



VET notes

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT ANIMALS ON YOUR FARM **DECEMBER 2010**



Totally Vets Client Christmas BBQ

Join us on:
Friday 17th December

At:
**Feilding Clinic
Manchester Street
Feilding**

&/or
**Awapuni Clinic
189 Pioneer Highway
Palmerston North**

Sometime between noon till late!

We would love to see you.



Merry Christmas!

The Totally Vets team would like to wish you all a very happy Christmas and a great 2011. We are looking forward to catching up with

as many of you as possible at the client BBQ on the 17th December. Please see below for our holiday period opening hours.

Holiday hours

December	Feilding	PNth
20 Dec	Mon	8 - 5
21 Dec	Tue	8 - 6
22 Dec	Wed	8 - 7
23 Dec	Thu	8 - 5
24 Dec	Fri	8 - 5
25 Dec	Sat	Closed
26 Dec	Sun	Closed
27 Dec	Mon	Closed
28 Dec	Tue	Closed
29 Dec	Wed	8 - 5
30 Dec	Thu	8 - 5
31 Dec	Fri	8 - 5

January	Feilding	PNth
1 Jan	Sat	Closed
2 Jan	Sun	Closed
3 Jan	Mon	Closed
4 Jan	Tue	Closed
5 Jan	Wed	8 - 5
6 Jan	Thu	8 - 5
7 Jan	Fri	8 - 5
8 Jan	Sat	9 - 2
9 Jan	Sun	Closed

Normal hours resume Monday 10 January 2011.

For emergencies, please note that we have a duty veterinarian available at all times on 06 323 6161 or 06 356 5011.





Totally Vets current stock health

Dairy

Your earliest estimate of the conception rate in your herd is the Non Return Rate (NRR), which MindaPro subscribers can access through the fertility focus report. The NRR is dependent on the detection of returns to service. If your NRR is too good to be true, i.e. greater than 75%, especially if you used CIDRs early, then it probably is too good to be true.

A good result is a NRR of 60-70%. Use your NRR to estimate cows in calf at the end of AB and the number to be mated by the bulls.

Lameness and high somatic cell counts have been an issue for some this season. Totally Vets can help you with both these manageable problems, as long as they are addressed well before calving.



HA HA

A blonde motorist was two hours from the Gold Coast when she was flagged down by a man whose truck had broken.

He asked, "are you going to the Gold Coast?"

"Sure", answered the blonde, "do you need a lift?"

"Not for me. I've got a truck to fix. I have two chimpanzees to be taken to the Gold Coast zoo. They're a bit stressed and I don't want them sitting in the back of the truck all day. I'll give you \$100 if you could take them to the zoo for me?"

"I'd be happy to", said the blonde.

Five hours later, the truck driver was driving through the heart of the Gold Coast when he saw the blonde walking down the street and holding hands with the two chimps, much to the amusement of a big crowd. With a screech of brakes he pulled over and ran up to the blonde.

"What the heck are you doing?", he demanded. "I gave you \$100 to take these two to the zoo!"

"I know you did", said the blonde, "but we had money left over, so now we're going to Sea World."

Leptosure® - to be sure

Joao Dib

Leptospirosis is a serious illness and potentially fatal. Despite the inroads made into the disease by vaccination and other control measures, dairy farmers and their staff still have one of the highest rates of infection with leptospirosis.

Consequently, there has been a continual drive from within the dairy industry and from OSH to place responsibility on employers and those in control in the workplace to take all practical steps to prevent people suffering 'serious harm' from such a hazard.

Leptosure® was born to put these practical steps into place and monitor progress. Leptosure® is a risk management scheme developed by NZ Dairy Cattle Vets, National Quality Veterinary Services and the Livestock Improvement Corporation (LIC). Its objective are:

- To reduce the incidence of human leptospirosis on dairy farms and thus provide protection from leptospirosis to all involved in dairy farming and stock handling.
- To ensure both dairy veterinarians and dairy farmers meet their obligations under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992.

- To develop a nationally consistent approach to leptospirosis control in the dairy industry.
- To set up a national register of leptospirosis for dairy herds.

LIC MINDA records your farm's Leptosure® status.

WHAT IS INVOLVED

An initial consultation and contract to participate in the Leptosure® programme is the first step. A risk-management programme will be implemented and a vaccination plan discussed. You will then receive a Leptosure®-protected status. A yearly visit is carried out from then on to monitor progress and ensure the farm-protected status is kept on track.

COSTS

At present, the initial consultation is \$175 with an additional \$75 annual registration fee. In subsequent years there is an annual consultation of \$95 plus an annual \$75 registration fee - all in all a small price to pay for a very positive and progressive programme.

Give your vet a call to make your farm part of the national Leptosure® programme.

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.





As your herd settles, it is a grand opportunity to assess the bovine virus diarrhoea (BVD) status with a bulk tank milk sample. BVD is an insidious disease that just erodes your profit. Doing something about it may seem onerous; however, the rewards are significant.

Young stock vaccinations are also due.

Those on high risk facial eczema (FE) properties may care to remember that FE often raises its ugly head for the first time in December.

Sheep and Beef

Ewe body-condition at weaning this year is going to have a big impact on next season's tugging. Many flocks have a big jump to make to get back up to body-condition score 3 for tugging this autumn, and will require some careful and planned management over summer to ensure the majority of the flock gets there - especially the younger ewes.

It sounds as though many older ewes have dropped out of the system by themselves this

spring, but those that remain will also need special attention.

An option to increase capital stock numbers is the use of reproductive hormones Androvax and Ovastim, which lift lambing percentage. Plan for these now to get the timing right.

Reproductive vaccines for campylobacter and toxoplasma are insurance to protect what you've already got. We've seen some big losses this spring in flocks that stopped vaccinating for 'economic' reasons.



Photosensitivity in cattle

Leisa Norris-Spring

Photosensitivity is caused by compounds in the blood that react to sunlight. Liver function is the key. Anything affecting the liver's ability to metabolise or excrete harmful compounds predisposes an animal to photosensitivity. If the liver is not functioning, toxic compounds build up in the blood. When toxins reach the skin and react with sunlight, they cause photosensitization.

The source of these compounds can be **primary**, through the animal's diet or an inherited defect in the animal's metabolism of its red blood cells, or **secondary** due to liver damage from facial eczema (FE), leptospirosis, or anything that interferes with normal metabolism.

Signs of photosensitivity include:

- Twitching, flicking of ears and tail
- Irritability, stomping and kicking at self
- Swelling around the eyes, ears, udder, and feet
- Hair loss, reddening, thickening, and peeling of affected skin

Diagnosis is based on signs; a blood sample can be taken to assess liver function.

Treatment is primarily supportive, including the provision of shade, topical treatment with zinc oxide-based sunblock ointments and fly control. Depending on the cause, antibiotics for secondary skin infection and/or prevention of hepatitis may be useful. Early use of anti-inflammatory drugs reduces the severity of the disease and improves the welfare of affected animals.

Prevention depends on the cause - FE, spring eczema and brassica crops are the three most common causes of photosensitivity in New Zealand.

Facial eczema causes photosensitivity and/or death due to liver injury. Humid conditions trigger growth and formation of fungal spores, *Pithomyces chartarum*. These produce the toxin sporidesmin, which when ingested, causes liver damage, especially to

the bile system, and impairs the excretion of phyloerythrin (a breakdown product of chlorophyll). Symptoms of FE liver damage are seen 10 to 20 days after consumption of spores.

Strategies to minimise the risk of FE include the use of spore-counting to identify risk periods and areas. At high-risk times, graze the most exposed, poorly sheltered pastures (often west or south-facing); increase rotation rate so pastures maintain some leaf length (don't graze down to base levels where the spores are); feed fodder crop or other supplements if available; w spray pasture with fungicide and use zinc salts, such as zinc sulphate in water troughs or zinc oxide for oral drenching, as these have a protective effect against the toxin.

The cause of spring eczema is uncertain. Unlike FE, the liver is not necessarily affected but previous liver damage doesn't help.

Brassica crop photosensitisation is most often seen within 10-14 days of going onto summer turnips, especially if under drought stress. Eating immature rape can also cause photosensitization ('rape scald'). Prevent the risk of breakouts by maintaining adequate voltage and double-fencing of breaks; gradually introducing crops and grazing them at the optimal stage of maturity; and offering supplements or pasture before going onto new crop.



Growing good young stock...

Lindsay Rowe

...is like putting money in the bank - the more you put in during the whole rearing period, the more you will get paid out.

Replacement heifers are the most valuable asset on the farm, representing the best genetic material and carrying the future production potential of your herd; they are also often the most neglected, despite the \$1000+ cost of bringing them into the herd as a two year-old.

NZ survey data estimate that 30% of replacement heifers are below target-mating weights in October, which leads to:

Increased wastage: only 67% of calves identified as replacements for the herd may calve as three-year olds, meaning there is a 33% loss rate between rearing and completion of the first lactation. The lighter the heifer, the greater the chance she will be lost from the herd.

Production losses: a heifer that is 10% below target live-weight can be expected to

produce 9kg MS less in her first lactation. The closer a heifer is to her calving weight target, the more milk she will produce in her first lactation - every extra kg of live-weight is worth an extra seven litres of milk.

Reproductive failure: the major influence on the onset of puberty for yearlings is live-weight, so the lower the average live-weight, the greater the proportion of late or empty heifers. Light-weight heifers are five times more likely to be empty than the heaviest heifers in the group.

Once in the herd, failure to cycle becomes the major problem as these new entrants struggle to settle into the herd hierarchy and successfully compete for the available feed. The problem is worse when they are below target weight to start with and actually have an increased feed demand just to support the extra growth required. By comparison, well-grown heifers will have a reproductive performance equal to that of mature cows.

Live-weight targets are best calculated as a percentage of the live-weight of your mature herd. These are **minimum** target weights and require an average growth rate of 0.6kg EVERY day for the total rearing period or 20kg per month.

Mature live-weight (kg)	6 mnths % mature LW	Mating % mature LW	Calving % mature LW
	30%	60%	90%
Jersey (400)	120	240	360
J x F (450)	135	270	405
Friesian (500)	150	300	450

To achieve these growth rates, management needs to focus on:

- Efficient calf-rearing through to weaning.
- Generous dry matter intakes after weaning allowing for maintenance, live-weight gain and then pregnancy, especially the last 4 months.
- High quality feed - energy (ME), protein % and digestibility.
- An efficient worm control programme.
- Trace element sufficiency (copper, cobalt and selenium levels).
- Appropriate disease control and vaccination status.

Ask your vet about the Totally Vets Growing Great Heifers programme - it will help you to produce replacement heifers capable of lifting the overall performance of your herd.

What's the goss?

We are thrilled for **Des** and **Wendy Hart**, **Megan Antrobus** and **Steve** and **Mary Barr** who were all winners of our various in-store promotions during our Feilding clinic open week,

generously sponsored by Merial Ancare, Bomac and Eukanuba. It was a tough job picking nine entries from our colouring competition but **Emily Love, Hayley Jenkins, Madison Hart, Luke, Cassie Buick, Cameron Purches, Weston Harper, Brodie Flanagan** and **Maia** were first, second or third in their respective age categories, receiving a Masterpet toy for their creative masterpieces.

If you have had difficulty getting through to the Feilding branch over the last few weeks, we sincerely apologise and thank you for your patience. We have since addressed the teething problems relating to our phone system. Please let us know if you experience problems again so we can rectify these as soon as possible - our thanks to all those who have given us feedback to date.

New drugs on the block - Zolvix and Startect

Ginny Dodunski

Last month we took a look at the two new sheep drenches that have hit the market this year, Zolvix (Novartis) and Startect (Pfizer).

Both are significantly more expensive than existing combination drenches or endectocides. However they are now the products of choice for quarantine drenching, as triple combination resistance, while not commonplace, has certainly been diagnosed on a number of North Island breeding properties, and the number with undiagnosed resistance is likely to be much higher.

ZOLVIX

Zolvix (monepantel) was the pick of the bunch from over 600 compounds from a drug family now known as the Amino Acetylnitrile Derivatives (AADs). In a first for drench chemicals, the scientists at Novartis have done a whole lot of work to determine exactly how the monepantel molecule exerts its effect on worms. They have shown that:

- Monepantel works in a completely different way from any of the other drench chemicals

- It works at a site in the cell wall that is unique to parasitic nematodes, so the drug has minimal impact on non target species (e.g. earthworms) and is very safe for sheep, even if inadvertently overdosed.

Other things to know about Zolvix:

- It is only a single active compound, not a combination. As such it is a poor choice for regular, routine drenching; for example the monthly drenching of lambs.
- Monepantel is not ovicidal (does not kill worm eggs).

Thus when Zolvix is used as a quarantine drench, although all existing adult worms are likely to be killed, the eggs they have already laid will still be hatchable, and may take up to three days to pass out of the animal, though the majority will probably be gone by 24 hours. This makes it very important to have a properly thought-out quarantine procedure on farms where large numbers of lambs are purchased each year. Talk to us if you'd like help with this.

STARTECT

Startect (derquantel/abamectin combination) is the latest offering from Pfizer. The derquantel molecule has been around for some years but had not gained favour in early testing, until Pfizer looked at it again and realised it had potential, especially in combination.

Derquantel works by interfering with nerve transmission in the worm, causing flaccid paralysis and death. Again, the mode of action is unique. It doesn't have the same safety profile as monepantel, and is highly toxic to horses.

But the fact that derquantel has been combined with abamectin gives it a much wider range of uses than Zolvix, because of the resistance-delaying properties of combinations.

We know that the effective life of combinations is greatly prolonged where there is minimal or no resistance to the individual actives. So at the beginning, this will always be true for the derquantel component, but may not be so for abamectin.

On farms where abamectin is failing badly, especially against *Ostertagia*, Startect is not a good choice for routine drenching, but where abamectin is just starting to fail (very commonly seen in our local testing), using it in combination with derquantel is likely to be highly protective.

Modelling work by Dave Leathwick at AgResearch has recently predicted a period of more than 20 years' good protection of abamectin by derquantel where there was already moderate resistance to abamectin.

But while the profitability of sheep farming remains depressed and the price of Startect is around three times that of a triple combination, I can't see it being widely used for routine drenching, despite its theoretical advantages.

However, as already mentioned, either of these new drenches represents a more logical choice for quarantine drenching given the increasing prevalence of resistance to triple combinations.

Next month - exit drenching.



The Feilding branch is now proudly displaying a fabulous picture kindly presented to us by **John Moffat** and **John Poole** from Intervet/Schering-Plough Animal Health. The canvas lists towns and districts serviced by Totally Vets and illustrates, through the completion of our purpose-built clinic, "Totally Vets' confidence in and commitment to its district and community for many years to come".

We love it and have had lots of compliments about it already.

It's going to be an active six weeks for 15 of us - Totally Vets has three teams in the BNZ Workplace Challenge. **Lindsay, Kayla, Rebekah, Hayley, Anna, Charmaine, Kirk, Diane, Ginny, Greta, Margaret, Anita, Lucy, Julie** and **Selena** are all working hard

at increasing their activity level, so if you see us jogging round reception, you'll know why!

Finally, November was a milestone month for **Kayla** who was one score year and one on the 9th and **Brian** who turned three score year and ten on the 12th. Many happy returns to both of them.



Some weaner calf health issues

Hamish Pike

INTERNAL PARASITISM

A wet but mild winter and spring allows large pasture parasite larval populations to survive and challenge young cattle in the late spring and early summer. Calves should be drenched at weaning with an effective oral double or triple combination anthelmintic. Regular drenching with a similar product may be required to prevent clinical parasitism.

Calves younger than 8 weeks of age (or less than 120 kg body weight) are at risk of abamectin toxicity. Drenching calves at this age is unlikely to be necessary; but if you must, it is best to avoid products containing abamectin, such as Converge, Genesis and Matrix. Always follow label and dose rate recommendations.

YERSINIOSIS

Yersiniosis, a common cause of enteritis in young cattle, is usually brought on by stress such as weaning, transportation or inclement weather. Affected calves show general malaise,

listlessness, weight loss and diarrhoea, often containing blood.

COCCIDIOSIS

Coccidia are protozoan parasites causing diarrhoea (often containing blood), and ill-thrift in calves up to 12 months. Straining and a 'pot-bellied' appearance may be features of coccidiosis. Most cattle develop no clinical signs and mount a strong immune response. Like yersiniosis, coccidiosis is often precipitated by stress. Avoid overstocking young animals in warm, moist conditions. Use pre-weaner and weaner feeds that contain a suitable anti-coccidial drug.

PNEUMONIA

Pneumonia is caused by a complex of viruses, bacteria and mycoplasma. A change in environmental conditions can trigger pneumonia. Calves may develop signs 7-14 days after a stressful episode, including a dry cough, lethargy, ill-thriftiness and death. Viral pneumonia is often confused with lungworm.

BOVINE VIRUS DIARRHOEA (BVD)

In calves between 6-12 months of age which are ill-thrifty, with/or without diarrhoea, and have diseases similar to viral pneumonia, coccidiosis, parasitism or yersiniosis, BVD could be the underlying cause. BVD suppresses the

immune system and reduces the calf's ability to fight off challenges from concurrent diseases. In these situations, the probability of a persistently infected (PI) BVD calf running with the mob is high. PI animals excrete huge numbers of BVD virus and provide a continual source of infection. Identify PI animals with blood tests and eliminate the challenge. A BVD vaccine is available.

CLOSTRIDIAL DISEASE

Two vaccinations of a 5-in-1 vaccine four weeks apart at weaning protects calves against the group of bacterial diseases which cause blood poisoning, blackleg and tetanus. 5-in-1 can be used with leptospirosis vaccinations.

POLIOENCEPHALOMALACIA (PEM)

PEM is an induced-vitamin B1 (thiamine) deficiency which is most often triggered by a sudden change in diet. Blindness, incoordination, 'star-gazing' and 'dog sitting' are characteristic signs, although in some situations signs can be fairly non-specific. PEM is often confused with ryegrass staggers which occurs mainly in the late summer/autumn period. PEM responds to Vitamin B1, if diagnosis and treatment is early.

If you have any questions regarding this newsletter article, please do not hesitate to contact your vet at Totally Vets.

Drench-testing time is coming...

Ginny Dodunski

'Why bother drench-testing now that there are two new drench families on the market?'

An analysis presented at Wishnowsky's recent monitor farm day showed the extra cost of changing from an ordinary double combination to one of the new drenches for routine drenching of lambs to be \$2200 per 1000 lambs per season.

For a one-off cost of \$1000 to \$1200 a drench test seems a pretty smart investment - for example at Wishnowskys the three older drench families are performing remarkably well and

it is still logical to be using much cheaper combination products for routine drenching.

But on a number of other farms where we completed drench-testing last season, there was severe drench resistance to a number of chemicals, including the combinations.

So you don't know until you look, but at least once you have tested we can help you make a logical plan that prioritises productivity and looks after sustainability.

Why should you care about vaccinating your farm dogs?

Intervet/ Schering-Plough Animal Health

In the same way that everyone insures their farm bikes and tractor, it is possible to 'insure' the investment made in our farm working dogs. A lot of time and money is spent on breeding or purchasing, training, and then keeping farm dogs fit and healthy.

Dogs are essential to the operation of a farming business and they contribute uncountable hours of labour. However, they are often taken for granted and there are several infectious diseases that can quickly devastate a team and cost a significant amount of money in treatment, lost productivity or even death. Vaccination against these diseases is an essential 'insurance policy'.

Farm dogs have several factors which put them at higher risk of contracting infectious diseases:

- Teams often have a high proportion of young dogs, including litters of pups. Young

unvaccinated dogs are at higher risk of contracting infectious diseases.

- Living and working in close contact with several other dogs. Most infectious diseases are more prevalent where groups of animals are in close contact.
- Farm dog teams are often a very mobile population. This can be as simple as introducing new dogs to the team, or travelling to other properties, or participating in dog trials or other events.

Parvovirus is of particular importance - it is prevalent in New Zealand and the majority of dogs that contract the virus will die. Treatment involves hospitalisation and intensive care and is very costly from both a financial and emotional perspective. Even then, there is no guarantee they will survive. Infected dogs shed parvovirus in their faeces for three weeks or more, and the virus can then survive for months in the environment and be spread on shoes, clothing and vehicles. Unfortunately, veterinarians and farmers around the country still regularly deal with outbreaks of parvo in unvaccinated farm dogs. This is particularly devastating when it is so simple to prevent with vaccination.

My dogs have never had these diseases - Why should this matter to me?

It is almost impossible to completely isolate farm dogs from external contact which may introduce infections onto a property. Think about the other dogs that may come onto your farm - your neighbour's dogs, the fencing contractor's Labrador, the stock truck driver's Huntaway, your relations from town with

their Jack Russell... Have these dogs been vaccinated? Could they be carrying disease that could infect your dogs? How about the people or their equipment bringing infected faeces onto the property on boots or vehicles? These are some of the many ways infection can be introduced onto your farm.

Vaccination is an easy way to protect dogs against certain life-threatening and debilitating diseases.

There are three core diseases which need regular vaccination against in all dogs: distemper, parvovirus and infectious hepatitis. In addition, vaccination against the main causes of kennel cough - *Bordetella* and parainfluenza virus - are important where groups of dogs are living together. In some regions of NZ, protection against leptospirosis is also necessary.

There are two key things for a successful vaccination programme for dogs - completing a primary vaccination in all pups from as early as possible; and continuing with regular revaccination. This is easy with the Nobivac range of dog vaccines.

The Nobivac range provides the only vaccines that will protect pups from 6 weeks old with only two vaccinations. They are also the only vaccines which will protect any dog with an unknown vaccination history with only a single vaccination with Nobivac DHP or DHPPI from as early as 10 weeks of age. This makes vaccination extremely simple.

Dog vaccination is simple and cost-effective. Protect your investment - talk to Totally Vets about vaccinating your dogs today.





Enjoy your summer with a Preston hardwood bar leaner set

Enter the draw for this elegant outdoor furniture when you purchase selected Merial Ancare products from Totally Vets

Three five-piece bar leaner sets to be won



Conditions apply to selected products and availability. Promotion runs from November 2010 to the end of January 2011. Each qualifying purchase entitles purchaser to one entry in the draw. Winners will be notified 14 February 2011.

Congratulations to Des & Wendy Hart

Des and Wendy won the draw for a \$1000 BBQ and gas bottle from purchases of selected Merial Ancare products during the New Building Opening Week Celebrations.



CHRISTMAS HAM

DON'T MISS OUT

PURCHASE SELECTED MERIAL ANCARE PRODUCTS DURING THIS FESTIVE SEASON AND WE'LL SERVE YOU UP A QUALITY KIWI HAM!

Offer only available before Christmas from your local Vet while stocks last.

Choose either a Kiwi 1/2 COB Ham 4.2-5.2kg or Kiwi Banquet Ham 2.9-3.6kg (choice dependent on availability at your local vet)
*Promotion starts 1 November and finishes 22 December 2010 or when stocks run out.