



# VET notes

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT ANIMALS ON YOUR FARM

MARCH 2015



## Going, going, gone!

Reuben Harland

### What a day at the Lions Club of Ashhurst-Pohangina Small Holder's Auction!

With a scorcher of a day, and thousands of folks out for a bargain, it was hard not to get swept up in the excitement of this event - Totally Vets was proud to be there and support our community.

Leisa was on-hand for anyone needing veterinary advice on the day and we had a few bargains of our own to offer.

It was also great to have some small block holders register their interest in a new Small Block Animal Health Plan service we are looking to implement this year. If this is of interest to you give us a call!

## Totally Vets fishing competition

Guy Haynes

After the weather did its bit in seeing our 2014 tenth anniversary fishing competition cancelled, we are really looking forward to our 2015 event!

Competitor numbers are already looking good, including a Taumarunui contingent, and we are hoping for some record breaking fish!

Barny and I had decided that 2014 would be our last year organising the Totally Vets fishing competition, but neither of us could finish on a cancellation!

Organisation has begun again, and this year we are supported by a new team with Sue Payne (Procurement Officer) and Reuben Harland (Territory Manager) coming on board - pardon the pun! These two will be harassing, cajoling, pleading to all our sales reps to make sure

there's a top amount of prizes available for all our competitors.

The Wanganui Manawatu Fishing Club will once again be in charge of the weigh-in and compilation of the results for us, as well as providing a great BBQ feast. The Wanganui Coast Guard will be on duty during the day, taking care of us all, and making sure we get home safely.

Once again Turners Sports will be offering two prizes for people who purchase goods at their store prior to the competition, so be sure you're in the draw for these.

Saturday 11th April is the day we have selected for this year's competition. Low tide is scheduled at 8.30am and high tide at 2.40pm, perfect times to allow for heaps of good fishing. So, mark your calendar and be sure to keep this day free! Come and enjoy a good day's fishing, great camaraderie and many a story of "the ones that got away".

**Entry forms and the competition rules are available from all of our clinics and on our website. In the meantime, may your lines be tight and we will see you all on the 11th April 2015!**



# Totally Vets current stock health

Despite a tiny reprieve of rain in early February, at the time of print, the dry spell seems to be persisting.

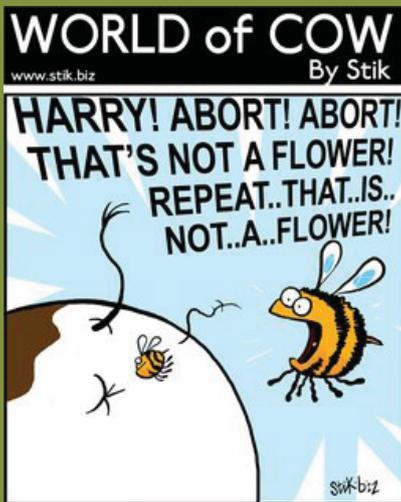
Take care when feeding crops that may be under drought stress as they can lead to animal health issues. Cooler temperatures have

largely limited clinical facial eczema (FE) to localised hot spots, and if you haven't started zinc treatment already now is a good time.

## Sheep and Beef

February climatic conditions, specifically rain after a dry spell, predisposed to outbreaks of Barber's Pole worm, which will likely continue

# HA HA



## Where has all the rain gone?

Leisa Norris

Aside from a small period of rain in early February, 2015 has been dry. Coping with a long dry spell can be difficult and stressful. Having a plan can minimise the impact on your farm, your finances and your sanity!

Preparing a **feed budget** can help ensure you have enough feed going into winter, which is paramount so that things don't fall over come lambing/calving time. You will never come out of the winter with more grass than you had going in!

Even a simple budget using the estimated amount of feed on hand, energy content of that feed, stock energy requirements and stock numbers, is good. Once you have worked out the daily feed ration, you can multiply it to work out a budget for the coming months. If there is a deficit decisions can be made,

such as whether to sell stock, buy in feed, or graze stock off. As a general rule it is more economic to sell stock than to buy in extra feed<sup>1</sup>. If feed levels are low it is better to have fewer stock that are in better condition, as allowing ewes/cows to lose weight short term will cost in lost production next season.

Regularly check your troughs to make sure there is always sufficient **clean water** available for all stock. In past years we have seen cases of salt poisoning (water deficiency) leading to death in beef cattle.

Barber's pole worm, salmonella in ewes, pneumonia in lambs, ryegrass staggers and polio (Vitamin B1 deficiency), are all **animal health issues** to look out for during dry periods. When rain does come it is important to watch out for facial eczema, barber's pole (again), other internal parasites (such as black scour worm), liver fluke, and nitrate poisoning. Metabolic problems around lambing/calving can occur if stock are light this coming spring.

**Weighing and/or condition scoring** stock at one to two monthly intervals will allow an accurate picture of how things are going.

<sup>1</sup> Extreme Dry Management and Planning Toolkit, Beef and Lamb NZ, May 2010

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to be a risk. This worm breeds prolifically and, as it feeds on blood, sheep can quickly become very ill and even die without developing scours.

Now is a good time to be thinking about vaccinating your calves against clostridial diseases, leptospirosis and possibly bovine virus diarrhoea. Autumn is also a good time for trace element testing, to ensure copper levels are sufficient before winter.

## Dairy

The weather at this stage may dictate the need for an early dry-off, as it has the last couple of years. Begin planning your approach to dry-off (see Helen's article on page seven), continue zinc treatment for FE prevention and diarise leptospirosis vaccinations. Additionally now is a good time to consider body condition scoring your herd to aid decision making heading into drying-off.

## Equine

Amongst other things, parasites can cause ill-thrift and colic in horses. Autumn is often a good time to drench your horse(s) but, to be sure, we recommend getting a faecal egg count done to check. Be sure to use a product that includes the active ivermectin to kill bot eggs in the stomach. Additionally, book in a dental check to ensure maximum feed conversion efficiency over the coming winter.

# Tupping management and planning for scanning

Mark Eames

We are fast approaching ram joining date ('tupping') for the majority of sheep in the district.

Ideally tail-end ewes have been getting preferentially fed to get their body condition scores up and there is planning in place for an increase in feed supply to "flush" the ewes during tupping. It has been well established that better ovulation rates are achieved when there is liveweight gain during tupping.

Avoid shearing ewes within a month prior to tupping and two weeks after, as the stress involved can have a negative effect on ovulation and embryo survival.

An important concept to have in mind is that the production of sperm, or spermatogenesis, takes approximately two months. This means that all the sperm that a ram ejaculates during tupping is formed BEFORE joining date. Consequently rams should be looked after well before the breeding season to optimize their sperm production.

If teaser rams are used, ensure they have been vasectomised at least six weeks prior to introduction to prevent any unwanted pregnancies. Teasers should be introduced 19



days prior to the working rams at a ratio of one teaser to 300-500 ewes. In order to get a teaser response ewes need to have been isolated from teasers, rams or bucks at least 21 days prior. Sudden teaser introduction after this break will induce a 'silent' heat before the working rams go out so that they will be into their second, more fertile, cycle soon after ram joining.

It is a good idea to run hogget and/or maiden two-tooth ewes separate to the mixed-age ewes as they are less active seeking the ram out and have shorter oestrus cycles. Sexually experienced rams should also be used over younger ewes.

The standard ram-to-ewe ratio is between 1:50 and 1:100. The ideal ratio will depend on topography, flock size, paddock size, time of joining, breed, age of ewes, and nutrition. Ewe hoggets and two-tooth ewes should be mated with higher ram ratios.

Ram harnesses can be used to detect mating patterns, provide information on submission and return rates. Crayon colours should be changed at 14-16 day intervals so that ewes returning to the ram are marked with a different colour. Ensure harnesses are well fitted and positioned correctly to mark the ewe.

Looking ahead, pregnancy scanning of ewes is very beneficial as ewes can be managed differently according to the number of lambs they are carrying. Preferentially feeding ewes carrying multiples will improve lamb birth weights and milk production. Another important benefit is that dry ewes can be quit early so that valuable winter feed can be allocated to pregnant ewes that need it.

**Contact us now for the best time to scan your flock and what is required.**



## Bite wounds - more than meets the eye!

Suzanne Lane

Bite wounds have been described by one veterinary emergency specialist as “a combination of a crushing injury and a stab wound with the injection of some really nasty oral and faecal bacteria.”

On the surface there may be a small wound but lying beneath there may be a large under-run wound or deep penetrating tract with a bunch of hair pushed in to the area and bruising

or crushing of the muscle. Sometimes other foreign bodies may be carried into the wound such as dirt, a tooth or a claw. Crushed or dead muscle can act as a culture medium for bacteria and also as a stimulus for a serious life-threatening condition known as systemic inflammatory response syndrome (SIRS).

It is important not to under estimate the size of a wound or the extent of the injuries. Often a wound will need surgical attention to open the area wider, to examine the depth of the injury and to remove foreign material and dead tissue. Extensive flushing is needed and a drain may be placed to allow oxygen to circulate the wound and prevent the growth of bacteria.

More important than the visible wounds however, may be the overall status of the animal and the possibility of crushing or blunt

trauma injury. An animal traumatised by a fight may present in a state of shock - pale, faint and cold. Hypovolaemic shock can be more life-threatening than the obvious wounds and treatment may include intravenous fluids, oxygen therapy, pain relief and antibiotic coverage. Minor clipping and cleaning of the wounds may be attempted whilst the animal is receiving shock therapy but thorough investigation may only be safe after many hours of stabilisation.

Some examples of bite wound cases which demonstrate potential dangers:

- A border collie with multiple dog bite wounds developed a life-threatening heart arrhythmia either as a direct result of trauma to the heart or circulating stress hormones. Only after 12 hours of shock treatment and anti-arrhythmic drugs could the bite wounds be properly addressed.
- A fox terrier with bite wounds around the neck where the muscle swelled extensively. Air was also trapped within the muscle layers and together this resulted in crushing injuries with a very sad ending.
- A cat grabbed about the abdomen by a dog. Although there were no visible wounds the attack had ruptured the cat's bladder and torn the ureter from its kidney. After being treated for shock, the damage was surgically repaired with a good outcome.

In essence, don't under estimate bite wounds - there may be more lurking beneath the surface than meets the eye!

## Gossip

February saw **Ginny** running an 11km leg of the around Taupo relay as a 'filler-in' for the Greenlea Meats team. An awesome effort, and a great event to be a part of, well done Ginny! Plans are afoot for a full Totally Vets team to participate in 2016.

Last month also saw **Cormac**, our rugby superstar, add 'movie star' to his resume! He made his acting debut in a promotional video for Massey University Veterinary School. Cormac did a fantastic job and we look forward to his next performance, whatever that may be!?

Sadly, come May, we farewell **Hannah** from our Taumarunui Clinic. Hannah, Rex and Jack will be making a change of residence across the river back to the family dairy farm. The plan is for Hannah to start giving her Dad a more 'hands-off' role with the cows. Hannah

has put her heart and soul into her time at Totally Vets and we will miss her terribly, but wish her well on her new journey.

Feilding clients will already be aware of **road works** outside the Feilding Branch. Curbing has now been completed but the road is now going to be lowered so disruption will continue. Look out for signs that will direct you where to park.

Two of our employee's daughters, Calla Toyne (**Catherine's** daughter) and Grace Henley-King (**Allie's** daughter) represented Manawatu Pony Club at the North Island Pony Club

# 'Knockout drenching' - what, why and when?

Ginny Dodunski

In the last issue of Vetnotes we briefly covered some of the technical issues around drench product choice and worm management for lambs over summer. The number one aim being good lamb growth, but with an eye on reducing the risk of escalating drench resistance.

A strategy that has been developed over recent years, and shown to reduce the development of resistance, is the practice of 'knockout 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 recommended that they be given a one-off 'exit drench' of a different (and highly effective) drug at the end of the product's pay-out time. This is to remove any resistant worms that had established during the time the product was active. This includes Bionic® capsules people!

**So the point of exit drenching is to use a one-off product of known high efficacy**

**to take out resistant worms that may have established a breeding population during a period of treatment with another chemical(s).**

Aside from the capsule example, the other main use of this strategy on sheep farms is going to be in lambs that are still on the farm in the autumn, after a summer drenching programme. This is what has become known as the 'knockout drench'.

On some farms, this will only be the replacement ewe hoggets, on others there will be trading lambs involved as well. An example could be that all lambs grazing permanent pasture are given a double combination at monthly intervals for three or four drenches, the following drench being one of the new actives. However, product choice for the 'knockout drench' is heavily dependent on the farm's resistance status. Where resistance is minimal, there is an opportunity to save money - but you don't know until you test!

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 autumn contamination by resistant worms. If drenching earlier on, there will be more lambs to give that expensive drench to! Additionally, the timing may be affected by the severity of resistance in the various worm species on your farm. Speak to your vet about the best timing for your own situation.



A further application for the 'knockout' concept is where you are using a moxidectin based product (such as 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 five to six 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 in lambs, 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 as a 'knockout' in animals treated with moxidectin - for lambs, around a month later; for ewes, when next convenient.

Show Jumping Champs in Cambridge on 19th and 20th January 2015. They were placed a very credible fifth out of 34 teams in the jigsaw competition (this is a timed competition where both riders are in the jumping arena at the same time jumping separate fences). The Manawatu team consisted of all Totally Vets client's children... two junior riders, Georgie Moody (individual fourth placing) and Charlotte Sowry; Grace and Calla (individual ninth placing) as intermediates; Caitlin Bills and Alex Smartt as the two senior riders. Congratulations to all the riders for a brilliant effort!



Calla and Grace

# Weaner deer losses

Leisa Norris

Late autumn and winter are periods in which we typically see cases of sudden death in young deer.

## POTENTIAL CAUSES INCLUDE:

**Parasitism** is THE most important cause of ill-thrift and losses (particularly from lungworm) in weaners at this time. Drench choice is limited and development of resistance is a concern. Lungworm infection is usually noticed when moving stock, as they lag behind and may cough or pant. Gut parasites also need to be considered if animals are scouring. See next month's Vetnotes for more ...

**Yersiniosis** is carried by birds and animals and can survive well in soil, water and pasture during the winter months, and so is a very common cause of weaner deaths in Manawatu. Management during and after weaning is

vital. Stressors such as transport, bad weather, poor nutrition, trace element deficiencies or parasites can cause clinical disease. Deer weaned pre-rut may be more susceptible, so vaccination may be more important when animals are weaned early. Affected deer usually scour, lose weight, quickly dehydrate and die. In the case of an outbreak, often 20% of a mob may be affected. Vaccination, at over 12 weeks of age with a booster three to six weeks later, is the best prevention.

**Johnes disease** sporadically affects all ages of deer, however outbreaks involving much younger animals, eight to 20 months old, have been on the rise over recent years. Scouring and weight loss, progressing to death occurs fairly rapidly. Up to 10% of a mob may be affected and, as there is no treatment available and the disease is fatal, affected animals should be culled as soon as possible to minimise shedding of the bacteria.

**Malignant Catarrhal Fever (MCF)** causes a bloody scour and outbreaks can be precipitated by severe forms of stress, such as excessive yarding or mustering. MCF is caused by a virus and is always fatal. There is no treatment or vaccine available.

**Leptospirosis** causes deaths in weaners leading into the winter, generally following a short illness. On post-mortem the carcass is usually jaundiced, the kidneys abnormal and redwater (red urine) features. This can be vaccinated against and treatment is generally very effective.

**Clostridial diseases** can be a problem. The most important in deer of all ages being blackleg and malignant oedema. Animals are rarely seen alive and the carcass rots very quickly. Again, this can be vaccinated against and should be part of your routine animal health treatment.

**Necrobacillosis** (necrotic footrot) is caused by a bacterium that is a normal inhabitant of the gut. Wounds to the lower limbs are a point of entry leading to infections in the feet, joints and tendons and potentially severe lameness. Infections can spread to the bloodstream, liver and lungs, at which stage treatment is generally futile and death is inevitable.

**There is often value in submitting dead stock for a post-mortem examination so call your vet for advice if you are faced with this challenging situation.**

# Totally Vets facial eczema monitoring

Gayle Stein

The monitoring of facial eczema (FE) spore counts is something that Totally Vets considers to be a highly valuable service for all of our clients. Whether you are a small block holder with a few animals or a production animal farmer with stock providing you with your income, the information that we are getting out to you is of equal importance.

Over the years that I have worked at Awapuni Veterinary Services, and then Totally Vets,

I have been involved with the monitoring and reporting of spore counts. Our aim is to update you weekly on the district FE risk by combining fungal spore counts recorded from a number of sites with prevailing weather conditions provided by AgResearch. Reports are as up-to-date as possible with the ability now to send out alerts through our website, to clients who have provided us with their email address, should spores suddenly spike.

Maps displayed in the branches show the locations of monitor farms across the Manawatu and Ruapehu districts. These monitor farms belong to Totally Vets clients or staff members who provide a grass sample, to their closest clinic to be counted once a week, from January until May. Data is collected over the period of a week and reported on early the following week. Dependent upon the information gathered you can then decide upon the appropriate product at the appropriate strength.

Strategies for the prevention of FE include spraying the pasture with a suitable fungicide,

capsule treatment with either zinc oxide (Time Capsules®) or elemental zinc (Faceguard®), zinc oxide (dusting on feed, oral drenching), or treating the drinking water with zinc sulphate (in-trough and in-line dispensers, supply tanks etc).

**For anyone unsure of the best prevention programme for their stock, don't hesitate to give the Totally Vets Team a call today! in store for details.**



*Pithomyces Charitatum* (Facial eczema) spores



# Early dry-off decisions

Helen Mather

There are opportunities going into the final third of lactation to improve both fertility and the efficiency of feed utilisation. The plan for mating in spring 2015 starts now!

Numerous factors influence the decision of when to dry off:

### FEED AVAILABILITY:

- Cows must be dried off according to feed-budget targets.
- In general, herd demand is greater than winter growth, therefore pasture cover will tend to decline.
- If cows need to gain condition, more grass (or supplement) will be required and a faster rotation needed. This means less feed at the start of calving.
- Cows can be more efficient at gaining weight while they are still milking. With the target body condition score (BCS) of 4.5 at dry-off 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.

### MILK YIELD:

- When herd production drops below 10L/cow/day, start planning drying-off.
- Dry off low producers first. 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.

- Cows producing less than five litres per day have noticeable negative changes in milk composition and quality.
- Dry off low producing cows (less than 0.4kgMS/cow/day, being approximately 5L for friesians, 4L for jerseys) early before their somatic cell count (SCC) increases as they dry themselves off naturally.

### AVOIDING SCC GRADES:

- Persistently high SCC contributes to bulk tank somatic cell count (BTSCC). Removing high SCC cows helps to keep the BTSCC down in later lactation.
- Dry off high SCC cows (>500,000 cells/ml) early to avoid the risk of grading.
- If BTSCC is greater than 350,000 cells/ml, dry off selected cows as above, or dry off the whole herd.

### COW CONDITION:

Body Condition Score (BCS)		Number days to be dried off before calving
Cow	Rising 3 year-old	
	3.0	140
3.0	3.5	120
3.5	4.0	90
4.0	5.0	60
5.0	5.5	40

- Cows need a long enough dry period to be at BCS 5.0 by calving, low BCS cows need additional time.
- Cows do NOT increase BCS during the last 30 days before calving due to the energy demands of the calf.

- Cows calving at lower BCS will produce less and have more reproductive problems. A cow calving at BCS 4.0 produces 15kgMS less than if she calved at BCS 5.0.
- Dry cows must be fed like lactating cows to gain one BCS in 30-40 days.
- The first priority is lighter first and second calvers. 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.
- Individually BCS cows NOW - 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. 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.

### The dry period needs to be long enough to allow the udder (and cow) to regenerate:

- Cows with teat lesions are more susceptible to mastitis and increased SCC. Consider dry-cow therapy for such cows to give increased protection for these at-risk girls.
- Slow milkers and lame cows should also be considered for early dry-off.

**Don't hesitate to call your vet to discuss your dry-off decisions and/or to arrange a BCS visit today!**



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