



VET notes

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT ANIMALS ON YOUR FARM

NOVEMBER 2013



Newbury School Pet Day: Kobe with Chocolate followed by Haana with Lia

Pet Days in full swing

Spring means Pet Days and Totally Vets finds it very rewarding sponsoring ribbons for 26 rural schools across the Manawatu.

As well as supplying ribbons, we offer ourselves as judges in the Pet section. Vets and support staff attend the Pet Days, which include cats, dogs, rats, chooks, chinchillas, budgies, ducks and even red-eared terrapins. It's sometimes very difficult to pick a winner! Our shearing and pet care demonstrations at Newbury School have also been very popular with the children and their parents.

This year, we have enjoyed providing free pet lambs vaccinations, to help maximise the chances of that special pet lamb making it to Pet Day!

If you would like us to be involved in your Pet Day, please contact Hayley Oldfield (Feilding), Anna Huston (Palmerston North) or Lana Vethaak (Taumarunui) and we can arrange to send a Totally Vets representative to your School to help make Pet Day a success.

Farm Focus: Ian, Steph & Sam Strahan

Ian & Steph Strahan

When thinking about what farming direction we've been heading in the last 10 years, the answer seems to be south; but in a good way. That is towards more intensive country lower in the Manawatu.

The original Apiti breeding/finishing block that Sam was raised on was sold in 2005 to expand the home Kiwitea finishing block. After considering converting some of the 400ha effective Kiwitea farm, a winter run-off beside the Rangitikei River near Halcombe was bought in 2006 and in 2011, we purchased a 100ha dairy farm in the silt country of the Taonui basin near Rangiotu.

At Kiwitea, Steph and I farm in partnership with Sam. The farming philosophy we follow

is to grow stock as fast as possible so that as much grass as possible is converted into livestock growth rather than used for animal maintenance. This is done by growing as much grass as we can by regrassing paddocks every five years and matching the feed demand to the supply throughout the year. Last year, this meant finishing and grazing over 17,000 lambs, 810 steers and 480 dairy grazers.

Due to ad lib feeding and a health plan that was started by Trevor and Ginny when we were Monitor Farm from 2003 to 2006, we don't see as much of our vet as we once did on a day-to-day basis, because with the right health advice and planning, the livestock are healthier. One of the few times we see Hamish at Kiwitea is to pregnancy-test dairy heifers. This relationship has continued at the dairy farm, drawing on the knowledge of Allie and Fraser at Awapuni to plan for health and production.

With sharemilkers Jarrod and Nicki Greenwood, assistant Paul Mercer and at Kiwitea, Nick Smith joining Theresa Hollister, Sam and I earlier this year, the end of year dinner shout looks to be a lot busier than 10 years ago when the family used to just take Theresa out for dinner!



The Strahans: Ian, Steph, Olive, Isla, Edie and Roger



Eddie Strahan enjoying feeding Jack



Totally Vets current stock health

Dairy

Monitor your **submission rate**. If you are targeting a 78% 6-week in-calf rate to maximise production, 90% of cows available to be mated should have been put up in 21 days. Also, be aware that cows returning to service in the second round of mating, when pasture quality is declining, may be

easily missed by you and her herd mates. By monitoring milk protein percentage and daily per cow milk yield (they should not be falling!), you will get an early indication of any problems. Cows need energy on the day to be able to spare some for heat behaviour. Cows with inadequate energy may not show heat or may stand for less than an hour.

HA HA

Listen to your trainer

A champion jockey is about to enter an important race on a new horse. The horse's trainer meets him and says "All you have to remember is that every time you approach a jump, you have to shout, 'ALLLEEE OOP!' really loudly in the horse's ear. Providing you do that, you'll be fine."

The jockey thinks the trainer is mad. The race begins and they approach the first hurdle. The jockey ignores the ridiculous advice and the horse crashes straight through the jump.

At the second hurdle, the jockey, somewhat embarrassed, whispers 'Aleeee oop' in the horse's ear. The horse crashes straight through the jump.

At the third hurdle, the jockey thinks, "It's no good, I'll have to do it," and yells, "ALLLEEE OOP!" really loudly. The horse sails over the jump and all the other jumps but only finishes third due to the earlier problems.

The trainer is fuming and asks the jockey what went wrong. The jockey replies, "Nothing is wrong with me - it's this horse. What is he - deaf or something?"

The trainer replies, "Deaf?? DEAF?? He's not deaf - he's BLIND!"

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Kopane School calf-rearing scheme

For over a decade, Kopane School has run their annual calf-rearing scheme which has always been a huge fundraising success for the school. This scheme has been co-ordinated by Brenden Print for the last 10 years. It has been hugely supported by the community and local businesses with the donations of milk powder and meal.

This is the fourth year Totally Vets has supported the calf-rearing scheme in the form of milk powder, and we are grateful for their contribution.

In the past, the money raised has contributed towards upgrades to the library, playground, shade covers and the multi-purpose room, to name a few.

The calves are either donated by local farmers or purchased by the school. Previously, the calves were handed out to participants who were willing to rear them for several months. However NAIT changes have made it difficult for small lifestyle block holders who don't have wand scanners to make the transfers, so this year Brenden Print has kindly offered to rear the calves in one mob.

This year, we have 22 healthy Friesian bull calves as well as three extra donated calves from from Roger Voss, Alastair Rowe and Bruce Hockley who have been associated with Kopane School. This will give us a total of 25 calves for 2013, which will be sold as weaner calves in early December.

This calf-rearing scheme is an ideal way to keep in touch with past families and other associated community members who have had a connection or attended Kopane School.

Kopane School could not run this calf-rearing scheme without the help of local businesses who contribute to the scheme and families from the school who donate money towards milk powder.

If you would like support the Kopane School calf-rearing scheme for this year, either contact the School Office on 06 324 8717 or Brenden Print on 06 329 0902.



Cases of coccidiosis in pre-weaner calves have been noted. Ideally, continue to use a calf meal with a suitable coccidiostat. If at all possible, avoid using the same paddocks for calves year after year, and be sure to take quick action by contacting us if calves are not thriving as expected!

Sheep & Beef

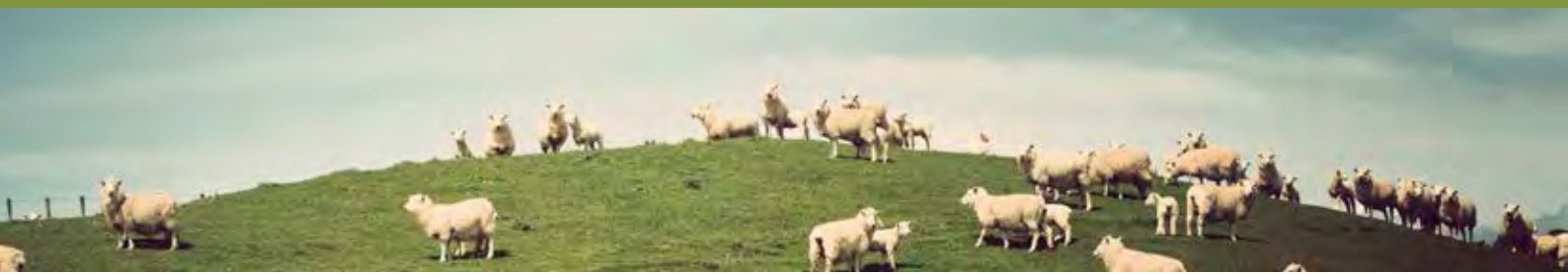
Bloat has been prevalent this season, in all classes of cattle. Clover, a dominant pasture,

is the classic 'culprit' but bloat also occurs on recently-sown short-rotation ryegrass swards with low clover content. There are a number of ways to manage this so talk to your vet about the best approach for your place.

Finishing cattle should be 5-in-1 or 10-in-1 vaccinated. Deaths from **clostridial disease** can be hard to distinguish from bloat and occur more commonly when cattle are growing well on high-quality feed.

Well-conditioned beef cows, especially those with a splash of dairy blood, may be more prone to **metabolic issues** this year. Dead cows are a major cost and hassle, especially if they already have a calf at foot, so have a chat with your vet about prevention.

Lambing ewe hoggets should be weaned once lambs are 10 weeks old to allow mum time to grow out to a decent 2-tooth. Plan for a place to put these lambs as they require very good feed with low parasite challenge!



Ewe vaccinations

Mark Eames

You're only just getting lambing out of the way and now we're going to tell you to start thinking about ewe vaccinations for next year.

'Toxo' (toxoplasmosis) and 'Campy' (campylobacteriosis) are two potentially devastating abortion-causing diseases for which we have very good vaccines. While a farmer may get away with not vaccinating for years, there is no telling when a Toxo or Campy abortion storm might hit, the consequences of which can be devastating. Also, abortion storms aside, there is a 3% increase in lambs born to Toxo-vaccinated flocks and up to 9% increase in Campy-vaccinated flocks. This increase in lambing percentage easily covers the cost of vaccinating.

TOXO

Toxoplasma gondii is a protozoan parasite with a complex lifecycle that includes cats and sheep. The classic Toxo outbreak is where cats

are breeding in the hayshed, defaecating in the hay and then the infectious oocysts are spread on pasture when feeding out. Whilst this is the classic story, there are variations on this which include contaminated drinking water and spread by rodents and small birds.

Toxo has also been isolated from ram semen which means that an infected ram may transmit the infection during mating.

Interesting fact: cat faeces can contain 1,000,000 oocysts per gram and only 200 oocysts are sufficient to infect one ewe. Therefore, theoretically one gram of cat poo could infect 5,000 ewes or 50g of cat poo could infect 250,000 sheep!

Once infected, a sheep remains infected for life, and abortion only occurs in ewes that are exposed to Toxo for the first time while pregnant. This is good for us in that one vaccination with a live vaccine gives lifelong protection from abortion. It is very important that this vaccine is given at least 4 weeks prior to introduction of rams, including teasers.

Toxovax®, being a live vaccine, has a short shelf life and must be treated carefully. It must be kept cool but not frozen, and protected from light. Due to its vulnerability, we need you to plan ahead, order early and be accurate

with dates you'd like us to get it in for. Oh and don't leave it sitting on the dash in the hot sun while you have a 'quick pint' at the Chelty on the way home!

CAMPY

The other major cause of abortion in sheep in NZ is *Campylobacter fetus fetus* (aka vibriosis). Other strains of *Campylobacter* have also been implicated in abortion. This is another disease for which we have a very effective vaccine.

Abortions due to Campy usually occur in the last trimester of pregnancy in maiden ewes and often, the aborting ewe shows no other signs of illness. Aborted foetuses may just be found in the paddock or ewes may be seen with a blood-stained back end or membranes hanging out the vulva.

Campylovexin® and Campyvax® are killed vaccines that should be given pre-tupping. Unvaccinated ewes need two shots 4-6 weeks apart. In following years, one shot pre-tupping is sufficient for full protection. Either the first or second shot in maiden ewes can be given at the same time as Toxovax®.

Place your orders for Toxovax®, and Campyvax® or Campylovexin® before Christmas.

The low-down on early pregnancy-testing

Leisa Norris

Herd reproduction (or lack of!) is one of the key production limiting components that can severely affect profitability on your dairy farm. Factors that limit good reproductive performance are well recognised and are at the core of the Dairy NZ InCalf model. InCalf is an excellent tool for identifying and monitoring these limiting factors in your herd.

To highlight in dollar terms just what an effect reproduction can have (using figures based on a 300-cow herd), lowering your empty rate from 12% to 8% could earn you an additional \$12,000 pa. Increasing your 6-week in-calf rate from 65% to 72% could earn you \$8,400 pa. In total an increase in operating profit of \$20,400 pa!

The key benefits of using the InCalf model to achieve a successful reproduction performance are:

- Better understanding of herd reproduction = more informed and hence better decisions
- An improved 6-week in-calf rate = increased days in milk
- A reduced empty rate = reduced herd wastage

Early pregnancy-testing is a really important first step that is necessary to enable the gathering of information. It allows accurate aging of pregnancy which produces these benefits:

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

Early pregnancy-testing involves testing cows 6 weeks after the end of AI (that's now!) and then rechecking the non-pregnant (not detected) cows 6 weeks after mating finishes.

As well as the many management benefits of early pregnancy-testing, the ability to accurately measure key performance indicators 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 is a statistic that all farmers should know and monitor for their herd.

The InCalf target for a 6-week in-calf rate is 78%.

Clients enrolled with Infonet can enter pregnancy-testing results directly into MINDA using a tough book touch screen computer on farm. Infonet 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 Infonet recording include reduced recording errors and time saved as the data are uploaded to MINDA immediately.

However, early pregnancy-testing may not suit all farms so we encourage you to discuss your thoughts and needs with your vet. If the decision is 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. So, talk to your vet now and 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!



Gossip

Kirsten Dalziell competes at the World Angus Forum Youth Challenge

Huge congratulations to Kirsten, who was selected for and attended this event. The Forum attracted more than 500 Angus breeders, farms and associated companies from around the world, with the Youth Team competition running alongside it.

Here is her account of the Challenge - sounds like she needs time off after her adventure!

From 11th to 16th October, 10 teams of four from Canada, Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand came to New Zealand to compete in the first ever World Angus Forum Youth Challenge held in Rotorua at the Agridome and the Energy Events Centre.

I was lucky to be one of 12 Kiwis picked and was placed in the NZ Team Green, made up of Lauren McWilliam (Captain), Taratahi Marketing Manager, Emma Pollitt, a shepherd from Gisborne and Matt Herries, an Ag student at Lincoln University.

Ten Angus studs from all over New Zealand supplied a total of 40 heifers that they had

Get on with that drench test!

Ginny Dodunski

For the 12 of you who have completed a Faecal Egg Count Reduction Test (FECRT) on your farm in the last 4-5 years, reading this article is optional. For the rest, read on for some good reasons why 2014 would be a great year to get this job tidied up!

Drench resistance testing, like many of the health checks we like to avoid or 'defer', is not a pleasant job. We might not like the results and the changes we may have to make might be unpalatable. And it is another jolly cost.

But like those personal health check-ups, when you let them slide, there is always that bit of doubt in the back of your mind, wondering what is really going on unseen, as well as the long-term cost of not knowing where you're at.

And isn't it a relief when you finally do get around to getting yourself looked at; the majority of the time the situation isn't as bad as you might have feared, and even if it is, at least you now have a plan and course of action to get on with, instead of just worry.

So why not make 2014 the year that you ditch the niggling worry, do your FECRT and let us help you with a subsequent worm management plan that protects both stock performance and sustainability.

Local parasitologist Phil McKenna has done a great job in recent years of comparing the various methods of doing a FECRT. He has shown that the more simplified versions are just as accurate at diagnosing resistance as the 'gold standard' test that some of you may have done in the past. We have modified our protocols to reflect this, which will save you time and money.

Since the early 2000s, NZ researchers have lead the way in studying drench resistance and how to manage it. We now have clear, practical strategies to help reduce further development of resistance on individual farms, but these do vary according to the start point. On farms with minimal resistance, continuing to use double-combination drenches may be entirely justifiable. On others with impending severe resistance, simply switching to a triple combination, or even one of the new actives, may not be enough.

It is near impossible to pick which of these categories a farm falls into just by the look or performance of their stock. Testing is essential.

Drench type	% of farms with resistance in any worm species
White/BZ (E.G. ALBENDAZOLE)	84%
Clear/Levamisole (E.G. LEVICARE)	63%
Abamectin (E.G. GENESIS)	53%
Moxidectin (E.G. CYDECTIN)	24%
White/Clear combo (E.G. ARREST, SCANDA)	37%

Dr Andrew Dowling from PGG Wrightson has recently reported the results of their last two years of FECRT results, which make sobering reading. The farms were 'typical' sheep breeding enterprises from across New Zealand.

The results for the old single actives, BZ and Levamisole are not surprising, and are in line with what we have been finding ourselves for years.

However the level of resistance to the others is a bit of a wake-up call.

The 2006 National Drench Resistance Survey found that 25% of farms had resistance to ivermectin. Abamectin and moxidectin are more potent than ivermectin so the results above understate the level of ivermectin resistance, and could represent a big jump in 'mectin' resistance if the PGG Wrightson findings are representative of the national situation.

I come across plenty of farmers who still use single active moxidectin as their routine drench. There are also heaps of you using a BZ/lev combination without knowing whether you already have resistance to it.

You will not see drench resistance until it is severe and the wheels really fall off. We have dealt with a number of these cases in recent years and the production loss in lambs can be spectacular.

Get ahead of the game this year. Talk to one of us about setting aside some undrenched lambs at weaning, and get this important test done for your farm.

broken in to lead for each team. On the first day, each team picked a stud name out of a hat and they were the heifers we had to work with.

We all competed in challenges which involved stock judging. This involved judging three classes of cattle and then giving our placings and reasons on one class to an audience. We also had to clip and prepare the heifers we were given for show, and then parade a heifer in a handler's class.

There were Agri modules which included machinery work, stock work, feed budgeting, making pikelets and a lot more. There was also a timed event called an 'Agri Nightmare

Challenge', similar to Young Farmer Challenges. This involved working as a team to fence, hang a gate, dig in posts, bone a leg of beef, set up a trough and irrigation system and a lot of other gut-busting activities.

In between everything else, we had to write a presentation on food quality and security, in which we were placed 4th; also on the last day, we had a quick fire buzzer quiz in front of the Forum delegates. Overall, Canada took out 1st and 2nd and two other New Zealand teams won 3rd equal. In four years' time, the Forum and Youth Challenge will be held in Scotland. It would be great to have the opportunity to take part in it again.



Feeding Fodder Beet

Trevor Cook

During September, Totally Vets in conjunction with Lincoln University, hosted a seminar on the science around the use of Fodder Beet in cattle.

Dr Jim Gibbs, a veterinarian and Lincoln's Senior Lecturer in Livestock Health and Production, addressed 60 farmers and rural professionals in our Feilding clinic.

Dr Gibbs has a well established reputation in NZ & Australia through his research in rumen function. His work has tested the limits of Fodder Beet feeding in cattle and has exposed an exciting new world of accelerated cattle growth.

Over the last 5 years the use of Fodder Beet for cattle has increased; over this period over 6000 hectares has been planted.

BASIC FACTS ABOUT FODDER BEET

- 25% leaf, 75% bulb
- Up to 12+ ME
- Leaf protein 17%, bulb protein 10% or less
- Dry matter 8-11%
- NDF 10%

ITS EXCEPTIONAL FEATURES

- Very high yields (20-30 t/ha)
- Very high levels of available "sugar"
- Can be stored for up to 6 months

THE PITFALLS

- "Poisoning" from overfeeding
- Protein too low to support high LWG
- Too much mud from lots of hooves on a small area of wet heavy soil

THE EXCITING BITS

- It is the cheapest source of energy available
- It creates options for early weaning of beef calves, for wintering one and two-year cattle, and for wintering cows
- Exceptional weight gains and "finishing" from ad lib feeding

THE KEY MESSAGES

- Investing in "best practice" establishment is essential for high-crop yields
- Careful transition of over two to three weeks is necessary when introducing cattle to Fodder Beet
- Plan well ahead - to get maximum crop yields and to get maximum return on the cost (plan the animal usage)

Following on from this seminar, Totally Vets is now facilitating a project in the lower North Island around the establishment of Fodder Beet and the performance of animals on it. More on this story over the coming months.

Theileriosis outbreak update

Leisa Norris

Theileriosis continues to spread.

To date, 213 farms have been affected with 866 cows having died from the disease. Infected herds are being faced with death rates of around 1.6%, with one third of cows severely affected by the course of the disease. In other words, theileriosis is of real concern, not only from an animal welfare perspective but also because of its financial impact on farming.

The cause of the disease is a blood-borne parasite called *Theileria orientalis* which is transmitted by cattle ticks when they feed on the animal's blood. The disease is NOT spread by direct animal-to-animal contact in the absence of ticks and there are **no human health or food safety risks** associated with *Theileria*.

It is important to be keeping a close eye on your stock, particularly those that may have recently returned from grazing. The symptoms that YOU may notice that could aid early detection include:

- Reduction in milk production.
- Yellow or pale mucous membranes, as compared to a healthy pink colour, so check vulva and conjunctiva (inside surfaces of eyes).
- Increased breathing and heart rates, particularly in cows that are slow to rise and may be lagging behind on the walk to the shed.
- Cows returning to the paddock after milking that are reluctant to eat.

Epidemiologists studying the disease have a growing belief that biting flies are also involved in transmitting the disease. And it is also important to be aware that reusing potentially infected needles (such as on vaccination guns) may also be a source of transmission.

They are also suggesting that there may be an increase in the geographical spread of the



disease associated with the seasonal annual dairy cattle movements such as the upcoming common grazing off of young cattle and the purchase/hire of bull teams.

Cattle are most at risk of infection when they are moved to areas where infected ticks are present. Likewise, if an infected animal is transported, it can spread infection to ticks in the new location, in turn spreading disease to uninfected animals.

So... the best form of treatment is still, by far, prevention! If you are bringing cattle in from the Waikato, or anywhere north of the Waikato, ensure they are treated with Bayticol and quarantined for two weeks (if possible) preferably prior to trucking.

Remain alert, and if you suspect your cattle may have theileriosis and show signs as listed above, then please contact us immediately.

Flystrike monitoring and prevention

Hamish Pike

Flystrike continues to be a condition that causes management headaches on many properties and is a major cost to farm business.

Each year in New Zealand, it is estimated that 1.3-2.3 million sheep are affected by flystrike, at least 250,000 lambs die from flystrike and that following treatment, recovery of lost liveweight may take up to 6 weeks.

Dipping for its prevention adds to the list of interventions we have to undertake with our sheep at this time of the year.

Many of you will already have given lambs a treatment at docking, and now is the time to be thinking ahead to the ewes, and further prevention in lambs.

As with all parasites, control is made much more logical when you understand the critical points of the lifecycle where outbreaks can be predicted and control measures applied.

There are 52 species of blowfly in New Zealand, but the vast majority do not strike sheep. The three main culprits are the green blowfly, the brown blowfly and the 'Aussie mongrel', the Australian green fly. This fly is of major concern as it preferentially strikes live sheep (the other two are quite happy to feed on dead matter), and it has quickly developed resistance to some dips.

Flies survive from season to season via pupae which overwinter in the soil. These become active and start developing into young adult flies once soil temperatures exceed 12 degrees in the spring. This process takes 10 days to two weeks minimum. The young adult flies take about another week to develop to maturity, when mating and egg-laying can begin.

Eggs are laid on the sheep; the fly is attracted by smell from dags, footrot, fleece-rot, wounds, or long wet wool. They hatch within 18 to 24 hours into maggots which initially just feed on debris on the skin surface. They undergo a

moult within a day or two and at this stage, develop scraping mouthparts and saliva that can dissolve tissue, causing the lesions we see. The maggots moult a third time; then drop off the sheep, burrow into the ground and form pupae. This entire process only takes 4-6 days. Pupae will hatch as young adults within a few weeks if conditions are right, otherwise they can overwinter as above.

Now we know the lifecycle, some points of control become obvious:

Knowing when strike flies are becoming active - soil temperature monitoring. Siting of monitor fly traps in 'fly attractive areas' such as near the woolshed and in sheltered gullies. These need to be re-baited and checked regularly. When you start seeing bronze and green coloured flies in the traps, flystrike becomes a possibility.

Intercepting overwintered pupae as they hatch. This involves setting bait bins once soil temperatures start to rise; flies are trapped in these before they get a chance to reproduce. Bait bins can be practical, but they need to be applied over a wide area, as flies can fly! The main downside is that most bait will lose its smell quite quickly.

Making sheep less attractive to flies

- Timing of dipping. Obvious, but sheep need to have insecticide on board before the majority of egg-laying starts. The optimum time for applying any sort of fly dip is when sheep have six weeks wool growth after shearing. Before this time, there is not enough wool for the product to adhere to properly and length of activity may be compromised. Four weeks is a minimum.
- Shearing will help prevent strike as maggots do not survive well when exposed to sunlight. Be aware that shearing wounds can get struck though!
- Crutching is vital, as dip will not adhere to faecal matter, and flies will still be attracted.

There is a wide range of products and application methods available to help treat and prevent flystrike in sheep. These need to be tailored to your own situation.

Please come in to the clinic so we can work with you to you choose the best product and help you manage flystrike in your flock.



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Totally Vets Client & Staff Christmas BBQ

Join us on Friday 13th December
2013 at our Feilding, Palmerston
North and Taumarunui clinics from
noon until 6pm.

We would love to see you!