



VET notes

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT ANIMALS ON YOUR FARM

MARCH 2014



Amos and Maddox Heron with Pa-Char.

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Filled with stories, pictures and links to great articles, keep up-to-date with what's happening in our Companion Animal Hospital.

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Pa-Char beats the odds!

Julie Rush

This story I think will interest all horse owners... the tale of how my seven year old miniature horse survived tetanus.

On the 3rd of December 2013 I thought Pa-Char had grass staggers so talked to our vet, Joao. We thought it was too early for that to be the case. Three days later, I called and asked, as Joao was away, if Craig could come and check her over. As a result of this examination the frightening diagnosis of tetanus was made!

In horses and humans tetanus can be fatal. Having seen the disease in other animals (and also shockingly in a human many years back!) neither Craig nor I had seen it in a horse. The

symptoms are stiff legs and lock jaw so she could not eat and it sounded like she had a mouth full of bubble gum!

The advice was to inject her twice a day with Intracillin®, so Pa-Char soon got to hate the sight of me! She also had a shot of tetanus antitoxin (TAT). The next five days I virtually slept with her... I gave her Keri apple drink mixing in Raro navel orange, glucose and salt. She could just drink this and after a few days extra vitamins were mixed in as well. Two and a half packs of Intracillin®, another TAT injection, six days after the first, and heaps of fruit juice later she started to eat grass again! Slowly but surely she improved, even kicking her mate Goldie when I fed them, who had stuck right by her throughout.

She is still hard-fed just palm kernel dampened with a vitamin molasses, some hage every day and has a coat like glass. Our Pa-Char is one tuff little nut that we are all SO glad is still around.

See page 2 for vaccination advice.



Totally Vets current stock health

General livestock health has been pretty good with very few out-of-the-ordinary conditions having been reported. Despite this, the season has been slowly shaping up to be challenging in regards to facial eczema... There has been plenty of moisture, excess feed and temperatures that all support fungal growth. So seriously consider supplementation and the

use of boluses on livestock, particularly those not "under your eye" (for example dry cows and yearlings).

Dairy, Sheep & Beef

Feed quality has been an issue and hence, despite dry matter (DM) availability, the nutrients available to stock not so plentiful.

Horses and tetanus

Tetanus is caused by Clostridial bugs that are present everywhere in the soil and many animals (sheep, cattle, goats, pigs, alpacas etc) are often routinely vaccinated to protect them from it.

Please note that to be fully protected against tetanus, horses require tetanus **TOXOID** which is different from tetanus **ANTITOXIN (TAT)**.

A full vaccination course for horses consists of a series of three injections... an initial shot, a booster after four weeks, and then one a year later. From then on one vaccination every five years will ensure ongoing protection. The TAT shot **ONLY GIVES THREE WEEKS** protection and is generally used in unvaccinated horses at times of risk (for example if your horse has a foot abscess, wound, or at foaling). If your horse has a wound and not had a toxoid booster within the last 12 months, an additional toxoid booster may be recommended by your vet.

The cost of vaccination is minimal compared to the potential risks so call your vet to discuss a vaccination and animal health plan for your horse today!

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Totally Vets 10th Annual Fishing Competition

Saturday 12th April 2014

Guy Haynes

Back in 2004, after the February floods, Totally Vets staff thought it would be a good idea to offer some relief and support to our clients by organising a surf casting and boat rod fishing competition out of Wanganui.

The original day was planned around comradery, fishing stories and a general get together over a BBQ and beer at the end of the day.

The first competition had 12 surfcasters and 25 clients boat rod fishing, with Ancare (now Merial-Ancare) being the major sponsor, a role in which they have continued to offer their invaluable support through to the present day. Additional generous sponsorship from other companies allowed us to have five major fishing categories in which participants could compete, in both surfcasting and boat rod fishing, as well as lucky draw prizes for the rest of us!

After two years the surfcasting numbers dwindled and a decision was made to cancel



that area of the competition. Through to this year we have only had one day cancelled due to bad weather and even on that day we still had a huge turnout of clients for the prize-giving back at Murray's Irish Pub in Feilding. The original entry fee still stands, which covers the end of day BBQ (run as a fund-raiser for the Wanganui Fishing Club and Coast Guard) and also contributes a small amount towards prizes.

The competition has now grown to around 35 boats and 120 clients enjoying a great day on the water competing for all the fantastic prizes from our very generous sponsors... Put this day on your calendar (and while you're at it, also add our **Golf Competition, Tuesday March 18th 2014 at 11.00am!**) and join us to celebrate the 10th year of this competition... Fill in your entry forms at any of our three branches today. May your lines be tight and we look forward to seeing you!



Check it closely and adjust pasture allowance to keep production and liveweight up, especially as cows need to maintain or gain condition before dry-off and ewes have to be in good shape before joining with rams.

Barbers pole is unlikely to become a significant problem from now on BUT with the current and past climatic conditions, Trichostrongylus are likely to be a big problem in the coming autumn. Bear that in mind when planning drenching but remember animals have to be

in good shape and well fed so that they can withstand a challenge.

Deer

Remember to consider potential lung worm challenge as you prepare to wean. Again, minimise stress, plan feeding well, supplement if necessary and choose carefully the best time to wean. The key is to support the developing immune system by good nutrition and minimal stress so animals have resilience.

Horses

Yes, many farmers have horses! Now would be an appropriate time to get a selenium test done, check worm burden by doing a faecal egg count, ensure feet are in top shape before winter and most importantly **get their teeth looked at**... You will be amazed at how bad teeth can be before your good loyal horse will show signs of dental disease!



Extending our Product Range

Chris Carter

The drench market whether it be for oral products, pour-ons or injectables, has rapidly changed over the last two years. New companies and products have come in to the market, prices have decreased while the complexity of managing NZ's largest production animal health problem, internal & external parasites, has increased. Products that were once central to on-farm control treatments are now promotional items and we are turning to more complex formulations containing either multiple or new actives.

This month we have announced the addition of a new product range for Totally Vets which

is being manufactured by the NZ owned company Alleva. From their product range we are selecting products which bring additional benefits. Alleva's BOSS® range comes as both a pour-on and an injectable for use in cattle.

BOSS® Pour-On is a combination of abamectin and levamisole in a new formulation system incorporating DMI-SORB™, a combination of materials designed to enhance absorption of the active ingredients through the skin. The formulation also contains a unique anti-run material to help prevent run-off which can be a problem with pour-on formulations. As a result of these formulation enhancements BOSS® pour-on is less variable in its absorption. Put simply DMI-SORB™, keeps the product concentrated to the areas it was applied (less run-off or spread) and assists in getting the actives through the hair to the skin for absorption into the body. BOSS® Pour-On is effective against gastrointestinal worms (including mature and immature Cooperia), lungworm and biting & sucking lice. The dose rate is 1ml per 20kg. Withholding periods are 42 days for meat and 35 days milk.

BOSS® Injection contains three actives; ivermectin, eprinomectin and levamisole and

can be used in cattle three months of age or older (minimum live weight 106kg). Clinical studies performed in NZ demonstrate that this product is highly effective against the common parasite species present on NZ farms. Efficacy levels of greater than 99% against all species were obtained in the total worm count studies undertaken with this product. This level of efficacy gives peace of mind for parasite control and helps to delay the onset of parasite resistance. The product is effective in the control of endectocide resistant Cooperia species and species resistant to benzimidazole drenches. BOSS® Injection provides the added benefit of controlling biting lice, sucking lice and lungworm. The packs don't need to be refrigerated and the dose rate is 1ml per 35kg with withholding periods of 21 days for meat and 35 days milk.

As for all products containing levamisole it is very important that the correct dose is calculated prior to administration to avoid overdosing.

Alleva's BOSS® range will sit alongside the complete range of Merial-Ancare products in our clinics. We hope you enjoy the choice in the knowledge that we stand behind their technical performance.



Mastitis and Drying Off

Craig Dickson

As far as mastitis control in your herd is concerned the issues during the dry period are very simple... to cure any existing infection AND to prevent new infections. Again, as far as the tools at your disposal to help achieve this, excluding management issues which shouldn't be ignored but are beyond the scope of this article, the options are simple; dry-cow therapy (DCT) and/or internal teat sealant (ITS).

Armed with these tools on a herd level the options then become:

- **Whole Herd DCT.** All quarters of all cows are treated with a dry-cow product. The

only variable will be which product to use. We will essentially have short, medium and long-acting options. The longer acting the product the better cure rates especially with Staph aureus and the longer the protection against new infections.

- **Part herd DCT.** Only at-risk cows are treated with a dry cow product. The at-risk group being cows treated for clinical mastitis, cows with one or more individual somatic cell count greater than 150,000cells/ml (120,000cells/ml for heifers). This is over the whole lactation not just off the last herd test.
- **Combination DCT and ITS.** Where a DCT product is inserted followed by an ITS. This approach would be considered where there is an extended dry period, for example light cows dried off early, high sub-clinical cows dried off early to manage the bulk tank somatic cell count or where there is a high chance of infection at calving (a history of many clinical cases within the first few days of lactation or an environment that predisposes to infection such as calving down on a pad).

- **Part herd ITS.** To protect uninfected cows against new infection. It is critical cows treated in this way are truly uninfected. Your herd test data will allow you to identify them.

The desire of SmartSAMM (Dairy NZs mastitis control programme www.smartsamm.co.nz) is to have all cows protected over the dry period. In order to achieve this we ideally need to know what bugs are the problem on your farm and have there been any cultures done? We also consider and assess bulk milk somatic cell count data, herd test results and look over records of treated cows.

Between now and drying off the annual milk quality review will be happening between you and your vet. Discussions around the plan for drying off will be an integral part of this. In order for sensible strategies to be implemented to minimise mastitis in your herd please have available as much data as you can. For those on infonet this is very easy as we will arrive armed with a printout. For those not on infonet you could always sign up!

Gossip

Please note: Our annual Golf Day is being held on **Tuesday 18th March**, not April as reported in the February Vetnotes.

Lovely **Julie** from Feilding reception is going on maternity leave at the end of March. We will miss her bubbly, helpful nature and we wish Julie an easy birth for husband Nick's sake. This will bring a sibling for their 2yr old son Noah.

Vet nurse **Kayla** is juggling work and planning her wedding, which is fast approaching in March. Kayla is marrying BJ Groves a diesel

mechanic in the air force. We wish Kayla & BJ the best of luck for their special day.

Sandy from Feilding reception has been enjoying working in dog behaviour training and has already had success with two difficult cases. Sandy is studying and working very hard in completing her qualification.

Trace minerals... have you got the balance right?

Allie Quinn

Every year, we see cases of trace element deficiencies in livestock. Copper (Cu), selenium (Se) and cobalt (Co) deficiencies are the trace mineral deficiencies most commonly reported. At the other end of the scale, overuse of trace mineral supplements also occurs. Cases of Cu and/or Se poisoning are also regularly reported by animal health laboratories. Getting the balance of trace minerals right is not easy, but it can be a lot harder without good monitoring information... So, are you giving enough of the trace minerals needed, or are you wasting money and risking toxicity by dosing stock unnecessarily?

GETTING THE RIGHT INFORMATION

The main options for monitoring trace mineral levels in livestock include blood sampling, liver samples from cull animals, or liver biopsies from live animals. Which samples should be taken and when can depend on a number of factors, so talk to us at Totally Vets about

The end of January, beginning of February was a busy time for birthdays at Awapuni with **Fraser, Helen, Cormac, Gaye** and **Tara** all having birthdays within seven days.

Now that **Leisa** has all three children safely settled into school she is welcomed back to the Palmerston North branch. We also welcome **Michelle** who has joined the equine team in



choosing the best method and timing of sampling for you and your livestock.

IN BRIEF:

- Blood sampling is relatively easy and cost-effective, is generally done on 4 to 10 animals, gives excellent information on Se and Co levels, but is limited in its use for Cu. It is good for monitoring Cu but overall is considered less accurate and does not reflect longer term Cu intake. Be aware that change in hair colour is not a reliable sign of copper deficiency because other factors can also affect coat condition.
- Liver samples from cull animals (usually 4 to 6) are the best way to assess Cu (and Se, Co) levels in cattle. If you are soon to send livestock to slaughter, now is a good time to get valuable information from cull liver samples. So, if you are sending stock to the 'works', contact us at Totally Vets to get a liver sample request form. There are two key steps to complete once you have the form:

1. Fax a copy of the liver request form through to theASUREQUALITY office at the slaughter premises. You can find the fax number on the back of the request form. We can fax a copy through for you, provided you give us enough notice, ideally at least ONE day's notice before your stock arrive for slaughter.

2. A copy of the completed liver sample request form MUST also go with the stock truck driver. Make sure it is attached to your Animal Status Declaration.

- Liver biopsies from live animals are much easier and simpler than it sounds! Samples are taken from 4 to 6 animals while standing but restrained in a head bale. The procedure is quick, cost effective, and allows collection of very valuable information and would, in many cases, be the method of choice.

GETTING THE TIMING RIGHT

Again, this may well differ from farm to farm but in general key times for monitoring are: young stock prior to sending to a run off (out of sight can often be out of mind which, in the case of a deficiency, can seriously affect growth rates); at drying-off (prior to winter when Cu levels often fall to their lowest); at transition (prior to calving); and pre-mating. Call your vet to discuss and formulate your trace mineral monitoring plan NOW!

USEFUL INFORMATION

You can find a useful fact-sheet on sheep and beef trace element nutrition on the Beef + Lamb New Zealand website. For further details go to www.beeflambnz.com.

a support role. She brings a wealth of equine experience as a vet nurse and technician.

Congratulations to **Hannah** from Taumarunui who celebrated her wedding in February and we look forward to her return from leave in March.

Sadly, **Anna** and **Margaret** left the Palmerston North branch during February, Anna to pursue

a new career in Matamata Vet Services, and Margaret to Otaki. We will miss them both.

With Anna away from her hot seat, to improve our customer service, all incoming calls are now be answered by the Feilding clinic with calls transferred to Palmerston North where required.



Diseases causing death of weaner deer

Hamish Pike

Looking ahead to late autumn and winter, we typically see or hear about a number of cases of sudden death in young deer. Causes may include:

Parasitism is still the most important cause of ill-thrift and losses in weaners at this time. Lungworm is very common and can quickly result in death of stock. Infection is usually noticed when moving stock as they lag behind and may cough or pant. Other gut parasites also need to be considered at this time of year especially if weaners are scouring.

Yersiniosis is a common reason for weaner deaths in Manawatu. Deer weaned pre-rut may be more susceptible to the stresses that precipitate Yersiniosis, so vaccination may be more important when animals are weaned early off their mothers. Affected deer usually scour, lose weight, quickly dehydrate and die. Young deer respond best to Yersiniavax® vaccine once they are over 12 weeks of age. A booster is required 3-6 weeks later.

Sporadic cases of **Johne's disease** affect all ages of deer, however outbreaks involving much younger animals, 8 to 20 months old, have been on the rise over recent years throughout New Zealand. Affected animals begin to scour and lose weight and this can progress to death fairly rapidly. Up to 10% of a mob may be affected and, as there is no treatment available and the disease is fatal, affected animals should be culled as soon as possible as they shed the bacteria.

Malignant Catarrhal Fever (MCF) causes a bloody scour and outbreaks can be precipitated by some severe form of stress such as excessive yarding or mustering. MCF is caused by a virus and is always fatal. There is no treatment or vaccine available.

Leptospirosis causes deaths in weaners leading into the winter following a short illness. On postmortem the carcass is usually jaundiced, the kidneys obviously abnormal and redwater (red urine) features. This can be vaccinated against and treatment is

generally very effective. Leptospirosis is easily transmitted to man via the urine of infected animals so it is vital that an outbreak is recognised early so that people are not at risk.

Clostridial diseases can also be a problem but is less common in deer compared to sheep and cattle. The most important in deer are blackleg and malignant oedema which can affect stock of all ages. Affected animals are rarely seen alive and the carcass rots very quickly. The routine use of a licensed 5-in-1 will prevent this.

Necrobacillosis (necrotic footrot) is caused by a bacterium which is a normal inhabitant of the gut of deer that survives well in cold environmental ground conditions. Wounds to the lower limbs are a point of entry leading to infections in the feet, joints and tendons and potentially severe lameness. From there infections can spread to the bloodstream, liver and lungs at which stage treatment is generally futile and death is inevitable.

In summary... Yersiniosis or parasitism is most often to blame as common things do occur commonly! However, there are numerous other diseases that can cause sudden death so, should you be faced with this challenging situation, there is value in submitting dead stock for a post-mortem examination.



Is anyone still doing drench checks?

Ginny Dodunski

The late nineties were an exciting time to start a career as a budding sheep and beef vet... the new sheep breeds had lifted the number of lambs our sheep flocks could produce, scanning had been widely adopted and was being used as a way to try and

better manage those productive ewes, the dollar was about 45-55c US, and you could still buy little tubes of penicillin for lambing time! Back then there were no 'new' drench families on the horizon, and the move to using combination drenches to slow the onset of drench resistance had started. All the AgResearch work on drench resistance was in its infancy, so many of the recommendations we make today around sustainable drench use were yet to be properly tested.

Body condition scoring

Helen Mather

A brief guide to using body condition scoring (BCS) as a tool to plan ahead when making drying off decisions.

Cows lose condition between calving and mating. So it's important that they have adequate condition before calving to allow for this BCS loss and to achieve a minimum BCS of 4.0 at mating. Going into the last third of lactation, we have the opportunity from February onward to increase BCS and improve fertility and the efficiency of feed utilisation. Our 2014 spring mating plan begins now!

WHAT ARE OUR BCS TARGETS AT CALVING?

Mature cows BCS of 5.0

Heifers and rising 3 year olds BCS of 5.5

Less than 15% of the herd below BCS 5.0

Less than 15% of cows above BCS 5.5

WHY THESE TARGETS?

Let's compare a cow of BCS 5.0 to one with BCS 4.0 (at calving) ... BCS 5.0 cow will:

- Cycle 8 days earlier

- Be 7% more likely to be cycling at planned start of mating
- Have a 1-2% higher 1st service conception rate
- Have a 2-4% higher 6-week in-calf rate
- Have a 1-2% lower empty rate
- Produce 12kg milk solids (MS) more
- Enjoy extra health and welfare benefits

Investing in BCS gives you a very high return on investment and YOU have a high level of control!

SO STARTING NOW, HOW CAN WE GET THERE? IT TAKES PLANNING...

Cows can't gain condition in the last 30 days of pregnancy, so we must have them up to target by this stage. A number of strategies can be used to get every cow close to her ideal BCS at calving:

1. Give 1st and 2nd calvers more time dry than older cows
2. Ensure heifers are on track for BCS and final mature weight
3. Dry off low-producing cows early
4. Split dry herds based on BCS and time until calving
5. BCS now and for part of the season, milk once a day (OAD) for all or part of the herd
6. Run a feed budget for BCS condition gain through to dry off

Use this table below to decide on the length of dry period cows at different BCS require.

For more information or support in assessing the BCS of your herd contact us now!

DRYING OFF TIME BASED ON BCS AND TIME UNTIL CALVING TO ACHIEVE TARGET BCS

BCS (MA cow)	Increase in BCS required	Number of days dry required	BCS (for rising 3 year old)	Increase in BCS required	Number of days dry required
3.0	2.0	120	3.0	2.5	140
3.5	1.5	100	3.5	2.0	120
4.0	1.0	80	4.0	1.5	100
4.5	0.5	60	4.5	1.0	80
			5.0	0.5	60

However one recommendation that was in force then, and has not changed, is to check that your routine drench is working OK. The 'drench check', being a faecal egg count of a mob 7 to 10 days after drenching, is a great way of keeping a watching brief on the drenches you are using. We used to do a lot of drench checks, but the number of these coming through our practice labs has definitely declined in recent years. I wonder if this simple procedure has become lost in the noise of new drench families, triple combinations, and new concepts such as 'exit drenches', 'knockout drenches' and refugia.

Obviously the full-blown faecal egg count reduction test (FECRT) is the definitive way to determine which drenches are working

properly on your farm. But in between these (which may need to be done every 3 to 6 years depending on circumstances), the drench check is a sensible way to monitor that the product(s) you are using are still performing properly. A good time to do a check is probably at the weaning drench, which will generally be early enough in the season to capture all the worm species, and also early enough to make a change or do further investigation if the results are equivocal.

All that is required is a random 10 or so fresh dung samples from lambs (or calves for that matter) 7 to 10 days after their last drench. If you have used something long-acting (for example Cydectin® or Exodus, or an injection or pour-on for calves), check with us first

regarding when best to sample. We have faecal egg count (FEC) kits available from our clinics to make the job easy for you.

If you haven't done a drench check for a while, now is still a good time as it's not too late to do something different. Why go through till May drenching lambs with something that could be leaving resistant worms behind. This applies particularly to those still using single actives (such as moxidectin) and double combinations as your routine drench. You may remember from previous newsletters in 2013 that new data suggests 25-30% of farms have resistance to these drench types. Is yours one? A simple drench check could help you find out.

THERE'S A NEW

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Boss® Injection is a new combination injection for cattle containing levamisole and a blend of eprinomectin and ivermectin, offering the greatest potential for high potency against internal and external parasites