



VET notes

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT ANIMALS ON YOUR FARM

DECEMBER 2011

Holiday Hours

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

Normal hours resume on Monday 9 January 2012.

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

Drenching young stock, dos and don'ts!

Allie Quinn

Abamectin is widely used in cattle and sheep for parasite control - either alone or in combination in a range of oral, injectable and pour-on products.

More reports of abamectin toxicity in calves is an important reminder that drenching of young stock must be undertaken with caution.

1. Avoid the use of pour-on preparations in young calves.

The use of pour-ons in young stock is not recommended. Published data indicate variable performance of pour-on products. Greater uptake of drug can occur in warm weather and this can affect both product performance and potential toxicity. Calves are at further risk if they lick other pour-on treated calves. In one study calves that licked treated calves had almost 20 times higher drench levels than calves that did not lick.

2. Don't use abamectin containing products in calves under 120kg or 4 months of age.

Get advice on choosing the right drench for your stock. It is also worth investing in regular checks of drench performance.

3. Don't drench calves when they are feeding from the calfeteria and don't mix drench in milk.

Drenching calves at the calfeteria may be more common practice than thought. It may be easy but it is also easy to cause toxicity. Giving an oral drench with the milk (either in the milk or with a drench gun at the same time as the calves are feeding) bypasses the rumen and can be absorbed more quickly giving higher, more lethal blood levels.

4. Don't swap drench containers.

Do not mix products. Clearly label decanted products. Thoroughly rinse drench equipment between different products. Double check the product being used.

5. Always regularly check your drench gun is accurate and that the dose is correct.

Dosing to the heaviest animal in the mob should not be applied to young animals. Weigh enough animals to get an accurate weight and split mobs if necessary to reduce dose variation.

Further information or advice is available from Totally Vets.





Totally Vets current stock health

Dairy

Your calves are doing well and **suddenly you find one dead in the paddock**. There's a great list of diseases that cause sudden death in calves. Some of these diseases are untreatable but are preventable, including bovine virus diarrhoea (BVD), blackleg and haemorrhagic enterotoxaemia. Others are both preventable

and treatable if you can get to them quickly enough including salmonella, bloat and listeriosis. There are treatments for yersiniosis and polioencephalomalacia (PEM) or thiamine deficiency. Early diagnosis of sudden death in calves will minimise further losses.

Spring eczema seems to be rampant in calves this year. Although there is little to



HA HA

Five-minute management course

LESSON 3:

An eagle was sitting on a tree resting, doing nothing. A small rabbit saw the eagle and asked him, 'Can I also sit like you and do nothing?' The eagle answered: 'Sure, why not.'

So, the rabbit sat on the ground below the eagle and rested. All of a sudden, a fox appeared, jumped on the rabbit and ate it.

Moral of the story: To be sitting and doing nothing, you must be sitting very, very high up.

For hoof's sake - get lame cows sorted??

Allie Quinn

Despite August snow and more than 22 rain days in October, this spring has been a vast improvement on 2010! Nonetheless there has still been a significant number of lame cows to treat.

With bulls out with the cows, silage in and crops sewn, you will hopefully take the time to look back and assess how it all went. Reflecting on your spring, was lameness an issue? Is there an opportunity to make life easier next year??

COST

After infertility and mastitis, lameness is the most common reason cows are culled. Each lame cow costs you \$200 in treatment costs and milk losses. If a cow is then culled or doesn't get in calf as a result of lameness, there's an additional \$1000 in replacement costs.

Plus there are the overlooked costs of staff time and stress in having to manage and treat lame cows.

PREVENTION

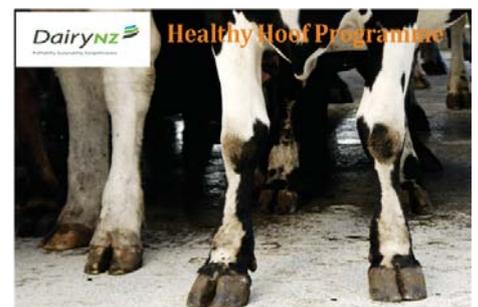
The key to reducing the cost of lame cows is of course prevention - and although there is no 'quick fix' for lameness, getting a preventative process started is easy.

To help farmers tackle lameness, DairyNZ has piloted and promoted **Healthy Hoof** - a straightforward stepwise approach to managing lameness on dairy farms. Better still, **Healthy Hoof** is based on the work of renowned lameness expert and Taranaki based veterinarian, Neil Chesterton.

The purpose of **Healthy Hoof** is to help farmers reduce lame cows through improved management of cows, and people. Although most farmers already have a good understanding of the physical causes of lameness, poor stock flow continues to be a major contributing factor to lame cows.

Healthy Hoof is only offered by registered advisers listed on the DairyNZ website. To help our clients, TotallyVets have invested in training several of our veterinarians in providing the programme.

Take the first step in getting lame cows sorted. To find out more about the Healthy Hoof Programme, contact Totally Vets and have one of our Healthy Hoof advisers give you a call.



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offer on the prevention front, there are palliative treatments that reduce the stress on affected calves and lessen the check they receive.

Why not **have your calves weighed** by Totally Vets when you are **vaccinating against leptospirosis and clostridial diseases?** Growing Great Heifers may be the first step in correcting a poor herd reproductive performance.

Sheep & Beef

The good feed levels produced this spring have produced some great results from the early drafts of lambs and nice improvements in the condition of breeding stock.

Make sure all lambs get a shot of 5-in-1 vaccine around weaning; we've certainly seen more cases of pulpy kidney this year and 5-in-1 vaccine is such cheap insurance against this disease which invariably

knocks over your biggest and fastest growing lambs!

Breeding bulls are carrying more weight this spring and could be more prone to 'sports injuries' whilst out with the cows, so make sure your bull management policy includes good cover for this possibility.

Fly continues to be an issue. Talk to us for options around summer fly control that will also minimise hassles with lice later on.



The question of trace mineral supplementation

Greg Smith

Trace mineral supplementation is undertaken on most farms in New Zealand. To meet that demand, there are plenty of opinions out there as to what is the right amount and the right product to use. The result is a fair amount of confusion not to mention false expectations as to the likely return on investment.

The only way around the uncertainty is to take an objective approach to define the need. That is to firstly establish if there is a deficit to fill, next assess how much supplement is required to fill that deficit, and finally consider the farm system to plan the best option to deliver supplement to the animals in question. To bypass the process runs the risk of excess, reduced cost effectiveness or failure to meet

the need. The steps for an objective approach are as follows:

1. Test animals from the group of interest.
2. Interpret the results considering time of year, future demand and dietary inputs.
3. Assess how much supplement is required and when.
4. Consider the farm system i.e. facilities, equipment, labour, feed system and budget.
5. Decide on the most appropriate way to supplement and the most appropriate product.

WHEN IS ENOUGH NOT ENOUGH?

There are some areas that seem to be continually up for debate. The most contentious perhaps is what level in the blood or liver constitutes enough. Time and again the production-response trials undertaken in New Zealand have failed to demonstrate a further economic response when levels are lifted above the marginal range. If a decision is made to lift levels well above the marginal range, expectations should be realistic. Improved performance beyond what is achieved at the point of sufficiency is unlikely and cost-effectiveness is reduced.

In the planning process described above, the decision to lift levels well above the marginal level may be valid where a period without supplementation or high demand is anticipated. The obvious example of this is the liver copper level in mid to late autumn. Because the liver acts as a reservoir and will maintain normal blood levels and meet normal production requirements even while the liver is being depleted, it is reasonable to use this to our advantage. However for other trace minerals this is not a valid approach.

ORGANIC VERSUS INORGANIC

Organic versus inorganic is another bone of contention. Good trial data comparing these in our pastoral based system are still largely missing. Most of the work is from overseas in cows on cereal-based diets and even in these trials the results are variable. A fair summary of what we know is that organic chelates will provide some advantage in situations involving antagonisms e.g. molybdenum, sulphur, iron or zinc interfering with the uptake of copper. As a result, the benefit cannot be guaranteed in all situations and is likely to be at best modest in most other situations.

Make trace minerals part of your annual animal health review with Totally Vets.



Facial eczema - a bit of history and a cautionary tale

Craig Dickson

Facial eczema (FE) was first reported in 1887 and had a major impact on many areas in New Zealand. It wasn't until the early 1970s that a dental nurse from Te Aroha, Gladys Reid, suggested that the addition of zinc to the drinking water of cattle reduced the symptoms of FE.

Gladys' idea was not embraced by everybody at the time. The Animal Remedies Board went as far as saying that zinc was completely

useless as a form of treatment or prevention of FE in livestock and threatened to prosecute anyone promoting zinc for FE control.

Time moves on! In 1983 Gladys received an OBE for her research and farm suppliers sell large amounts of zinc for FE control without fear of prosecution. We now know that zinc supplementation of animals will protect the liver from the toxic effects of sporidesmin. For good control this supplementation needs to be in place for long enough prior to exposure to toxic levels (three weeks for water trough treatment) and needs to be delivered consistently and at the appropriate rate.

For water treatment the factors that influence zinc intake are:

- Daily water intake which will be influenced by alternative drinking sources, pasture dry matter, daily milk yield and weather
- Zinc concentration in the trough

Daily water intake is difficult to control but the zinc concentration is something that is determined by how much of the stuff we tip into the water supply - so it is critical that we get this bit right.

Let's take a herd of 400 Friesians that weigh on average 500kg. There is no other stock on the milking platform (if there are, they need to be allowed for). We are trough-treating via an in-line water dispenser with zinc sulphate monohydrate.

Each cow needs 28g zinc sulphate MH per day (build up to this level over two weeks). 400 cows x 28g per day = 11200g. Which is a very big number and you're sure you just added one bucket each day last year and it seemed to be fine. It's now four weeks on and you've just noticed five cows with FE. You wander back to the shed to ring the vet and let him know that you think that maybe the Animal Remedies Board had it right when you notice three empty zinc bags sitting in the corner. Three bags used over the last two weeks. Three 25kg bags over the fortnight means that the cows have been getting 5.4kg per day - about half of what they needed. Whoops!

The story may seem contrived but the message is clear. Animals will only be protected from FE if supplementation levels are correct.

What's the goss?

It was great to see so many of our clients and staff taking part in the Tour de Manawatu on the 6th November. Well done to all but a special mention to **Margaret Leyland** who

came 2nd in her age group and 4th woman across the line, with a 3h40 time for the 116km ride - an awesome effort. This was also **Helen Ryan's** son **Liam's** first time in a bike race - watch your back Margaret!

A big welcome to **Aoife Mckeever**, a small animal vet, who joins the hospital team. Aoife will be working one in four Saturdays,

filling in where necessary and will also be on our small animal after-hours duty roster. For those who are wondering how to pronounce this lovely Irish name, it's "ee-fa".

We also welcome **Raewyn Brew**, who will be joining our dog/cat grooming team on a casual basis. Raewyn has a great grooming

Early pregnancy testing

Anita Renes

Is it time to stop making excuses about your herd's reproductive performance? The weather and old cows cop most of the blame but in reality this is not where the main problems lie. It is possible to make significant improvements on your farm. The first step is to look at the information to see exactly where you are, what the issues are and what you stand to gain with improvement.

Early pregnancy-testing involves pregnancy-testing cows approximately 5-6 weeks after the end of AI and then rechecking the non-pregnant (not detected) cows 6 weeks after mating finishes. Ageing of pregnancies can be accurately carried out between 5 and 12 weeks of gestation. Early pregnancy-testing allows us to accurately age pregnancies which in turn produces the following benefits.

- Identification of late calving cows for induction

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

The operational guidelines for routine induction of dairy cattle states that from the 1st June 2012 the level of inductions within an individual herd should not exceed 4% of the herd's total size.

At the time of the first induction injection, cows must be no more than 12 weeks and no less than 8 weeks from their expected calving date. To know this, the cows must be pregnancy-tested at a time that allows the date of conception to be accurately confirmed.

As well as the many management benefits which arise from early pregnancy-testing, the ability to analyse pregnancy and conception rates is vital to monitoring and improving herd reproductive performance. The six-week in-calf rate is a key driver of reproductive performance. This is an indicator of how quickly cows get in calf after the start of

mating and should be a statistic that all farmers know and monitor for their herd. The InCalf target for 6-week in-calf rate is 78%.

Totally Vets is encouraging clients to sign up for Infovet, our new herd information management software. With Infovet we can enter pregnancy testing results directly into MINDA using a tough-book touch-screen computer on-farm, at the time of pregnancy testing. Infovet is very easy to use and allows us to bring up the mating dates of each cow at the time of pregnancy-testing. We can then produce a pregnancy rate graph and Fertility Focus Report to look at reproductive statistics quickly and easily. Other benefits of recording in this way include reduced pregnancy test recording errors and time saved as the data are uploaded to MINDA immediately. It is free to sign up for Infovet.

Early pregnancy-testing may not suit all farms. If you decide to only carry out a single pregnancy test, it is still very important that it is planned well to ensure you gain the most benefit from it.

Talk to your vet now to sign up for Infovet and to ensure your pregnancy-testing occurs at the right time to make the best management decisions for your farm and to start improving your herd's reproductive performance.



background and will be helping **Di** and **Nardiene** out during this busy grooming time.

Sandy, Kayla, Rebekah and **Pauline** all went up to Auckland at the weekend to see Caesar Millan, the internationally renowned dog behaviour expert. All have returned very inspired with his methods and thinking on dog behaviour. Something to make you think: dogs

use their nose, then eyes, then ears to process things - for humans, it's generally the reverse - ears, eyes then nose.

We are delighted **Julie Slattery** has joined our Palmerston North branch on a permanent basis on Mondays, Tuesday and Thursdays from 9.30 to 2, as well continuing to work every other Saturday at the Feilding clinic and also filling

in. Julie has been with Totally Vets/Manawatu Vet Services on and off for just over 13 years, so is a very familiar face to many of you!

Finally, welcome to our two new graduates, **Ryan Carr** and **Helen Mather**, who will be joining the large animal vet team in the New Year - look out for more information in our February Vetnotes.

So what are you drenching your lambs with this year?

Ginny Dodunski

Back in the days when we rotated between three (or earlier, two) drench families on an annual basis, the answer to this question didn't require a lot of thought.

Nowadays the game has completely changed! There is a myriad of combination drenches on the market, two completely new drugs which a year ago seemed unaffordable (but with a \$4.00+ store price are probably now on the radar) PLUS we know so much more about sustainably managing the use of these products, that the approach is not so simple anymore!

However the one message we are still hammering is:

Know the efficacy of the main drench families on your own property

If you don't know - test

Let us help you interpret these to formulate a sensible and sustainable worm management plan

However given that the best time to run a faecal egg count reduction test (FECRT) in our area is probably early February through to early April, you do need to make some decisions now as to what to use until you get your testing done. 'Cause this is the year to do it!

So in simple terms here is what you could do:

1. If you have drench-testing information from your farm that is less than say 5 years old, it is probably still valuable - make some time to come and have a chat to us about it (even if we didn't do the testing, we're not that precious about it!) and get some recommendations for drench use based on what you already know.
2. If you have no info on your farm at all - best practice is to use a triple-combination drench as the routine lamb drench.
3. Book in to do a FECRT later in the summer. We've been doing these for many years and have refined a procedure that is as simple as possible but still collects the maximum information. You can collect the samples or we can.

Once we have the information from this testing we can help you make better decisions around:

- What should your routine lamb drench be?
- What is the best option for Barber's Pole worm control in ewes, in lambs, when and if required - and how do you know when this is?
- Ewe drenching
- How proactive you need to be with solutions other than the drench gun

Trust us - we can help make this exercise as simple and painless as possible, and even when the results are not what you expect, we can set you up with a plan that will help you continue to get the most out of your sheep. And then it's one less thing to waste time wondering about!



Check your rams for brucellosis

Barny Askin

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

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

several weeks apart before the disease can be eradicated from the ram flock.

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

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

The important things to remember are:

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

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



Sheep vaccinations

Barny Askin

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

TOXOVAX

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

One injection will protect the ewe for life. This will almost certainly apply to ewes that receive their first vaccination as a 2-tooth. If however hoggets are vaccinated for toxo then many things such as worm burden, pneumonia, footrot, puberty, struggling to make mating weight etc can affect their ability to mount a good immune response

following vaccination. For this reason it is worth considering vaccinating such animals again as 2-tooths rather than relying on one shot for life if you feel that they were in any way compromised as hoggets.

Vaccinate ewes and hoggets at least one month before the teaser rams join. We recommend not vaccinating hoggets until the end of January at the earliest but any time after this should be OK. Minimise other stressors such as worms at the time of vaccination. The vaccine is very fragile and once mixed, needs to be used almost immediately. Do not use methylated spirits to clean or soak your needles prior to use, as this will inactivate the vaccine.

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

CAMPYLOVEXIN/CAMPYVAX 4

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

Campylobacter is the most commonly diagnosed cause of sheep abortions. Apart from the abortions that we see, it can also be

responsible for lambs born alive but weak and dying after a few days. Evidence is mounting that it can be responsible for losses seen as abnormal foetuses at scanning.

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

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

ANDROVAX/OVASTIM

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

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

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