



VET notes

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT ANIMALS ON YOUR FARM

MARCH 2011



Above Richard, Gina, Hugo and Sophia Neale, with Julie at our Palmerston North branch

World Veterinary Year

Paul Wiseman

Celebrating 250 years of the veterinary profession!

2011 marks the 250th world anniversary of veterinary education, the 250th world anniversary of the veterinary profession and will also mark the 250th anniversary of the concept of comparative pathobiology, without which modern medicine would never have emerged.

The world's first veterinary school was founded in Lyon, France, in 1761, shortly followed by the Alfort veterinary school, near Paris, in 1764, both of them at the initiative of Claude Bourgelat, the Grand Equerry of Europe. The Alfort School is the oldest school in the world remaining on its original site. By setting up the world's first veterinary training institutions, Bourgelat created the veterinary profession itself.

Bourgelat's genius did not stop there. As a result of his fruitful collaboration with surgeons in Lyon, he was also the first scientist who dared to suggest that studying animal biology and pathology would help to improve our understanding of human biology and pathology.

The King's Council authorised Bourgelat to 'open a school in which the principles and methods whereby livestock diseases may be cured will be taught in public'. Lyon and Alfort became the cradles where the founders of all European veterinary schools trained in the fundamental tenets of the new art of veterinary medicine.

The following, from Bourgelat's 'philosophical testament', the 'Rules for the Royal Veterinary Schools', which could opportunely be used as an introduction to our modern Code of Practice, reveals the ethical preoccupations of this visionary founder of the veterinary profession:

"Securely anchored in honourable principles which they have prized and of which they have seen examples in the schools, they will never stray from them; they will distinguish between rich and poor; they will not put too high a price on talents which they owe only to the beneficence of the King and the generosity of their country. In short, they will prove by their behaviour that they are all equally convinced that riches lie less in the goods one possesses than in the good one can do".

Congratulations

Congratulations to all three winners from our Merial Ancare bar leaner promotion, which ran from November to the end of January.

All clients who purchased selected Merial Ancare products went into the draw to win one of three five-piece sets.

Richard and Gina Neale (Grantham Dairies) were delighted with their win and were joined by their children Hugo and Sophia at our Palmerston North branch for a picture. Hugo was slightly more impressed with the Totally Vets balloon! Bill and Chris Turner and Tim and Helen Hobson were our winners at the Feilding branch. We hope they all get a good deal of bar leaning out of them!





Totally Vets current stock health

Sheep

Be vigilant watching for Barber's Pole - this blood-sucking worm should be treated with a long-acting drench. Ensure rams are fit and healthy, aim to flush ewes and focus on the tail-end if cover is limited. Plan for 1st May covers, check your drenches are working and take preventative measures for facial eczema now if needed. Get your rams checked for

brucellosis. If your neighbour's rams have it, it's possible that your rams could get it or already have it. Alternatively if your rams have it, it could spread to your neighbour's rams. Talk to your neighbour - it's not just their problem.

Beef

Weaning plans should be in place for drenching, yard weaning and pasture



HA HA

An Australian school teacher tells her class she's a Wallabies fan.

She asks her students to raise their hand if they too are Wallabies fans.

Everyone in the class raises their hand except one little girl.

The teacher says. "Janie, why didn't you raise your hand?"

"Because I am not a Wallabies fan," she replies.

"If you're not a Wallabies fan then who are you a fan of?"

"I'm an All Blacks fan," Janie says.

The teacher can't believe her ears. "Janie why are you an All Blacks fan?"

"Because my mum is an All Blacks fan and my dad is an All Blacks fan also!"

"That is no reason for you to be an All Blacks fan," says the teacher. "You don't have to be just like your parents all of the time. What if mum was a moron and your dad was a moron, what would you be then?" "Then," Janie smiles, "I'd be a Wallabies fan."

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Pregnancy-scanning sheep

Guy Haynes

Once again, it is time for farmers to consider pregnancy-testing their sheep.

Both our experienced operators are able to take on a small number of new clients this season.

What's different from last year? The considerable increase in the price of dry ewes and new season lambs.

What's the same as last year? The cost of scanning.

We encourage those clients who are not scanning to look seriously at the advantages to be gained and to contact one of our operators below for a no-obligation discussion.

ADVANTAGES OF SCANNING INCLUDE:

- Quit non-productive dry ewes early while prices are high and conserve valuable feed for productive animals

- Priority-feed ewes carrying multiples to avoid metabolic disorders and improve birth weights and ewe lactation, thus maximizing lamb survival
- Ensure multiple-bearing ewes are lambing down in what are traditionally the best docking paddocks on the farm to enhance lamb survival and minimise mis-mothering
- Single-bearing ewes can be relegated to more difficult areas of the farm

All of this can result in substantial increases in docking percentages.

We would be happy to discuss your individual requirements and the services we can offer. For more information without obligation, please contact Totally Vets on 06 323 6161, Ross Edwards on 0274 402 032 or Guy Haynes on 0274 555 424.





management. Weaner vaccinations are due, including 5-in-1, leptospirosis and BVD. Organise pregnancy-testing.

Deer

Feed hinds well pre-mating. Vaccinate weaners against yersiniosis and remember lepto and 5-in-1.

Dairy

February climatic conditions have been favourable for facial eczema (FE) spore proliferation. The weekly average minimum

grass temperature has been above 12°C for some time, with spore counts holding in some areas but rising in most. Add a little moisture and March, April and even May spore counts will lift from what have been low to moderate counts. Please refer to our website www.totallyvets.co.nz for our latest FE bulletin. Absolute FE spore counts are probably a less important indicator of risk than a rising spore count. Low counts can sensitise animals to higher exposures. If you're not taking preventative measures then maybe you should be.

Remember that when supplementing with zinc to prevent FE, it is advisable to stop copper treatment. Zinc interferes with the absorption of most forms of copper and animals with FE-damaged livers are more prone to copper toxicity. As zinc treatments come to an end, have stock tested for copper status using liver samples.

Dry-cow therapy consultations are due, if you haven't had yours already. This is also a great opportunity for us to catch up with you about your own situation.

Tetanus, 'blood poisoning' and sudden death syndrome in beef cattle

Hamish Pike

These fatal clostridial diseases are bacterial infections entering the body by ingestion, or through wound contamination.

Disease is often triggered by a sudden change in diet (often from low to high-quality feed), or following an injury. Certain husbandry procedures e.g. docking, poor hygiene or compromised animal handling can also be predisposing factors.

In the case of clostridial diseases, prevention through vaccine is better than cure, as the latter is rarely successful. Death is usually certain, and often sudden (except tetanus).

Over the years, the standard clostridial 5-in-1 vaccines have given, and still give excellent cost-effective protection against tetanus and

'blood poisoning' (blackleg, black disease, pulpy kidney and malignant oedema).

However, sudden death syndrome (*Clostridium sordellii*), although rare, is not covered by the use of the standard 5-in-1 vaccines. Vaccines such as Ultravac 6-in-1 and Covexin 10 provide protection against all of the above diseases. Covexin 10 also covers another four clostridial species.

The vaccines are very cost-effective. Which vaccine you use can be likened to an insurance policy. The decision on which policy (or vaccine) to choose comes down to the level of the premium (vaccine cost), the value of the animal and the level of risk. Generally, rapidly-growing cattle on a high level of nutrition are most at risk. On the other hand,

beef cows on stinky pasture would be least at risk.

If there is no history of previous vaccination, two vaccinations should be administered 4-6 weeks apart. The booster should be given two weeks prior to the risk period e.g. before grazing a crop, docking, or calving. Vaccinating the cows pre-calving will give maximum clostridial protection to their calves for up to 12 weeks of age. After this, calves require two vaccinations 4-6 weeks apart.

An annual booster should be given to all cattle thereafter to provide ongoing protection.

Please feel free to consult a Totally Vets veterinarian if you have any questions.

Sheep measles reminder

Ginny Dodunski

Every season, we field enquiries from sheep farmers who have had lines of lambs downgraded due to the presence of 'sheep measles' (*Taenia ovis*) cysts in the carcasses.

This parasite is spread in the faeces of dogs who have consumed raw sheep meat.

There are comprehensive guidelines available around the treatment of sheep meat to prevent this problem - see the 'sheep measles' article in the 'Sheep' section of our website.

However, given that it can be difficult to prevent dogs getting any access to 'meat' that might be about, the most foolproof method is monthly dosing of all farm dogs with

praziquantel tablets. Dogs on the Totally Vets dog worming programme 'A' are thus covered. It takes 48 hours for a dog to become 'safe' once treated.

It is worth noting that the source of infection is often neighbouring dogs, visiting dogs or roaming dogs. To this end, Totally Vets will be working hard in the coming months to raise awareness of this issue amongst our lifestyle, equine and urban dog-owning clients.



Lame cows and track maintenance

Anita Renes

Now is the time of year to start thinking about track maintenance on your farm. Although only one possible cause of lame cows, tracks are an important part of the equation. Proper construction and regular maintenance of the track, especially the 300-500m closest to the dairy shed, are important in reducing lameness in dairy herds.

Races should be wide enough to allow good cow flow and free movement.

Gateways should be the same width as the track and the track should widen as it reaches the cow shed.

Recommended race widths	
Herd size (cows)	Race width (m)
<120	5.0
120-250	5.5
250-350	6.0
350-450	6.5
>450	Varies with the split of the herd

Design tracks to maximize cow flow.

Avoid sharp angles and turns as this will cause bottlenecks leading to pushing, misplaced feet and lameness. Cow flow is also disrupted by wet, boggy areas. Ensure tracks are adequately drained. Small drains should be cut regularly along the grassy track edge to allow water to flow off. Fix pot-holes early and remove adjacent hedges, or keep them well-trimmed to avoid shading of the track which stops it from drying out.

Choose appropriate materials for your track surfaces.

Use fine, non-abrasive or easily crushable material for the surface of the track, rather than coarse gravel. Examples include: sand, pumice, limestone, sandstone or woodchips. Get expert advice from your area when surfacing tracks. The hardness of a particular stone varies from region to region and the climate can make some materials unsuitable. To check if a material is soft enough to use on the surface layer, grind a small rock into concrete with the heel of your gumboot - it should shatter easily.

Use a professional road/track construction contractor when laying down tracks.

The shape, width, slope and drainage of these tracks will influence how much future lameness occurs and how often track repairs are required.

Pay particular attention to the area closest to the cowshed.

Stones tracked onto the concrete cause sole punctures and bruising. The track material

immediately before the concrete should be soft and easily crushable. A nib wall can be useful to minimize the amount of rock carried onto the yard and ensure yards are hosed regularly to prevent build-up of gravel. Cows often bunch up as they approach the cowshed. Make this area a priority for track maintenance.

Other things that may preserve the life of tracks and reduce lameness include: avoiding the use of farm machinery on cow tracks; minimizing the wetting of tracks by irrigators; and avoid using tracks and races as stand-off pads in wet weather.

Tracks on dairy farms get a lot of wear from hundreds or thousands of feet every day. Regular maintenance is a vital part of any lameness prevention plan.

Some of the information in this article has been extracted from the DairyNZ Healthy Hoof programme - contact Totally Vets for more information.



Gossip

Our large animal technician **Guy** - or should we say **Dr Guy** - had a great time at the Sevens.

It would seem that "having a great time" consists of not remembering much of the event apart from being dressed up like a doctor and

"soaking in the atmosphere" (and other things) for a good 24 hours! Being a little older than the spring chicken he thinks he is, it has taken him a few days to "recover" from the event and he now claims to have the flu.

Margaret and **Paul** are recovering well from their surgery and watch out - Paul feels like

a new man! His new hip feels great, although he's convinced he might be a bit lopsided with one leg feeling longer than the other at this stage. Let's hope things straighten out!

On the subject of holidays, **Nigel** went scalloping in the Marlborough Sounds in early February. The weather meant more

Drying-off, body-condition score and fertility

Greg Smith

There are opportunities going into the final third of lactation from February onward to improve both fertility and the efficiency of feed utilisation. The plan for mating in spring 2011 starts now.

After drying-off, there is only a relatively short period to put extra condition on the cows. The reason for this is that it is not possible for a cow to increase its body-condition score (BCS) during the last 30 days before calving. If the period between drying-off and the start of calving is 8-10 weeks and the median calving date is 18 days after the start of calving, then that leaves 6-8 weeks to add condition to the 'average' cow in the herd before calving.

HOW MUCH BCS CAN YOUR COWS PUT ON BEFORE CALVING?

If a cow is dried-off in BCS 4.0 in mid-May and is due to calve at the median calving

date in early August, she would need to gain at least 1 BCS in 7 weeks to reach the ideal 5-5.5 BCS by calving. That is 0.6 of a condition score per 30 days or 0.7kg per day.

Consider the case of a 450kg cow in her 8th month of pregnancy. To gain 0.7kg, the cow will need to eat 114MJME per day if the average ME of the feed is 10.5 MJ/kgDM. That is equivalent to 10.8kg of dry matter per day.

By comparison, if that cow is dried-off in BCS 4.5 then only half a condition score gain is required and that is only 9.3kgDM per day. How likely is it that you will be able to budget for 10.8kgDM per day from drying-off or even 9.3kg for that matter? And what about those cold wet spells that increase maintenance requirements and blow the budget? Obviously the better the BCS at drying-off, the more likely the target condition score of 5-5.5 will be reached by calving.

WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS BETWEEN NOW AND DRYING-OFF?

1. The first priority is lighter 1st and 2nd calvers. They will benefit from an early drying-off date. Their lack of ability to compete with the older cows over winter greatly reduces their chance of reaching targets in both calving BCS and final

mature weight. The first will affect fertility at the next mating and the second production and longevity.

2. The second priority is low producers. The amount they are eating relative to their production would be better used to improve the production in the remaining cows, while they can be given extra time to gain BCS before calving at lower daily intakes compared to their milking ration.
3. Condition-score the cows at pregnancy-testing - this will give you a benchmark to work with between now and drying-off. The target at drying-off is 4.5 but the average BCS is not the full story as an average can hide a high number of individuals at the extremes, both high and low. More than 15% of cows below 4.5 at calving and more than 15% above 5.5 are both associated with reduced fertility in the herd overall come mating time.
4. Cows are metabolically more efficient at gaining weight while they are still milking. With the target of 4.5 in mind, run a feed budget for increasing the BCS of the herd between now and drying-off. If the budget comes up short, supplements such as maize silage can be used to fill the gap and maize is particularly good at putting condition on cows before drying-off.



snapper was caught than scallops, but it was still a great little break away. At the time of writing, **Christine** was getting ready for her two-week holiday in Northland with her partner **Ewen**. She was most looking forward to visiting Houhora and doing a spot of fishing in Spirits Bay. **Tara** and her partner

Quayne had a blast camping in Kateriteri in Golden Bay.

Craig Tanner is back from Vietnam and his holiday. He has swapped muffins for noodles at morning tea time - possibly something to do with his six months there? Our very own **Trevor** has been in New York at **Pfizer's**

international summit, where he presented a paper on the foreseeable issues of cattle parasite management in New Zealand and Australia in 2020. His jet-lag cancelled itself out as he flew there and straight back - let's hope they changed the films on the plane!

Does the dry weather mean it might be time for drying off?

Leisa Norris-Spring & Emma Scott

Points to consider:

- Feed availability
- Milk yield: cows producing less than 5L per day have noticeable changes in milk composition and quality.
- Cow condition

Condition Score		Days to dry-off before calving
Cows	Rising 3 year-old	
3.0	3.5	120
3.5	4.0	90
4.0	5.0	60
5.0	5.5	Calving

- Persistently high somatic cell count (SCC) contributes to bulk tank somatic cell count (BTSCC), which rises during late lactation.

- Teat lesions
- Slow milkers
- Cows producing <10L per day require no special preparation prior to drying-off.
- Cows producing >10L per day: for three days prior to drying off, reduce protein intake; for the week after, reduce the green feed intake by utilising maize and hay. Reduce total DM intake but UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES withhold water.
- Drying-off abruptly is acceptable. Milking every other day is strongly discouraged and it is not clear if milking once daily is beneficial or not.

The DO's and DON'Ts of DCT:

- Dry-cow therapy (DCT) should be inserted immediately after the last milking.
- Good technique is important: ensure teats are clean from debris; sanitise teats with teat wipes or equivalent; partial insertion (approximately one third) of the nozzle is best; teat spray is essential after DCT or the last milking for those drying-off with no DCT.
- Allow for each labour unit to treat 25-30 cows per hour, no faster.
- Mark cows and record treatment details.

- Don't leave cows in laneways or yards.
- Put cows in a clean paddock.

WHOLE or SELECTIVE DCT?

Herds that had a mastitis problem this year will most likely need to use DCT on the whole herd; otherwise deciding whether your herd has a level of infection requiring whole herd therapy is best left to the DCT consult. Selective DCT is for herds with an 'acceptable' level of mastitis and the criteria for DCT are as follows:

1. Cows over 150,000 ISCC on ANY herd test.
2. Heifers over 120,000 ISCC on ANY herd test.
3. Cows/heifers treated for clinical mastitis.
4. Cows/heifers with teat end lesions.

Selective DCT still leaves the low SCC cows susceptible to mastitis post-drying-off. So the number of cases at drying-off in previous years will be a factor in selecting this option.

Drying-off is an important part of the season and decisions made at this time can impact greatly on the following season. The DCT consult is a good time to discuss your overall situation.

One tag, two tag, white tag, blue tag?

Greta Baynes

The rules regarding tag requirements do not seem to be very well understood. Hopefully this brief article will guide you as to who needs what, when and where.

Historically all cattle and deer more than one month old, being moved to another herd or property needed both a:

1. Primary tag: bar-coded tag with AHB or MINDA number and a
2. Secondary tag: plastic ID tag or a brass tag.

Animals going directly to slaughter needed only a primary tag or a direct-to-slaughter tag which are issued by meat processing companies.

THE RULES HAVE NOW CHANGED.

From now until 1st November 2011, animals being moved to another herd or property need a:

1. Primary tag: bar-coded tag with AHB or MINDA number (has not changed) and a
2. Secondary tag: brass tag, ID tag or a RFID. It is optional to use an RFID for this but by 1 November 2014, all capital stock must have a RFID.

Animals going directly to slaughter need only a primary tag or a direct-to-slaughter tag.

From the 1st November 2011, all calves born must be tagged with a RFID tag before their first off-farm movement or within 180 days of birth, whichever is sooner. The exception is bobby calves less than 30 days old going directly to slaughter which require a direct-to-slaughter tag. Feeder calves moving off-farm do require RFID tags.

Any other cattle being moved to another herd or property, or going to slaughter must have a

RFID tag. Capital stock remaining on the farm have an exemption period until 1st November 2014, at which time they must have a RFID tag.

The requirements are similar for deer but are delayed by a year.

Tag application must be in the middle or inside right ear with the female portion facing forward. This is to minimise tag losses. The universal red applicators can be used but the black 'jaw insert' where the female portion sits must be removed.



Universal applicator with jaw insert removed



Exit-drenching - a new concept in your worm management plan?

Ginny Dodunski

In the last two issues of Vetnotes we've discussed the technical aspects and some possible uses of the two new sheep drench families on the market.

Another application that both are a great fit for is something called 'exit-drenching'. This is not a new concept in some respects. For example where ewes or ewe hoggets had been given a capsule or other persistent product pre-lamb, we have long recommended that they be given a one-off dose of a different (and highly effective) drug at the end of the product's payout time to remove any resistant worms that had established during the time the product was active.

So the point of exit-drenching is to use one chemical of known high efficacy to take out resistant worms that may have established a breeding population during a period of treatment with another chemical.

Aside from the capsule example, the other main use on sheep farms is going to be in lambs that are still on the farm in the autumn, after a summer drenching programme. On some farms, this will only be the replacement ewe hoggets; on many others, there will be trading lambs involved as well.

An example could be that all lambs grazing pasture are given a double combination at monthly intervals for 3 or 4 drenches, the following drench being one of the new actives. However, what drenches are used is heavily dependent on the farm's resistance status. Where it is minimal, there is an opportunity to save money - but you don't know until you find out!

Treating lambs in this way has been shown in modelling studies to be very helpful in slowing resistance development, where other measures to delay resistance are also in place.

The timing of the exit drench is a bit of a compromise. Leave it too late and there may already be significant autumn contamination by resistant worms; earlier on, there are more lambs to give that expensive drench to! Speak to one of us about the timing for your own situation.

A third application for the 'exit' concept is where you are using a moxidectin-based product (Cydectin, Exodus) for Barber's Pole worm protection. After treatment with moxidectin, the drug is absorbed into the animal's body fat and is released over a period of weeks, initially in high concentrations but then 'tailing off' over time. In this 'tail' period,

partially-resistant worms can establish. Although moxidectin has a claim for 5-6 weeks protection against Barber's Pole worm, the same is not true for the other worm species, and they will be coming under this 'tail' effect from as early as a week after dosing. So knocking any of these out before they start laying eggs is a good plan. Therefore:

1. When using moxidectin, keep your dose intervals to around a month. You'll get excellent Barber's Pole control and be less likely to be creating resistance problems in other species.
2. Make sure moxidectin isn't the last drench that animals see in the autumn. Use another, highly effective short-acting product in animals treated with moxidectin - for lambs, around a month later, for ewes, when next convenient.

As mentioned above, the choice of product for exit-drenching will vary depending on what we know about the resistance status of the worms on your farm. Moderate to severe resistance to more than one of the common actives exists on a high proportion of farms in our database. If you have minimal resistance, you are in a fortunate position, but you don't know until you test. And it is not too late to do it this season.

Don't hesitate to get in contact with us regarding drench-testing, any questions you may have on exit-drenching, or indeed any other aspect of sheep worm management!



MERIAL ANCARE 2011 AUTUMN CATTLE AND SHEEP PROMOTIONS

Purchase selected sheep or cattle
drench and receive either a

**FREE DINNER SET
HALF-SLEEVE VEST
STORMBUSTA JACKET**

or a

PLUSH NEW TOWEL SET

Purchase a 2.5L EPRINEX
and receive 250ml FREE

While stocks last

See in-store for details

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Steinlager Totally Vets Classic Golf Tournament

MONDAY 14TH MARCH 2011

Hokowhitu Golf Course, Palmerston North

Stacked Mixed Ambrose teams

11am shotgun start

\$15 per entry (conditions apply)

Nine holes or 18 holes available

Entry fees for either event can be charged to your current Totally Vets account

Contact either clinic for your entry forms

Totally Vets Fishing Competition

SATURDAY 9TH APRIL 2011

Launch from the Castlecliff boat ramp from 6am

\$15 per entry, payable on entry

