



VET notes

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT ANIMALS ON YOUR FARM

DECEMBER 2012
JANUARY 2013

Holiday Hours

Feilding PNth			
17 Dec	Mon	8 - 5	8 - 5
18 Dec	Tue	8 - 6	8 - 5
19 Dec	Wed	8 - 7	8 - 5
20 Dec	Thu	8 - 5	8 - 5
21 Dec	Fri	8 - 5	8 - 5
22 Dec	Sat	9 - 2	Closed
23 Dec	Sun	Closed	Closed
24 Dec	Mon	8 - 5	8 - 5
25 Dec	Tue	Closed	Closed
26 Dec	Wed	Closed	Closed
27 Dec	Thu	8 - 5	8 - 5
28 Dec	Fri	8 - 5	8 - 5
29 Dec	Sat	9 - 2	Closed
30 Dec	Sun	Closed	Closed
31 Dec	Mon	8 - 5	8 - 5
1 Jan	Tue	Closed	Closed
2 Jan	Wed	Closed	Closed
3 Jan	Thu	8 - 5	8 - 5
4 Jan	Fri	8 - 5	8 - 5
5 Jan	Sat	9 - 2	Closed
6 Jan	Sun	Closed	Closed

Normal hours resume on Monday
7 January 2013.

**Please note we have a 24-hour
emergency service on 06 323 6161
or 06 356 5011.**



Farewell Nigel

Trevor Cook

The end of December marks the end of one era and the beginning of another.

Nigel steps down as Executive Director of Totally Vets Ltd after five years in that role and before that, for twelve years in the same role for Manawatu Veterinary Services. His influence on both businesses has been massive and his contribution to the veterinary world as a clinician and as a veterinary business leader is legendary.

On 14th December, Totally Vets will have its annual client and staff Christmas function at both the Feilding and Awapuni clinics. Nigel and the team welcome the opportunity to catch up with you at these functions. There will also be the opportunity to meet Nigel's replacement, Chris Carter, as he takes over the leading role. Below is a farewell message from Nigel as he moves into a different and exciting stage of his life.

"A huge thank you to all of the many wonderful people I have had the pleasure and privilege of

working with over the years I have been part of the Totally Vets and Manawatu Vets teams. In so many ways, it has been a hugely rewarding career for me - entirely due to people. The team I have worked with are such fabulous people - talented, focused on others, and so giving. The clients I have worked with have been amazing people - open and warm; very welcoming - just a pleasure to be a part of your enterprises. Thank you all.

Leaving this business that has been my passion for so long has been made so much easier with Chris Carter coming in to replace me. You will find him a very fair, measured and responsive person; he has a toolbox full of very useful and practical tools; and has a similar passion for our profession and industries.

My very best wishes go to all our clients - may you gain great enjoyment from your business and families. To my team mates - thank you for the journey - it has been a blast! You rock!"

Nigel





Totally Vets current stock health

Dairy

In general, feed levels this spring have been good and cows have cycled well. As the seasonal forecast is predicting a normal to dry summer, careful feed planning will be needed to safeguard herd production and young stock performance.

Ensure all calves have had 2 leptospirosis plus clostridial vaccinations by now. Plan

to give an important 3rd lepto/clostridial booster within 6 months. This should then also line up well with your herd's yearly autumn vaccination.

Look out for ill-thrift in young stock - now is the time to have your worm control and drench monitoring programme in place.

Contact your veterinarian if you'd like to discuss a customised animal health plan.



HA HA

British understatement

A United States Marine walked the entire length of the crowded train looking for a seat. The only seat left was taken by a well dressed, middle-aged, French woman's female poodle. The war-weary Marine asked, 'Ma'am, may I have that seat?'

The French woman sniffed and said to no one in particular: 'Americans are so rude. My little Fifi is using that seat.'

The Marine walked the train again, but the only seat left was under Fifi. 'Please, ma'am. May I sit down? I'm very tired.'

She snorted, 'Not only are you Americans rude, you are also arrogant!'

This time the Marine just picked up the dog, tossed it out the train window, and sat down. The woman shrieked, 'Someone must defend my honour! This American should be put in his place!'

An English gentleman spoke up, 'Sir, you Americans seem to have a penchant for doing the wrong thing. You hold the fork in the wrong hand. You drive your cars on the wrong side of the road. And now, sir, you seem to have thrown the wrong bitch out the window.'



Check your rams for brucellosis

Barry Askin

Every season, we have to deal with several outbreaks of brucellosis in several regions of our practice.

Some outbreaks result in entire ram flocks being culled because of a very high infection rate. Others take longer to get under control because of a lower level of infection within the ram flock and a slower rate of spread. Such cases often require multiple blood tests several weeks apart before the disease can be eradicated from the ram flock.

Over the last few seasons, the number of you contacting us about checking rams has increased, which is very encouraging. Traditionally rams have always been checked prior to mating. The problem with this is that if a problem is identified, there is often insufficient time to test and cull rams and ensure a Brucella ovis-free flock prior to mating. The disease can then spread like

wildfire during tupping, which can have dramatic effects on scanning percentages.

Your rams can be checked at any time and any infection that spreads during the previous mating season should by then be detectable. Outside the breeding season, when rams are sexually inactive, it can be much easier to eradicate the disease with minimal blood tests.

The important things to remember are:

- Always purchase rams from a Brucella ovis-free source (rams purchased should at least have been palpated)
- Avoid sharing or borrowing rams
- A community approach works best for preventing spread of disease within an area - talk to your neighbours and have a plan
- The disease is not carried from season to season in the ewe flock
- There is no treatment

If you would like your rams palpated in good time, please ring Hayley at the Feilding branch on 06 323 6161 and she will arrange a visit that suits you, even if it's in the New Year. If your dogs are also due for their vaccinations, Hayley can book this out at the same time.

Totally Vets prints **Vet Notes** on paper using FSC certified mixed source pulp from Well Managed forests and other controlled sources. The paper is produced under an environmental management system ISO 14001.





This summer, watch for polioencephalomalacia - (vitamin B1 deficiency). Any signs of depression, 'star gazing' or lack of coordination need urgent treatment. Like last year, watch for pinkeye in stock. Early detection, isolation and treatment of this highly contagious disease is vital.

Bloat prevention should already be in place on many farms. Preventative planning for facial eczema should be included this month. Our spore count email monitoring service will start in the New Year - if you would like

to subscribe to this, please give us a ring or contact us through our website.

Sheep & Beef

Last year's lamb crops in terms of scanning percentages and survival rates were high. This has challenged many farms to be able to manage their grazing stock in order to finish lambs in time. More lambs on the property beyond March will lead to other problems of feed allocation and increasing parasite pasture larval challenge. This is a good time of year to be talking to us about parasite prevention programmes as well as faecal

egg count reduction tests (FECRTs) to test drench efficacy.

Lambs going for slaughter present a great opportunity to monitor trace elements particularly cobalt (Vitamin B12) and selenium levels. Trace elements, such as copper, selenium and cobalt, are essential for the overall wellbeing of animals. With the use of diagnostic aids (soil and herbage testing, blood sampling and liver analysis), quantitative laboratory results should allow us to make informative decisions on whether supplementation is required or not.

The cost of not using a fully effective drench

Trevor Cook

We know very well how much worms depress liveweight gains of young animals.

A study in the New Zealand Veterinary Journal showed that if a drench that was only 90% effective was used on lambs instead of a fully effective one, the lambs grew 20% slower, were 2.8kg lighter late in the summer, had a 14% low carcass value and were of \$20 less value at slaughter. If this cost is extended to include the accumulated cost of the ewe lambs not growing so fast, and the impact that this has on

their ewe hogget lambing performance and then on their two tooth performance, for a 2000-ewe flock this amounts to \$20,000. The real significance is that at 90% effectiveness, there is absolutely no outward sign that something is not right. In fact, even for drenches that are only 70% effective, there is unlikely to be any outward signs that would trigger concern.

On many farms there will be continuing weight gain costs because the drench being used will not be fully effective. How do we know this? Because we know that most farmers have not had a drench test done on their farms. Unless a drench test is done, there is no way of knowing what drenches are fully effective on your farm. Waiting until there are signs of drench failure to appear means there will have been a massive production cost. We also know there is a lot of drench resistance out there from the small number of tests we have done. There are farms in this district on which even the triple-

combination drenches are not fully effective. So assumptions cannot be made.

The cost of a drench test varies between \$1200 and \$1600. This is insignificant when compared to the cost of not using a fully effective drench. A test entails keeping about 100 lambs aside in the early summer and allowing them to develop quite high faecal egg counts. This lamb group is then divided up into five or more smaller groups, each of which is drenched with one of the test drenches. Faecal egg counts are taken at the start and ten days later, and the change in the count is the measure of how effective the drench had been. It pays to test all of the drench type options, including the combinations, because then there is absolute certainty over which drenches are best to use.

Give us a call to book a test in for this summer.





Facial eczema - prevention is paramount

Helen Mather

The ideal conditions for facial eczema (FE) are grass minimum temperatures above 12°C and moisture in the form of rain or high humidity. The environment on-farm makes a difference as well with north-facing paddocks, shelter (prevents drying) and plenty of dead matter (litter) in the pasture base - i.e. close to the ground - creating 'hot spots'.

WHAT ANIMALS ARE AT RISK?

Fallow deer, sheep and alpacas are the most susceptible, followed by dairy cattle (including weaners), beef cattle and red deer, with goats being the least at risk. Horses are not affected.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

The most obvious symptoms of FE are due to photosensitivity: restlessness; shade-seeking behaviour; and reddening of non-pigmented skin

and areas without much hair/wool cover. The onset of photosensitivity is usually preceded by a drop in milk yield in affected dairy cows. Alpacas are stoic animals and do not readily display discomfort; a dead animal may be the first sign of a problem.

SPORE COUNTS

Climatic conditions and regular pasture spore-counting are the only way to accurately guess the onset of an FE-risk period. As spore counts can vary immensely from paddock to paddock, it is highly recommended that you have spore counts done on your own pastures at regular intervals. Visit www.totallyvets.co.nz or ask at either the Feilding or Palmerston North clinics for more information on spore-counting.

TREATMENT AND PREVENTION

Zinc-dosing is not a cure. To be effective, the zinc must be in the animal before pastures become dangerous.

Take preventative measures before spore counts get too high. Counts above 25,000/g are dangerous; however lower counts are not completely risk-free. A few young spores may be more dangerous than lots of old spores.

The common methods of prevention are:

1. Slow-release capsules ('Time Capsules')
2. Zinc sulphate in the drinking water
3. Zinc oxide in the feed or by drenching

4. Grazing management and crops

5. Pasture fungicide spray

Capsules are best suited for use in sheep and where water treatment is not possible. Totally Vets can administer these for those not familiar with their use.

Zinc sulphate in the drinking water is commonly used through an inline dispenser or header tank. Water treatment is not as effective for sheep as it is for cattle.

Pastures that have been well grazed in spring and early summer will have less dead matter and provide safer grazing in the autumn. Legumes and plantain are safer than grasses. Topping paddocks in summer increases the FE risk later on.

Lowering stocking densities and leaving higher residuals reduces the risk of animals grazing down to the pasture base.

Fungicide sprays must be applied before spore counts rise and have no effect on already dangerous pasture.

Regional spore counts from sentinel farms are updated weekly on our website.

For further information on dosages and managing different preventative measures, visit www.totallyvets.co.nz or contact Totally Vets.



What's the goss?

On the 27th October **Lindsay and Elizabeth's** son **Mike** married the lovely **Jess Collinge**.

It was a wonderful day of celebration for the families and even though their 'co-dependant' dogs were banned from the occasion, they were still represented on the wedding cake - but we

did hear from a very reliable source that the dogs still managed to accompany them on their honeymoon.

More sporting accomplishments this month with Totally Vets staff well represented at this year's Tour de Manawatu: **Christine (7th)**, **Charmaine (5th)**, **Marg (3rd)**, and **Suzanne (22nd)** all took part in the 116km or 45km cycling race. **Ryan** completed the October Auckland marathon (his first) in 4:48:11, in

Sheep vaccinations

Barry Askin

While most may have finished preparing for breeding, it is worthwhile thinking ahead to next year about vaccination management strategies you may wish to implement. What follows is a brief reminder about Toxovax, Campylovexin/ Campyvox-4 and Androvax/ Ovastim.

TOXOVAX

Toxoplasmosis in sheep has a seasonal pattern of infection which peaks in April/May/June. It makes good sense to vaccinate ewes/hoggets well in advance of this peak to ensure that maximum protection from the vaccine is achieved at the time it is needed. There is no benefit in leaving vaccination closer to tupping and it may in fact compromise the results.

One injection will protect the ewe for life. This will almost certainly apply to ewes that receive their first vaccination as a 2-tooth. If however, hoggets are vaccinated for toxo then many things such as worm burden, pneumonia, footrot, puberty, struggling to make mating weight etc can affect their ability to mount a good immune response following vaccination. For this reason, it is worth considering vaccinating such animals again as 2-tooths rather than relying on one shot for life if you feel that they were in any way compromised as hoggets.

Vaccinate ewes and hoggets at least one month before the teaser rams join. We recommend not vaccinating hoggets until the end of January

at the earliest but any time after this should be OK. Minimise other stressors such as worms at the time of vaccination. The vaccine is very fragile and once mixed, needs to be used almost immediately. Do not use methylated spirits to clean or soak your needles prior to use, as this will inactivate the vaccine.

Toxovax is an intramuscular injection and therefore must not be given under the skin. Inappropriate handling or incorrect administration of this vaccine can result in failure of protection in the face of a toxoplasmosis challenge. Do not vaccinate rams with this product. Due to the fact that Toxovax is a live vaccine and has a very short half-life, it needs to be ordered 4 weeks before delivery to the Clinic, so remember to contact us well ahead of the planned date of administration.

CAMPYLOVEXIN/CAMPYVAX 4

These two vaccines are very similar except that Campyvox 4 contains an additional strain of *Campylobacter* - *C. jejuni* - which has been linked to some cases of abortion.

Campylobacter is the most commonly diagnosed cause of sheep abortions. Apart from the abortions that we see, it can also be responsible for lambs born alive but weak and dying after a few days. Evidence is mounting that it can be responsible for losses seen as abnormal foetuses at scanning.

Two vaccinations 4-8 weeks apart are required in the first year. The second one should be given prior to or at ram joining. If the first shot is received as a hogget, then a subsequent booster as a 2-tooth prior to tupping may be advisable, depending on farm history. There is some evidence that there is a return on investment when all the flock is boosted each year.

Where vaccination has never been used before, the entire flock should receive two shots in the first year, thereafter only the first-time-to-the-ram females get two inoculations.



We have seen cases of toxo and campy in the last few years in 2-tooths and 4-tooths that have been bought in. Do not assume that these animals have been vaccinated previously and consider their inclusion in a comprehensive vaccination programme.

Campylovexin and Campyvox 4 are held in stock, so you do not need to pre-order them; however, if you would like us to put some aside for you, please just give us a ring.

ANDROVAX/OVASTIM

Androvax and Ovastim are vaccines that cause the production of antibodies which act on ewes' ovaries resulting in the release of more mature eggs. The average increase in lambs docked from vaccinated ewes is 20% (range 10-40%).

The decision on whether or not to use these vaccines is a complicated one and needs careful consideration. Prior to use, there are several management strategies to be taken into account in relation to managing increased numbers of lambs, the effect on the ewes of carrying multiple lambs, the effect on lambs of being a twin and the effect on feed requirements. Please chat to one of our vets if you are considering using either Androvax or Ovastim.

calm sunny conditions. He is rapt with his time but slightly disgruntled that his older sister Jocelyn beat him by 7 minutes - we understand he's up for another race as he now has a score to settle!

We have a few very sad goodbyes in December, with both **Nigel and Paul** retiring at the end of the month. As Trevor has said on the front page, it's the end of an era and the beginning of a new one - it's still so hard to say goodbye though! We will miss you both so much and

know you will both make the most of your retirement. We will also farewell **Julie Slattery**, who is relocating to Queenstown in January with her husband Paul and boys Max and Will. Julie has worked for Totally Vets and previously Manawatu Vets for a whopping 14 years. We will miss you Jules and wish you and your family all the best in your new life down South. Stay in touch!

Finally a huge well done to **Rachel Humphrey**, Wattlegrave Farm, for her accomplishments at

the Royal Show in Hamilton. Rachel actually went up to the show to judge in the wool breed sheep section but came home with 17 ribbons, four rosettes, two trophies and a gold medal from her meat-bred sheep as well as two fleeces! Her results were Champion Dorset Down Ram, Reserve Champion Dorset Down Ewe, Champion South Suffolk Ewe, Champion white fleece - Supreme Champion Fleece and Royal Agricultural Gold Medal - and Champion black and coloured fleece.



Latest drench study results

Trevor Cook

The latest in a string of studies by Dave Leathwick at AgResearch shows that pour-on and injectable macrocyclic lactone (ML) drenches (such as Ivomec) do not work very well.

The same drenches given orally work very well. Although pour-on and injectable MLs were fully effective against *Ostertagia*, their

poor effectiveness against *Cooperia* compared to when given orally demonstrated that, when delivered by these routes, they get to the worms in lower concentrations. In fact, they were only in the low fifty percent level of effectiveness.

The cost to production is huge if the drench being used is not fully effective. For example,

Early pregnancy-testing

Fraser Abernethy

Lowering your empty rate from 12% to 8% could earn you an additional \$12,000 pa. Increasing your 6-week in-calf rate from 65% to 72% could earn you \$8400 pa. Or an increase in total operating profit of \$20,400 pa (figures based on a 300-cow herd).

Herd reproduction is severely limiting production and profitability on many New Zealand dairy farms. Factors that limit good reproduction performance are well recognised. The InCalf model is an excellent tool for identifying and monitoring these limiting factors in your herd.

The key benefits of using the InCalf model to achieve a successful reproduction performance are:

- Better understanding of herd reproduction: better decisions

- An improved 6-week in-calf rate: increases days in milk
- A reduced empty rate: reduces herd wastage

Early pregnancy-testing allows accurate aging of pregnancy which produces these benefits:

- Accurate calculation of 6-week in-calf rate
- Early culling of empty cows if feed becomes short
- Early drying-off of thin or early calving cows
- Milking later-calving cows for longer
- Knowing which cows to send away for grazing and for how long
- Identification of late-calving cows for induction or culling
- Allocating cows to the springer mob next season
- Assessing pregnancy losses e.g. if BVD or other diseases are suspected

Early pregnancy-testing involves pregnancy-testing cows 5-6 weeks after the end of AI - that's now - and then rechecking the non-pregnant (not detected) cows 6 weeks after mating finishes.

As well as the many management benefits of early pregnancy-testing, the ability



to accurately measure key performance indicators is vital to monitoring and improving herd reproductive performance. The six-week in-calf rate is a key driver of reproductive performance. This is an indicator of how quickly cows get in calf after the start of mating and is a statistic that all farmers should know and monitor for their herd. The InCalf target for a 6-week in-calf rate is 78%.

Clients enrolled with Infonet can enter pregnancy-testing results directly into MINDA using a tough-book touch-screen computer on-farm. Infonet allows us to bring up the mating dates of each cow at the time of pregnancy-testing. We can then produce a pregnancy rate graph and Fertility Focus Report to look at reproductive statistics quickly and easily. Other benefits of Infonet recording include reduced recording errors and time saved as the data are uploaded to MINDA immediately.



using a drench on calves/RIs that is 90% effective will result in yearling cattle that are 20kg to 40kg lighter so have \$70 to \$100 less value. There will be no outward sign that this loss is occurring. So doing a drench test to find out which drenches are still fully effective (using only oral drenches) is the only way to get the best results. We know that there are farms about on which the standard combination drenches are not fully effective. Only testing will give this information. The long-term consequence of drenches not reaching their target in the

highest concentration possible is that it encourages the development of worms that are resistant to the drench. So while the injectable drench and the pour-on removed *Ostertagia*, the study showed that lower levels of drug must be reaching this worm compared to if the drug was given orally. The study also indicated that the variability of the effectiveness was much greater with the injectable and pour-on drenches when compared to the orals. This further adds to the potential for the drenches given this way to select for resistance.

For weaner cattle systems, it is a matter of leaving them not drenched a bit longer than usual to allow the faecal egg counts to get higher. Aiming for the autumn is probably the best. For beef weaners, the test really can only be done in the month or two after weaning. So maybe starting with calves at weaning could be the best. As for sheep, it is a ten-day test with sampling and drenching at the start and sampling again ten days later (see Trevor's article on page 3).

Zoonoses

Paul Wiseman

Definition: those diseases and infections which are naturally transmitted between animals with a back bone (vertebrates) and man.

Because of the risk of zoonoses, anyone working with or handling animals need to know about such diseases and the precautions they must take to minimise the risk of infection. People who have close contact with a large number of animals are at relatively high risk of contracting a zoonotic disease.

Compared with other countries, the numbers of zoonoses known to be endemic in New Zealand are comparatively few. Here are just some of them.

Leptospirosis is one of the most widespread occupationally acquired zoonoses in the world. New Zealand has one of the highest rates of human leptospirosis in the world, despite years of vaccination in cattle. There are still around 100 cases of lepto reported each year. It is estimated that the number of unreported or undiagnosed cases are actually 40-50 times higher. Farmers account for around 70% of human cases. Almost 60% of notified cases require hospitalisation. 30% of dairy herds in New Zealand pass lepto in their urine - even in vaccinated herds! A number of the herds tested were in the Manawatu.

The first four or five signs of leptospirosis in humans are very similar to influenza. The recovery time is a major difference. Most people recover from influenza in 4-5 days while lepto persists for longer. Does this help explain the number of unreported or undiagnosed cases?

HUMAN EFFECTS OF

Influenza	Leptospirosis
Fever	Fever
Bodyaches	Bodyaches
Headaches	Headaches
Fatigue	Profound fatigue
Vomiting/diarrhoea	Vomiting/nausea
Cough	Sore eyes
Sore throat	Pregnancy loss
Runny or stuffy nose	Organ failure/death
	Ranges from no signs to death

Vaccination of cattle, sheep and deer is an integral part of preventing the transmission of lepto to humans. Vaccinating "early", starting at 6-12 weeks of age, before animals become infected is essential to reducing the spread of lepto in urine.

Cryptosporidiosis is the second most common cause of calf scours in New Zealand. Crypto is usually seen in calves between 4 days and 4 weeks of age. It is transmitted to humans by direct contact with animal faeces, contamination of water or food. Adults can become very ill, although it's more common in children, vets and farmers. Good sanitation and hygiene are essential when handling calves.

Campylobacter exists in the gastrointestinal tract of ruminants, poultry and

other domestic animals and causes them no harm. These animals act as reservoirs and are ultimate sources for most human infections. Humans are infected via the oral route, with the infective dose being relatively low. It causes diarrhoea with abdominal cramps.

Salmonellosis in humans is a gastrointestinal infection associated with eating faeces-contaminated food. There are more than 2,200 types of *Salmonella*, some of which cause disease in calves and mature cattle, though many animals may carry *Salmonella* and show no sign. Stress, such as transportation and crowding provide suitable conditions for *Salmonella* to multiply in such carrier animals. This is the source of contamination of carcasses for human consumption. *Salmonella* can multiply in many food products kept at room temperature. Therefore salmonellosis is often a food-transmitted disease in many animals, including man. It is not primarily a zoonosis associated with direct animal contact.

Ringworm is common in cattle. The young are more susceptible than older cattle. Cats, dogs, cattle, horses, sheep and rodents are the most common source of human infection. Some types of ringworm destroy the hair, leaving bald patches.

There are a number of ways by which animal diseases can be transmitted to humans. Transmission may be by direct contact with animals or by indirect contact. Indirect contact implies there is an intermediary step between the infected animal and humans. This may involve transmission via fomites or through biological or mechanical vectors.

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Totally Vets Clients & Staff Christmas BBQ

When **Friday 14 December**

Where **25 Manchester Street, Feilding &
189 Pioneer Highway, Palmerston North**

What time **From noon onwards**



Stop in for some good food and a Christmas drink

Plus

Win a prize and help us support Relay For Life
by purchasing a raffle ticket in our fabulous
Christmas Raffle