



VET notes

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT ANIMALS ON YOUR FARM SEPTEMBER 2017



Free pet lamb vaccination service

Totally Vets is again offering a free vaccination service for **pet day lambs** with the aim of preventing as many unnecessary lamb deaths (and very upset children!) as possible in the run up to pet day.

Ring your nearest clinic to book a time to bring your pet lamb(s) in during the week of the 11th to 15th September 2017, between the hours of 9.00am and 4.00pm. We will be happy to vaccinate them and apply docking rings if required.

Good luck for pet day, we look forward to hearing how your pets performed!

Mycoplasma bovis – be on the look out

Chris Carter

The recent diagnosis of *Mycoplasma bovis* (*M. bovis*) in two South Island herds is another reminder for us not to take for granted our freedom from diseases that plague cattle in many other countries.

M. bovis expresses itself in several ways – pneumonia, arthritis, mastitis and abortion to name the most common signs. It does have a dark side in that it regularly is present in cattle but with no clinical signs.

M. bovis has characteristics that make these bacteria difficult to fight with antibiotics and the drugs with licence claims for *M. bovis* are not currently available in New Zealand (NZ). Be on the lookout for mastitis cases and arthritis cases that don't respond to current treatments. This may be the first sign.

There are no effective vaccinations to prevent infection.

How the disease arrived and how long it has been in NZ, is still under investigation and we won't add to the speculation. Suffice to say, all of us, farmers and vets, need to be vigilant.

Disease spread is primarily through contact with another infected cattle beast so movement of cattle (young or mature) from an infected farm to another herd is a serious risk. Transmission by semen and embryos may also occur but the treatment or washing of semen and embryos following collection and prior to freezing will remove this risk.

Windborne transmission is not considered a significant transmission pathway but we should avoid the movement of contaminated equipment and those handling stock who move from farm to farm must clean down between farms.

To diagnose *M. bovis* testing for the bacteria's DNA or genetic material using a PCR test is the test of choice and we can also test for an immune response (antibodies). *M. bovis* is an unwanted organism and any suspicion of this disease must be reported to MPI by phoning 0800 80 99 66.

Like many farmers, we are deeply concerned about the consequences on the long-term wellbeing of our cattle following the diagnosis of this disease in NZ.



Looking ahead

Potential animal health issues, tasks to consider and reminders for **September** include ...

DAIRY

- **Calf management** – excellent hygiene practices are essential throughout the season so keep up with this! So long as the weather allows, getting calves outside onto grass is

generally a big help, but do keep coccidiosis prevention in place. Also make sure not to miss the key two to six week old window in which to disbud calves – have you got yours booked in?

- **Metri-checking** – hopefully your first batch and/or the at-risk group of cows will already have been checked and, if required, treated.
- **Bull preparation** – the start of natural mating may seem a long way off but selecting and preparing your bull team is an excellent first step to ensure a successful mating – **article P4.**

- **Lame cows** – take time to observe, draft and treat lame cows early to avoid large numbers creeping up.

SHEEP and BEEF

- **Lambing** – maintain checks on later pregnant ewes and act quickly at the first sign of metabolic disease or lambing trouble.
- **Docking** – having a plan in place will help to ensure important tasks aren't missed - **article P7.**

HA HA



New deer velvetting requirements

Juan Klue

As most deer farmers will know, the industry is now subject to new hygiene and food safety measures in respect to velvet harvesting and handling.

The National Velvetting Standards Body (NVSB) is implementing four new standards prescribing hygiene measures relating to velvetting which include **hygiene, cold chain management, transport and traceability.**

These new standards are final.

Basically, velvet antler (that is to be sold) can only be removed, stored, handled, tagged, recorded, transported and frozen in clean zones. These zones are the velvet removal areas, velvet storage and transport receptacles, bins, racks, benches and freezers.

Clean zones have to have washable and nonporous surfaces which don't harbour bacteria and have to be cleaned and disinfected with an approved maintenance compound before and after the velvetting process. At all times during the velvetting to freezing process the velvet needs to be protected from dust, dirt, bird droppings etc.

As veterinarians cutting the velvet, if the shed is not up to the new standards, we can still cut velvet but we cannot tag it for sale. Supervisory veterinarians will also not be able to issue tags if the deer shed is not up to standard. Our role or the expectations required by us in these changes is still a little unclear but should be clarified by the next VetNotes issue.

For more in depth information please refer to <http://deernz.org>. Click on the **Deer Hub** then **Velvetting** to find the new rules and regulations under the **NVSB** section. You will also find photos of sheds that have been changed to suit the new rules and a list of approved maintenance compounds.

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EQUINE

- **Spring things** – the spring flush of grass can bring with it some challenges, particularly laminitis prevention and weight management – remember prevention is better than cure! It is also timely to worm all horses with a drench containing moxidectin (such as Ultra-mox™) as this is often the period of risk for cyathostomosis.

- **Foaling** – mares should now be in the paddocks in which they will foal. Also make sure they have had their pre-foal vaccinations four to six weeks before their due date.

DEER

- **Ticks** – depending on your farm history consider the need for tick control in the coming months. Talk with your vet about options for treatment.



'Crypto'

Rebecca Weal

Cryptosporidium parvum is an important protozoal cause of neonatal scours in calves, commonly referred to as 'crypto'.

Crypto can be found as a normal inhabitant of the calf's digestive system, but if a calf has any illness or immune suppression then the crypto organisms can overgrow and cause scours. Scours can appear yellow and watery right through to mucoid, pasty, grey and slimy. Calves are most at risk of becoming infected from four days to four weeks of age, the younger they are infected generally the more severe the disease. Three to six days following infection the calves will begin to shed eggs in their faeces allowing others to become infected too. The infectious dose of these eggs to develop disease is quite low and therefore contaminated feeders and water troughs are a great source of the bug.

Infection with crypto can also open the gate for "superinfection" with bacteria and viruses. Whilst crypto does not cause a huge number of deaths, these "superinfections" can cause a high mortality rate.

Any scouring calf, no matter the cause, should be isolated to a designated sick pen. Good hygiene (solid partitions, scrubbing and disinfection of equipment between pens etc.) and good colostrum management (two litres

of first milking colostrum within six hours of birth) can help give the calves the best start to life. Vaccinating cows with Rotavec Corona® or Scourguard® pre-calving, and feeding the milk from these cows to the calves, can also help mitigate these "superinfections".

Once definitively diagnosed by the laboratory we can directly target treatment towards crypto. Halocur® is the only product available that specifically targets crypto. Given orally once daily for seven days it helps reduce severity of disease and reduce shedding of eggs. Kryptade® is another product that can help in the face of a crypto outbreak. It is an oral electrolyte that contains an anti-crypto active ingredient that helps affected calves recover faster.

Crypto is a zoonotic disease meaning it can be easily transferred to humans and cause disease if good hygiene practices aren't maintained. Children and immune compromised people are most at risk. It causes prolonged diarrhoea and stomach cramps. Maintain good hygiene practices such as regularly washing of hands after contact with livestock, wearing gloves and coveralls, and not wearing dirty calf rearing clothes home.

If you are having issues with scouring calves or have any questions regarding calf rearing don't hesitate to give us a call!



The case of Rust and the GDV

Sarah Hart

Gastric dilation volvulus (GDV) is a condition we see relatively frequently up in the King Country.

This is the tale of Rust, a four year old Huntaway who made an incredible recovery from a twisted stomach!

Rust presented to the veterinary clinic on Saturday morning with a large, distended abdomen. He was very uncomfortable, had difficulty breathing and was in a state of 'shock' with a heart rate over 180 beats per minute (normal is 80 to 120).

Rust had a purple tinge to his gums which indicated there was inadequate blood flow

throughout his body. He was immediately placed on two intravenous drips to rapidly increase his blood pressure and assist the body in providing oxygen and blood supply to his vital organs. A tube was passed into his stomach and some gastric contents were removed to reduce the pressure exerted on his diaphragm, allowing him to breathe more easily.

Rust was diagnosed with GDV, which is a condition that occurs when the stomach becomes distended either with food or gas and then rotates on its axis, meaning that gas

Are your bulls up to the job?

Barney Askin

We have seen several bull team failures in the last few years, all of which were avoidable. For a hassle-free tailing up after artificial breeding (AB) has finished, please take heed of the following recommendations.



Ensure bulls arrive on farm a minimum of six weeks, but preferably two to three months, prior to intended use. This gives them time to settle, sort out any dominance issues and hopefully get over any new diseases they might become exposed to. This means at the very latest they should arrive on farm is at the start of AB.

Bulls should be blood-tested negative for bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD) antigen before arrival. Ensure you receive or visualise an official copy of the paperwork to confirm this. If you are unsure what the paperwork means then please give us a call. The fact that bulls have been vaccinated is not going to stop them introducing BVD to your farm. Given the emergence of Theileria in our area over the last few years it would be wise to enquire about the presence of this disease on the property of origin. If your herd is clear you don't want to bring it in. Equally you may have Theileria on your property (you might be unaware) and your bulls might be at risk of contracting this just before they are needed. The most useful precaution you can take is to treat bulls with Bayticol® Pour-On on arrival and at three weekly intervals until mating has finished. This will reduce the chance of them being bitten by infected ticks which spread the disease.

If not done so at farm of origin, which would be the preferred option, bulls should be vaccinated on arrival and one month later with BVD vaccine, preferably a combined BVD/IBR vaccine.

Bulls should be selected to be of an appropriate size for your cows or heifers and ideally have been fertility-checked to ensure they do not have any libido, conformational or semen defects that will render them infertile. If they have not been fertility checked this can be reasonably easy to organise once they have settled in to their mating groups.

Bulls should have a temperament that makes them easy and safe to handle.

HOW MANY BULLS DO YOU NEED?

For both yearling heifers and cows, use the 3% plus one rule. That is, if you have 100 animals to mate, then you will need three bulls and one spare.

Don't forget if bulls are being used following synchronisation, the ratio will need to be doubled, i.e. approximately one bull per 15 heifers.

It is a good idea to assume the worst and estimate that 50 to 60% of the herd is empty after six weeks of AB and calculate bull requirements based on this. Where possible, always have some spare bulls in case of breakdowns.

Please talk to your vet if you have any queries about your bull team.



and fluid cannot escape. When the stomach is twisted, the blood supply to the stomach is significantly impeded, and if decompression is not initiated rapidly the stomach wall can begin to die. The blood flow returning to the heart is reduced when the enlarged stomach presses on nearby vessels. Toxins from oxygen deprived tissues are also released into the blood stream.

Surgery is indicated for these cases to de-rotate the twisted stomach and attach it to the wall of the abdomen to prevent the twist from occurring again.

The exact cause is unknown, however risk factors include:

- Large deep chested breeds
- Dogs fed one large meal once daily
- Rapid eating or drinking
- Exercise after eating
- Stress or nervous temperament

Death is the outcome in approximately one third of dogs, even with veterinary treatment; but luckily for Rust he was brought into the clinic and treated quickly before too much damage was done.



Rust with best mate Conor

The pasture surplus dream

Lindsay Rowe

The big issue to focus on in this early stage of the season is to continue to seek to achieve ad-lib feeding of the milking herd – that is to say, the cows are being allowed to eat as much as they can so that they have a chance to reach their peak milk production potential.

Given the extremely difficult season to date, it is hard to imagine leaving post grazing pasture residuals slightly higher than the normal 1500kg DM per ha but this is the best sign that milking cows are ad-lib feeding. Hopefully we find ourselves in this situation by the start of September!

However, by the start of October pasture quality should become the focus and the post grazing residual pasture levels need to be back on the target of 1500kg DM per ha (25% of the paddock with some clumping left and a tiller height of 3-4cm between the clumps).

If the pasture base becomes stalky, then feed quality will decrease leading to a fall in the herd's milk production in late spring and early summer, even though there appears to be plenty of pasture available to graze. A rapid fall from peak production is usually an indication that there has been poor pasture control leading up to this stage of the season. In fact, many trials have demonstrated that production is affected right through the summer period if target post-grazing residuals are not achieved through a period of spring surplus.

Crucial to this aspect of pasture management is the early recognition of a developing pasture surplus and a plan to deal with it. Failure to react quickly will lead to a deterioration in the pasture sward as well as a reducing ability to convert any surplus into quality silage.

Proof of the difficulty in getting this right are the surveys that show that more than 70% of the silage made in New Zealand is of poor quality and will not meet the needs of a lactating dairy cow.

When is there a surplus and how big is it? The three-leaf principle can be used as the basis for this assessment by firstly establishing the speed for the rotation which in turn determines the area that can be grazed by the herd each day. If this area will provide more pasture than the cows are capable of grazing to the target 1500 residual, then the area allocated for grazing can be reduced. The balance of the area is then surplus that can be accumulated and harvested as grass silage.

If quality silage is the goal, aim for a maximum period of closure of five to six weeks from the last grazing as from this point on, the protein and energy levels will be steadily falling. The golden rule is that if it is not suitable to feed to a milking cow before conservation, then it will certainly not be suitable after conservation!





Mating season is approaching

Emma Scott

Sound mating management is one area where the effort put in to achieve efficient mating of the herd will really pay dividends, it is a critical part of setting up a successful year ahead.

So what strategies are available for improving mating performance of your herd?

PRE-MATING

Ensure a body condition score (BCS) of 5.0 at calving. Cows that are less than condition score 4.5 at calving will have a submission rate 10% lower than cows that average 5.0. They will also have a 20% lower pregnancy rate to their first service.

Managing the nutrition of the springing and freshly calved cow, to reduce metabolic disease and energy deficits, is essential.

Minimising weight loss between now and the planned start of mating (PSM). Cows that lose more than 1.5 BCS from calving to mating will have a 20% drop in pregnancy rate compared to cows that only lose 0.5 of a score after calving.

Tail paint cows at least 35 days before the planned start of mating. If you count your non-cycling cows 10 days before the start of mating you can get an indication of what your submission rate will be like at the start of mating — if more than 30% non-cyclers expect a slow start to mating.

Record all your at-risk cows and have them checked in the first 21 to 28 days post-calving for best results.

MATING

Accurate heat detection – it costs approximately \$150 to \$200 for every missed

heat. Ensure you have experienced staff to do this or invest in training them. We can help you with this. Four observations a day for 30 minutes will detect more than 90% of your cycling cows compared to two observations a day for 30 minutes detecting around 70%.

Identify and treat non-cyclers early. Use of an intravaginal progesterone insert will increase the submission rate when used at the start of mating and they are most profitable when used early in the mating programme i.e. a week before the PSM.

Consider use of short-gestation bulls for second round inseminations, their use will help to keep calving spread more compact and decrease numbers of late calvers. See Barny's article on bull management on page four.

Please don't hesitate to talk to your vet for a tailored mating plan for your herd.



Caring for orphan lambs

Katy Johnston

Hypothermia frequently occurs in newborn lambs, especially when the weather is bad or they don't get a feed of colostrum within the first few hours of life.



Preparing yourselves for docking

Caitlin Jackson

Docking is just around the corner and it's a very busy time for anyone involved. Here's a few things to think about to ensure you meet the minimum standards...

The ideal age for **tail docking** is within six weeks of birth, but no less than 12 hours old. Tails should be left long enough to cover the vulva in ewe lambs and be of a similar length in ram lambs. The methods of tail removal which are recommended include hot searing/docking iron or conventional rubber rings. If an animal is over six months old, pain relief must be used.

Castration with a rubber ring is the most common method and is best done in lambs less than six weeks of age. This may be difficult for the commercial farmers however as castration and docking are commonly done together. When performing castration, placement of the ring is important so that the ring sits above both testes, but below the teats. For those who will be scrotum shortening, the ring is placed around the scrotum while the testes are pushed into the cavity above.

If a lamb will suckle it should be offered a bottle-feed of colostrum to provide energy. If the lamb won't suckle it might require stomach tubing. For an unresponsive or comatose lamb, an injection of dextrose into the abdomen before warming the lamb will increase the chance of survival, so contact your vet urgently.

Colostrum not only provides high levels of energy for newborn lambs, but also provides antibodies that protect lambs from disease during the first few months of life. Newborn lambs need to drink 15 to 20% of their

In order to minimise the chances of infection clean all pieces of equipment in disinfectant, aim to keep your hands clean and dry, and try to use a clean area (the use of temporary set up yards might help with this). Also avoid docking/castrating in wet weather.

Vaccinations can also be performed at docking time. Recommendations are as follows:

A lamb from an **unvaccinated** ewe should be given one dose of Lamb Vaccine at docking, then one shot of 5-in-1, 6-in-1 (either Multine® or Ultravac®) or 10-in-1 (Covexin® 10) four weeks later. Any lambs which are to be kept on farm for longer should receive a further booster shot of 5-in-1, 6-in-1 or 10-in-1.

For lambs born to previously **vaccinated** ewes, two injections of 5-in-1, 6-in-1 or 10-in-1 are required at 12 and 16 weeks of age.

Certain vaccines offer protection for different diseases:

- Lamb Vaccine gives **immediate** protection against tetanus at docking because it contains tetanus antitoxin. It also contains a sensitiser for pulpy kidney disease.
- 5-in-1 (Multine® or Ultravac®) protects against the clostridial diseases pulpy kidney, blackleg, black disease, malignant oedema and tetanus.
- Covexin® 10 and Ultravac® 6in1 provide protection against some extra clostridial diseases which cause 'sudden death syndrome' seen in fast growing lambs on lush feed.

bodyweight of colostrum (e.g. 4kg lamb needs 600 to 800mL) within the first 12 hours of life.

A common problem encountered in bottle-fed lambs is bloating of the abomasum (fourth stomach) after feeding. This is due to the bug sarcina, which produces gas from milk. To minimise the risk of bloat occurring, keep feeds small (less than 600ml), offer lambs access to grass and consider yoghurtised milk. Acidophilus yoghurt in milk provides good bugs, which compete with sarcina, reducing gas production. Ask us for the recipe!

Both vaccination programs above will give protection to the lamb for 12 months. Any replacement animals vaccinated with this scheme will only require booster vaccines at pre-lamb.

If you have scabby mouth virus on your farm there is a vaccine available. Vaccination is done by scratching an 'X' on the skin on the inner thigh of the lamb with the vaccine tool at docking. You should always check for a successful 'take' seven to 10 days afterward. Be careful not to scratch yourself with this vaccine as it is a live virus and you can catch the disease.

Vaccination regimes can be confusing, if you have any questions don't hesitate to speak to us to go over the programs.



Take care to watch for pneumonia and navel ill in your pet lambs. Aspiration pneumonia can occur if the hole in the teat is too large and lambs drink too fast causing some of the milk to go in to the airway. If you notice increased rate and effort of breathing, swelling of the navel or lameness in your pet lamb, talk to your vet.

Lastly, don't forget to vaccinate your pet lambs against clostridial diseases such as pulpy kidney and tetanus. It could save their lives!

ARE YOU READY FOR DOCKING?



Call in to your nearest clinic
for all your docking supplies



Did you know that
endometritis
cows don't self cure?

Identify your at risk cows & book in your
first batch for metrichecking now!



Assisted
calvings



Dead calves/
stillbirths



Retained
membranes



Vaginal
discharge



Down cows



Did you know we offer
minimal stress, pain free
calf disbudding?



Book in with your nearest clinic
now to make sure you don't miss out
on your window* of opportunity!

Local anaesthetic is administered and anti-
inflammatory/pain relief can be provided post
disbudding on request.

Other tasks that can be undertaken include:

- extra teat removal
- non-surgical hernia repair
- 7-in-1 vaccinations
- tagging

*For calves disbudded by us between two and six weeks of age
if horns regrow, and we are notified before calves are six
months of age, we will revisit at no extra cost to you.

