



# VET notes

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT ANIMALS ON YOUR FARM **SEPTEMBER 2012**



Above: Jo and her Yamaha XVS 1100

## A warm welcome to Jo Weir

We are delighted to welcome Jo, who joined Totally Vets in August. Jo takes on Catherine Toyne's role as the Sales and Reception Team Leader at our Feilding branch. Catherine has opted to move to a PA role to Trevor Cook and later this year to our new CEO, Chris Carter. She will also be tackling all the administration and organisation associated with our Sheep & Beef Extension Group.

Jo originally comes from Upper Hutt and is now settled in the Manawatu with husband Bernie and border terriers Angus and Heidi. She loves motorbikes, a passion she shares with Bernie, and adds that it's great having one bike each (no need to talk to one another!). She also enjoys fitness and is keen to join the gym.

Jo is really looking forward to meeting you all, getting to know you and learning more about you and your animals.

## Farming for Hospice

Paul Wiseman



"The Farming for Hospice programme is an amazing testimony to the generosity of the region's farmers and to the volunteers who co-ordinate it." Roger Clausen - Arohanui Hospice Trustee.

Since 1991, Arohanui Hospice in Palmerston North has been providing specialist palliative care for patients who have life-limiting illness. Care provided by Arohanui Hospice enables patients to achieve the best possible quality of life, and provides support to their families.

Care is free of charge and provided wherever people need it - at the Hospice inpatient unit, at home or an alternative comfortable environment.

Arohanui Hospice is only partly funded by MidCentral District Health Board, and to provide the range of free palliative care services that their patients require, it needs to raise extra funds.

The Hospice therefore looks to the community, who each year, make up a

shortfall in funds to help Hospice patients live every moment.

### FARMING FOR HOSPICE

Since its inception in 1994, local farmers and supporters have raised and fattened thousands of beef cattle to raise money for Arohanui Hospice.

### HOW DOES THE PROGRAMME WORK?

An Hospice representative buys beef cattle and has it delivered to a farmer who has agreed to graze it. When the cattle have reached slaughter weight, arrangements are made to have the cattle killed, and Arohanui Hospice receives the money.

Dairy farmers can also help by donating the proceeds of cull cow sales to the Hospice. Likewise, farmers and lifestyle block holders contribute to Farming for Hospice by donating a share of proceeds when they send animals to the works.

It's easy to get involved with the Farming for Hospice programme.

### CONTACT

**Derek Tuck** 06 323 3070 or  
**Robyn Boyle** 06 350 2240 or  
**email** [farming@arohanuihospice.org.nz](mailto:farming@arohanuihospice.org.nz)

However you choose to support Arohanui Hospice, patients and their families will be grateful.

If Totally Vets is called to an Hospice animal, please remember to tell this to the attending vet.



# Totally Vets current stock health

## Sheep & Beef

Bearing trouble is the most highly visible cause of ewe loss in the lambing period. This year, bearings are increasing but mostly not to the high levels seen last year.

In terms of treatment, plastic commercial bearing retainers and safety pins have a low

success rate; baling twine (not synthetic) is not suitable for freshly-shorn ewes but when tied correctly enables ewes to usually lamb through it; suture material such as nylon, is thin, may rip out too quickly if the ewe attempts to push out the bearing again and may need to be removed prior to lambing depending on where it is placed; 3mm ribbon



HA HA

## Name obsessions

A psychiatrist was conducting a group therapy session with five young mothers and their small children.

'You all have obsessions,' he observed. To the first mother, Mary, he said, 'You are obsessed with eating. You've even named your daughter Candy.'

He turned to the second Mum, Anne: 'Your obsession is with money. It manifests itself in your children's names, Penny, Goldie and Frank.'

He turned to the third Mum, Joyce: 'Your obsession is alcohol... This too shows itself in your children's names: Brandy and Sherry. You even called the cat Whiskey'.

He then turned to the fourth Mum, June: 'Your obsession is with flowers. Your girls are called Rose, Daphne and Poppy.'

At this point, the fifth mother, Kathy, quietly got up, took her little boy by the hand and whispered, 'Come on, Dick, this guy has no idea what he's talking about. Let's go pick up Fanny and Willy and go home.'

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## Will you have a non-cycler problem?

Paul Wiseman

In the lead up to mating, there are indicators you could be monitoring to ensure a good outcome. If you're not meeting any of these key trigger points, mating will be compromised. Monitoring allows early detection and timely adjustment.

Body-condition score (BCS) at calving is your first indicator of the probable success of mating. Cows at less than BCS 5 at calving have 6-week in-calf rates lower than if they had calved in the optimal BCS range of 5.0-5.5.

### Achieve these herd targets and you're on track for a great mating:

- Not more than 15% of cows are below BCS 5 at calving
- Not more than 15% of cows are above BCS 5.5 at calving
- The average BCS loss for the herd after calving is not more than 1.0
- Not more than 15% of cows are below BCS 4 at mating; and
- Cows maintain or gain BCS from the start of mating

Use the following quick checks to ensure that your herd's nutrition is on track, and that no undesired condition losses are occurring.

- Check pastures before and after every grazing
- Check your cows are eating the supplements you offer
- Monitor daily milk solids yield
- Monitor milk protein and milk fat
- Check cud chewing
- Check manure consistency

Take action when:

- A quick check remains abnormal for several consecutive days
- Several quick checks become abnormal at the same time

Don't get caught out by a non-cycling problem. Poor submission rates can be a consequence of too many non-cyclers in your herd at the start of mating. Pre-mating heat detection gives you the option of managing a non-cycling problem early.

The first trigger, BCS at calving, has passed and tells you something.

### The next steps:

1. Organise your pre-mating heat detection and decide what you're going to do if it's not up to target.
2. Check the BCS of your herd at least 2 weeks before mating start date.
3. Check your pre-mating cycling rate.



tape has a proven record of enabling the ewe to lamb through it, when placed correctly using individual stitches.

For more in-depth information on how to treat bearings, as well as other alerts, updates and management prompts for Sheep, Beef and Deer farmers, please subscribe to our In the Loop fortnightly issue by contacting Ginny at [ginnyd@totallyvets.co.nz](mailto:ginnyd@totallyvets.co.nz).

Add acidophilus yoghurt to milk for hand-reared orphan lambs to prevent gastric bloat

and sudden death. Also remember the value of getting dead lambs post mortemed - this can help highlight any issues looking ahead at next year, such as feeding. Just give us a ring to arrange for one of our vets to do this for you.

## Dairy

'Dirty' cows fail to get in calf. Checking your herd for uterine infections and treating 'dirty' cows is a straightforward process that pays dividends. Book in your Metrichecking now.

Before plunging in and treating those high somatic cell count cows from the first herd test, assess your risk, likely response to treatment and what other options might be available to you. Our data management software, Infovet, can be hugely helpful in assessing mastitis issues.

Fertility testing of herd bulls used for natural mating is simply commonsense. Bull failure cannot be repaired once it has happened.

Book your bull fertility testing with us ASAP.



# Totally Vets Supporters' Partnership - supporting our community

**Gaye Stein**

Totally Vets is delighted to be able to contribute to our rural schools and sports clubs through our Supporters' Partnership. Over twelve years \$129,600 has been distributed to the participating rural schools and sports clubs of our district.

This year we gave back over \$8,500. This was allocated to 30 of our participating rural schools and clubs with an average return of more than \$280.

- Benefitting from an above average return this year, Halcombe School will be using their contribution to finish off their

Environmental Area where they have planned native planting, pathways, gardens and a worm farm. Sue Simpson, Halcombe School's Principal, is very grateful for the support of the Totally Vets clients who have chosen Halcombe School as their beneficiary.

- Hiwinui School included a shout out to their supporters in their first school newsletter of term three thanking them for their support. By including our sign-up form with their newsletter, three new supporters have since signed up, choosing Hiwinui School, which will hopefully lift their share of the pot next year. The funds they received this year are going towards their Annual Lamb, Calf and Pet Day which they promote as a community event with ex-pupils and neighbouring families encouraged to come along on the day.
- Feilding Old Boys Oroua Rugby Football Club has a very loyal following with clients contributing around \$35,000 over the twelve years the scheme has been running. This is on top of the sponsorship provided directly from Totally Vets. This contribution is essential to keep this community icon functioning as well as it does.

What is the Supporters' Partnership? How does it work? How can you be involved?

Supporters' Partnership is a Totally Vets in-house rebate system in conjunction with Merial Ancare and Pfizer Animal Health. Whenever qualifying products are purchased from Totally Vets, in either Feilding or Palmerston North, nominated schools or sporting associations are allocated a rebate. This is not an increase in the cost of any product, but a contribution from the participating suppliers and Totally Vets. For every qualifying purchase made with Totally Vets, a percentage of the value of that purchase goes to our clients' chosen beneficiary.

At no cost, you can nominate which rural school, sports club or community group you wish to support. The payments are assembled and distributed to the school or club at the end of Totally Vets trading year.

If you have animals that require drenching then you may be purchasing worming products that contribute to the Supporters' Partnership scheme. If you are not already a member and wish to sign up, a copy of the Supporters' Partnership information, registration form and product list can be obtained at either clinic or by contacting us on [admin@totallyvets.co.nz](mailto:admin@totallyvets.co.nz).

We thank all involved for participating in our partnership and are pleased to be part of the success of our Rural Communities.

# Orphan lambs

Leisa Norris

For various reasons, sometimes lambs are left without a mother. If you adopt a lamb this year, some important points to remember include.

## DAY ONE

Ensure the lamb is warm enough. If it seems depressed, feels cold and is reluctant to move then it may be suffering from hypothermia (body temperature 1-2°C below normal), so drying it off and taking it home to a warm sheltered environment is vital. HOWEVER, hypothermic lambs also require an injection of glucose into the abdomen PRIOR to warming. If this is your situation, give us a call.

Check if the lamb is strong enough to nurse by putting your finger in its mouth. If it is unable to suck, it will require tube feeding at 2-3 hour intervals until it gains strength. Again, give us a call.

The navel should be sprayed using iodine solution ASAP after birth.

## FEEDING

Within the first 6-12 hours, a lamb needs colostrum which is energy, antibody and nutrient dense and is vital for survival and lifetime wellbeing. At minimum, 3-4 feeds of 100-200ml per lamb per feed are required, but if possible continue feeding colostrum for 3-4 days.

After colostrum feeding, a suitable lamb milk replacer is required, at a temperature slightly above normal body heat (approximately 40°C), and at feeding rates recommended on the bag.

Remember that more is not necessarily better and over-feeding is likely to induce scours. If a lamb is hungry, it will let you know, is often hunched up and will 'cry'!

## ENVIRONMENT

Lambs require shelter, quality pasture, fresh water and companionship...

## VACCINATIONS

Clostridial vaccination is the most important and the course required depends on the vaccination status of the ewe:

Ewe fully vaccinated - vaccinate lamb at weaning with booster in 4-6 weeks.

Ewe not vaccinated - give lamb vaccine prior to docking followed by TWO shots of clostridial vaccine 4-6 weeks apart (i.e. need 3 shots total!).

**DOCKING of TAILS** & castration is normally done with rubber (elastator) rings placed around the tail at the desired level and around the base of the scrotum ensuring that both testicles are present. Best done at a few days to several weeks old.

**DRENCHING:** Depends on your situation (stock numbers/types/classes/ages etc) but generally start at weaning and drench every 6-8 weeks for a series of 6 treatments and then as required. Totally Vets can help make a suitable plan for you.

**SUPPLEMENTS:** The main one to consider is selenium as deficiency can result in white-muscle disease. The minimum recommended dose of 2ml is too much for a newborn (products for cattle are too strong for lambs), 0.5ml should be adequate in most cases.

...Good luck and enjoy!



## What's the goss?

**Guy** and **Meryl** had a great time at the **Kenny Rogers** concert in Auckland in August. Kenny, who turned 74 a few weeks ago, very obviously

still 'has it' with the girls. A bra was tossed at him by a young lady during the show. Always the performer, Kenny carried on crooning while his band members had a chuckle in the background. Guy and Meryl went on to Phuket in Thailand to recover from the event and catch up on some sunshine, Thai food and a number of golf rounds.

We have some new babies at Totally Vets! **Lilly** (**Ryan's** German Short-Haired Pointer pup), **Jud** (**Chrissy's** Rottie pup) and **Gus** (**Hayley's** Lab/Huntaway pup). All their owners are all very excited about their new bundle of fur. **Kellie** also popped over to Australia to visit her baby nephew **Marin** born in mid August and had a wonderful time.



# Be ready for ticks this fawning!

Hamish Pike

Last summer/autumn boded well for the winter in terms of pasture cover. Although this has benefits in terms of over-wintering stock, it also has potential to boost tick numbers especially on properties with an annual tick problem.

Because of their lifecycle, adult ticks tend to be most prevalent around fawning time. Newborn fawns will have around half a litre of blood. If say 160 ticks each ingest 1ml of blood over 3-5 days, fawns can lose a third of their blood volume in this time - death is inevitable.

The challenge is to decrease tick numbers before fawning. Once ticks are established, eradication is generally impossible. Farm history often dictates whether control measures need to be introduced. It is possible to gauge tick numbers by dragging a towel

through individual paddocks and counting the attached ticks (or nymphs). This can be done from September/October. At this time, the ticks will be around 2-3mm long.

Bayticol® pour-on can be applied to hinds every three weeks from August through to fawning. This will reduce nymph numbers reaching the adult stage and infesting fawns in November-December. Although relatively expensive (@\$1.60 per dose), Bayticol is very effective. Alternatively, you could treat at periods when the ticks start to re-appear on the hinds. Some ticks however, would have already engorged and dropped off, therefore continuing on the lifecycle. Ticks inhabit under the jaw in adult deer, but also around the ears and face, and under the belly.

Where paddocks are heavily infested, removal of ticks from pasture can be achieved through high-density grazing using cattle, sheep or deer. After four days, the stock can then be removed from the paddock and treated.

Bayticol® is registered for cattle and deer only, and will continue to kill ticks for about three to six weeks. Showers or sprays containing organophosphates are effective in sheep. Synthetic pyrethroids can also be used in sheep, provided they are applied using a hand-held jet sprayer.

Alternatively, pastures can be sprayed with Diazinon 80%. This is best applied during a dry spell on intended fawning paddocks where pastures have been grazed fairly low in the spring. For areas where there is a severe annual tick problem, pastures should be sprayed in late autumn. Re-grassing or cropping a paddock will also reduce the tick population.

Fawning paddocks should have relatively even pasture covers. It is important that these paddocks are hard-grazed late winter/early spring to reduce tick numbers (through ingestion, trampling and desiccation). An alternative is to use silage aftermath, harvesting as close to fawning as possible. Topping paddocks is generally not recommended unless the cut grass can be removed.

It has been suggested to have hinds fawning next to unoccupied paddocks. These paddocks can be grazed very low in early summer by other stock. This will allow the paddocks to recover before shifting.

Spelling paddocks for 12 months will have an effect on the lifecycle, but is often not practical, and may not be totally effective if the area is heavily populated by other warm-blooded wildlife (ticks are not fussy!).

On the sporting front, **Suzanne** and **Di** both took part in the Palmerston North running races on 12th August. Suzanne cracked out a 49:25 for her 10km race and Di did a personal best for her half-marathon (21.1km) with a 2:20.35. Well done girls, and to all those who took part on the day - it wasn't the nicest weather for a

running event with huge downpours and windy conditions.

Finally, we were absolutely stoked to be awarded Best Rural Business at the Feilding Business Awards on the 25th July. Nine of us attended the Awards and really enjoyed the evening organised by Feilding Promotions.

This award is entirely based on customer service and we are fortunate to have a wonderful team of people who deliver this service. However, without our clients, we wouldn't have a business - so thank you all for your loyal custom and feedback over the years. We look forward to many, many more years together.



## Are your heifers ready for mating?

Allie Quinn

The stage at which a heifer will reach puberty and begin fertile heats depends on several factors including liveweight, age, nutrition, body-condition score and breed. A New Zealand study has shown that younger heifers and heifers with a lower body-condition score are less likely to have reached puberty. This means that up to 40% of heifers in New Zealand dairy herds will not have had a fertile heat by the planned start of mating!

Despite this, many undergrown heifers still get in calf! Why? Probably because there is an excess of feed around during

the mating period and heifers are likely to have reasonable daily weight gains during this time. Don't be fooled! - the full effects of not achieving heifer targets will not be seen until later as lower lifetime milk solids production, lower body-condition scores and poorer reproductive performance at their next mating.

A profitable dairy business relies on good reproductive performance and heifers are a major part of this profitability. A key thing to do before mating starts is to weigh your heifers. Target bodyweights for heifers at mating should be around:

<b>Friesian</b>	320 kg
<b>Crossbred</b>	290 kg
<b>Jersey</b>	260 kg

Having liveweight information is valuable - if you have achieved targets, great! If targets haven't been achieved, you have the information to be able to make changes. If you have heifers below target weight, here are some actions to take.

- Implement a feeding strategy to get weights up early in the mating period. Make sure you have a plan to monitor heifer growth and body condition right through to calving.

- Consider applying heat detectors to heifers to check submission rates during the early mating period.
- Give heifers a mating head-start - plan to start mating heifers around 7-10 days earlier than the main herd.
- Use a heifer synchrony programme. Synchrony has a number of benefits here:
  - Synchrony programmes can "kick-start" cycling in heifers that haven't quite reached puberty.
  - Early cycling/early calving heifers have more time to recover and get in calf next season.
  - Early calving heifers help tighten the calving pattern, with more days in milk.
  - In addition, if you combine heifer synchrony with AI, there is potential for faster genetic gain with more recorded heifer calves.

**Totally Vets offers a range of services from heifer weighing, condition scoring and mating management through to fully supervised heifer-grazing programmes. For more information, talk to your vet when planning your herd mating.**

# What's up with those dirty cows?

greg Smith

The considerable effort that has been put into researching endometritis is consistently finding that this problem does not happen overnight.

In fact the uterus in 80-100% of cows is routinely contaminated with bacteria during the first two weeks after calving. In healthy cows, this contamination diminishes substantially over weeks 3-4 after calving but for problem cows the infection becomes ongoing. So exposure to bacteria is almost universal but disease is occurring in some cows only. For endometritis, the prevalence is reported to be in the range of 5-26% of the herd with the average around 17%.

The evidence is now compelling that both metritis and endometritis are associated with reduced feed intake, a negative energy balance and a compromised immune system, and that these changes are detectable beginning approximately 2 weeks before calving. That is cows that develop metritis or

endometritis are already different from their healthy herd mates before calving and the changes are starting 3-7 weeks before the metritis or endometritis is evident.

In a pasture-based system common to most NZ farms, the reasons for the reduced feed intake and associated negative energy balance are most likely based around feed quantity and quality. The quantity will be limited by the grazing residuals employed with competition between cows accounting for the haves and the have nots. If feed pads are used, then the space per head allotted for access to the feed troughs can become limiting. The feed quality will most likely be limiting if the supplements on offer - in particular baleage or pit silage - are not ideal. Weather could also play a role by reducing the time spent foraging.

## METRICHECKING AND TREATING ENOMETRITIS

In view of the above, it is not surprising that endometritis is not just limited to the at-risk cows. Just to refresh your memory, at-risk cows are those that have had retained foetal membranes (RFMs), metritis, twins, a purulent vaginal discharge and a major calving assist. Assisted calvings that did not require prolonged intra-uterine manipulation of the calf are not included but cows that had milk fever (or ketosis) are probably more at risk than the general population, so should be included.

However, as the at-risk cows account for only 30-35% of cases, a significant number will be

missed if the rest of the herd is not checked. The metricheck is the most practical means of detecting cows with endometritis and is quick enough to allow the whole herd to be checked efficiently.

The best time to identify and treat cows has been a large part of the research discussion to date. Earlier treatment between 2 and 4 weeks after calving was put forward as being more effective in one study; but in other research, cows identified and treated more than 4 weeks after calving showed equivalent reproductive performance as measured by parameters such as conception rate to first service and days until pregnant.

Therefore the current practice of metrichecking the herd around 2-3 weeks prior to the planned start of mating is the most practical from a management point of view and cure rates will be similar to checking and treating the herd in batches. A possible refinement to the whole herd metricheck is to examine and treat the at-risk cows at an earlier visit if they calved during the first 3 weeks after the planned start of calving.

Also the thicker and more purulent the discharge, the harder it is to effect a cure. Therefore, if cows are observed to have a vaginal discharge, drafting these at the next vet visit rather than leaving them for the whole herd metricheck would improve their chances.

# Salmonellosis

Allie Quinn

Salmonellosis is an important bacterial disease of all animals - including humans. It occurs in two main forms in New Zealand livestock, enteric (gut) infections and abortions.

In sheep and cattle, enteric salmonellosis causes diarrhoea and sudden death. To date, abortions have occurred mainly in sheep and mainly in the south island.

*Salmonella* infection may affect only a few animals to a large number of animals in a group. Deaths rates can range from high to low.

There is always a risk of salmonellosis in any livestock management system. Carrier animals, showing no signs of disease, will be present

in most cases. Carriers will shed and spread *Salmonella* bacteria in response to a variety of risk factors including transport, poor weather, pregnancy, stocking density and feed changes. However, salmonellosis can occur in otherwise healthy well fed stock.

## SHEEP

In sheep, affected animals are often found dead. It is most common in two tooth and older sheep during mid-late pregnancy through late summer to winter. Sick sheep are weak and may have foul smelling diarrhoea. Deaths can range from a few isolated animals to 20-30% of the flock.

## DAIRY HERDS

Over the last 18 months, salmonellosis outbreaks in local dairy herds have been challenging. Fortunately, death rates have been low, but overall production losses and treatment costs have been significant.

A NZ survey has been conducted to look for risk factors for salmonellosis in dairy herds. The survey found that use of a pelletised mineral supplement, home mixing of minerals and the use of concentrates, apart from PKE, (e.g. wheat bran pellet, kibbled maize etc) to be risk factors.

## TREATMENT

Early diagnosis and treatment is the key to reducing deaths and minimising production losses. Hygiene is important.

## PREVENTION

Due to the widespread and unpredictable nature of salmonellosis, prevention is the best approach. Vaccination is an important tool to help reduce the disease risk. *Salmonella* infection can spread to humans. Totally Vets can help identify and manage other at risk factors with you.

# It Starts Now - The Manawatu Mating Event

**Come along to this one stop shop and  
kick your mating plan into action**

Heat detection and staff management  
Non cyclers - detection and treatment

Nutrition and body-condition score  
Bull management

Hear from local vets, farmers and DairyNZ. LIC will also be there to answer questions over lunch. Register now and we can have your Fertility Focus Report ready for you at the door. Walk away with an action plan specific to your farm!

**Thursday 13 September 2012**

10.30am - 1.30pm Te Kawau Memorial Recreational Centre, Wye Street, Rongotea  
Morning tea and lunch provided



For more information and to register contact:

Lindy Crawford  
Events & Administration Co-ordinator  
0800 4 DairyNZ

P 06 350 5214  
E [lindy.crawford@dairynz.co.nz](mailto:lindy.crawford@dairynz.co.nz)  
[www.dairynz.co.nz/events](http://www.dairynz.co.nz/events)



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