zealand-based surveys into the results of bull soundness examinations. From these it has been shown that the proportion of bulls that fail range from 13-19%.

A testing procedure including a general examination, service testing and scrotal measurement will identify most of these sub-fertile bulls. There appears to be around 2.5% of bulls that will only be identified by incorporating semen evaluation into the above testing.

Components of the bull soundness examination are subject to interpretation and there will be some animals that fall into the category of temporarily unsound and may need retesting.

At Totally Vets we have the equipment and the expertise to deliver a complete bull soundness examination service. Give your vet a ring and we can discuss your bull testing requirements and avoid any nasty surprises come pregnancy testing time.

Equine newsletter launch

Following feedback from various groups of clients, Totally Vets is proud to bring you an equine and lifestyle-specific newsletter, to be published quarterly.

With articles written by our team of equine vets, and contributions from outside experts, our aim is to provide you with relevant, current information on the various aspects of equine health and management along with helpful tips and hints for small-block farmers.

The first edition will be the December/January issue, which will be distributed in early December.

If you are an equine client or lifestyle-block owner and already receiving a copy of VetNotes, it will be replaced with this new publication.

If you wish to continue to receive VetNotes as well as the new newsletter, please contact either **Gaye** on **06 356 5011** or **Hayley** on **06 323 6161**.

VetNotes, the production animal newsletter, Vetmates, the small animal newsletter and the new equine and lifestyle newsletter are all available in electronic form, hard copy or via our website www.totallyvets.co.nz

Heifer management... or future-proofing your herd!

Peter Aitken

"A few lighter heifers won't make a difference to herd fertility and besides, mine are all in pretty good nick!"...

The above comment based on the 'eye-o-meter' assessment of young stock is a common one, and as a general rule, most folks aren't far off in their assessments of stock condition.

So the following questions must be asked: Can you guarantee that what you see with your eye is true? Would you gamble your mating performance on your eye, or the future potential lifetime milk production of those heifers on a look over the fence?

The reproductive performance and milk production potential of replacement heifers is directly related to growth rate and liveweight at first mating and calving. Calves and heifers must be reared to achieve liveweight targets, otherwise their first calving will be delayed, liveweight at calving will be too low and

fertility during the next mating period reduced. Well-grown heifers will produce more milk in their first lactation, compete better with mature cows and will survive longer in the herd.

Measuring liveweight should be done at least every three months but more regularly will allow you to make changes more quickly if required. Scales are by far the best option and also the quickest. You should aim to weigh heifers at the same time during the day or let them stand off for a couple of hours before weighing to remove the variation in weights due to gut-fill changes.

How much should they weigh? In order to work this out for your heifers, weigh at least 10 of the 6-8 year old cows in the herd around April/May when they are in body condition score 4.0-5.0. These animals should be at their mature liveweight and should give you a good guide of what you are aiming for. Alternatively, you could use the formula in the **InCalf book** to calculate mature liveweight from the heifer's liveweight breeding value (Lwt BV). With your mature liveweight target established, the **targets for the heifers** are:

- 30% of mature liveweight by 6 months
- 60% of mature liveweight by 15 months
- 90% of mature liveweight by 22 months.

Therefore, if the mature liveweight of your cows is 500kg then by six months your heifers should weigh 150kg, by nine months they should weigh 300kg and by 22 months they should be at 450kg.

The calving pattern of your first calvers will provide you with an indicator of how successful your heifer management has been. Top farmers achieve levels of 75% calved by week three of the calving period and 92% by week six. It is important to note that if your planned start of calving for the heifers is before the main herd, then your figures should be even higher. For example, if you calve two weeks earlier than the herd then your targets should be 87% by week three and 98% by week six of the herd's calving period. Totally Vets' technician, Guy Haynes, can help by coming out to weigh your heifers to assist with monitoring their progress.

Another area for assessment is the three-week submission rate for your first calvers - the target should be 90%!

Some other things to remember for the young stock are:

- Put in place a parasite control programme
- Don't forget clostridial/leptospirosis booster vaccinations to get them in sync with the main herd
- Protect them from facial eczema during the late summer/autumn period
- Make sure all trace elements are taken care of!

If you have any questions or would like to discuss your heifer rearing, please contact one of the large animal vets at Totally Vets.



Sheep and beef seminar From Calgary to Kimbolton

Making the most of this year's high lambing percentage

WHERE

Oroua clubrooms

WHEN

25th November 2009

Coffee and tea from 3pm

Seminar 3.30pm - 5.30pm

Beer and BBQ afterwards

TOPICS FOR THE DAY

- The latest from Scandinavia and Canada courtesy of Ginny and Trevor
- Creep feeding - experiences in the field
- Achieving optimum lamb weaning weights
- Practical aspects of B12 (some free sampling available)
- Interesting case presentation
- Animal Health Plans - how we can help you
- Tail-end ewe study - Trial results so far.

The first seminar for the new Finishing Farm Programme 2009-2011!!

'A feast of Beef Cattle Finishing'

WHEN

Wednesday 11th November

TIME

10am - 4pm

Lunch and refreshments provided

WHERE

Feilding Yellows Clubrooms

Corner of Drake St & Wellington St

TOPICS FOR THE DAY

- Getting it right at the rumen level
- Lessons from lot feeding
- Lessons from dairy systems
- Feed conversion efficiency and the cost of production on grass
- Cell grazing systems
- Animal health and the monitoring that matters.

For further enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact:

Greta Baynes (06) 323 6161

or Charmaine Robertson (06) 323 6161

GretaMMF@totallyvets.co.nz

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MEAT & WOOL

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