



# VET notes

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT ANIMALS ON YOUR FARM

MAY 2015



## Totally Vets fishing tournament

Yet again the autumn weather put a stop to the Totally Vets annual fishing tournament.

Around 80 keen fishermen, who had registered to attend, met at Murray's Irish Bar in Feilding for a BBQ and prize giving where all awards were drawn as spot prizes. Despite the lack of fishing a good afternoon was had by all.

Sue Payne and Carla Sheridan from the Feilding clinic were there, along with Guy and Barney, to help with the organisation of the day. Sue and Carla are taking over the running of the tournament next year and are looking to bring the date forward to early March 2016. Hopefully the weather will be more co-operative and boats will be able to touch water!

Thank you to all participants and a very special mention and much gratitude to all of our sponsors whose generosity makes this event possible!

## Changes at Awapuni

Chris Carter

The month of May sees us welcome Rochelle Spiers to Totally Vets Awapuni clinic, joining the team in the role of clinic manager.

Rochelle is coming to us after leading teams in both national and regional roles, for companies operating in New Zealand and Australia, and we are very excited to have her on board. She has a strong interest in customer service and ensuring customer needs are met, and also in the retail area. Horses are her passion outside of work and she holds national titles in the equestrian field.

Rochelle plans on getting out and meeting as many of our clients as possible as she settles into the new role.

Alongside of the change in staff structure we will **return to answering calls to our Awapuni clinic number, 06 356 5011, at our Awapuni clinic.** Currently these calls are being answered by staff in our Feilding customer service centre.

Feedback has been consistent that on the phone you like to talk to those you are familiar with from your visits to the clinic. After a year of working with the current system we acknowledge that a change is required.



This change is scheduled for 1st July 2015. Under the new arrangement, our two telephone centres in Feilding and Awapuni will continue to work closely together to ensure calls are answered and managed promptly. It will also ensure we have cover for seasonal peaks and holidays, and can provide the best customer service to you.

**More information on this change will be given as we get closer to the 1st July.**



# Totally Vets current stock health

## Dairy

May generally sees most herds drying-off. Given this, now is a wise time to body condition score (BCS) your herd to help guide drying-off decisions. Seeing change in animals we view every day can be hard, but it is vital that cows calve in good body condition. Cows calving below target BCS of 5.0 are more susceptible to illness, don't produce well and

are harder to get back in calf. Totally Vets have DNZ accredited BC scorers so you can be confident in the information they provide.

Drying-off is also a good time, as we head towards winter, to consider trace mineral supplementation. Both deficiency and toxicity issues are common so monitoring via liver (preferable) or blood samples would be prudent prior to supplementation.

## HA HA



## Strategic drenching - why knockout drench?

Reuben Harland

Strategic use of drenches containing a new active can help delay drench resistance.

There are three main positions for strategic use of drenches. These are:

1. A **quarantine** drench, to prevent someone else's drench resistance problem establishing on your farm.
2. An **exit** drench after using a long acting product such as capsules or long acting oral or injections.
3. A **knockout** drench.

### WHAT IS A KNOCKOUT DRENCH?

Firstly, it does not involve extra work! It is simply substituting one of your routine lamb drenches (e.g. double or triple combination) with a drench containing a new active ingredient.

### WHY SHOULD A KNOCKOUT DRENCH BE USED?

Modelling work has clearly shown that the substitution with a knockout drench, into your



existing lamb drench program, can significantly delay the onset of resistance to the existing drenches. This will allow farmers to keep using their routine combination drenches for longer. This will also ensure that the low cost of their drench program is maintained for longer.

### WHEN SHOULD A KNOCKOUT DRENCH BE USED?

The ideal time to use a knockout drench is in the late summer/early autumn prior to the time when weather conditions favour rapid larval development on pasture. This is also when early saleable stock have already left the property so fewer animals require knockout drenching.

### WHICH PRODUCT SHOULD BE USED AS A KNOCKOUT DRENCH?

There are two new active products on the market that are the best choice for a knockout drench. They are Startect® (derquantal and abamectin) and Zolvix® (monepantel). The suitability of either of them depends very much on a farm's existing resistance status.

**Talk to one of the team at Totally Vets today to learn more about how we can help you improve profitability, and to delay drench resistance, on your farm.**

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Remember to vaccinate ALL stock (and dogs!) against Leptospirosis, and young stock against Clostridial diseases too.

## Sheep and Beef

Winter ewe management is aided by scanning of ewes as it provides information that can be put to profitable use in BCS management (a key productivity driver) and winter rotation lengths. Call us and book in scanning of your ewes today.

Now, if not already done, is also a good time to vaccinate your hoggets against Clostridial diseases.

With the nights getting colder, *Trichostrongylus*, the 'black scour worm', starts to replace *Haemonchus* (Barber's Pole worm) as the main parasitic threat. Don't increase drenching intervals unless lambs are on particularly clean pasture and remember 'long acting' drenches, sufficient for Barber's Pole cover, won't give lambs protection from ongoing *Trichostrongylus* challenge. See

Reuben's article on page two for more!

Also be sure to have drenching of R1s in hand as autumn is when clinical parasitism is often seen. Egg output by worms peaks and is hence the key source of parasite contamination and challenge for spring born calves.

## Deer

Organise hind scanning now and consider management effects of potential disease risks. See Barney's article on page four for more information.

# Licking lice

Colin Wakelin

Lice are external parasites that live on most animals.

They are very host specific and the lice species that affect one type of animal cannot breed on other another type of animal. Lice lay eggs on the host that attach to its hairs (commonly called "nits"), hatch into nymphs and then mature into adults. The entire life cycle occurs on the host as lice can only survive for a few days once off the host.

In cattle, lice are spread mainly by direct contact with each other, usually by the transfer of adult lice. Occasionally transmission via hair infested with nits, via a third party or even yards, can occur. If a different type of animal (such as a human) is in close contact with infested animal(s) then transfer can occur, however, though lice will bite you, they will not breed on you.

There are two types of lice that affect cattle in New Zealand:

1. Body or biting lice (*Bovicola bovis*):  
These are uncommon on dairy cattle, occurring more commonly on beef cattle. They feed off the skin debris and cause irritation, hair loss and occasional hide damage occurs due to scratching.
2. Sucking lice (*Linognathus vituli* is the most common):

These are more common on dairy cattle. They feed on tissue fluids and blood. In large numbers they can cause anaemia but primarily cause irritation and hide damage.

### CLINICAL SIGNS

Infested cattle show signs of irritation and rubbing which may cause hair loss from large areas of the body. There are differing opinions on effect of lice on production, but affected animals will often be discounted at sale, or even excluded from sale yards, due to their appearance.

Younger cattle and those in poor condition tend to have heavier louse infestations, mainly due to poorer immunity. Cattle lice populations are also affected by weather and tend to be highest in winter and lowest in summer.

### MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL

There are currently four types of products available for the treatment of lice:

1. Milbimycins ('the Mectins')  
The most effective, and the only product with a 56 day 'control' claim, is abamectin as a pour-on (e.g. Genesis®, Eclipse®, BOSS®). It is absorbed into the blood stream and kills the lice when they feed. Safety for both cattle and humans is good. Injectable abamectins are available but are only effective against sucking lice and have comparatively long milk and meat withholding periods.
2. Permethrins  
These are synthetic pyrethrins applied as

a pour-on (e.g. BLAZE®). They are not absorbed into the blood stream but diffuse around the body in the grease layer on the skin. They kill the lice by direct contact and again are safe for cattle and humans. These products are commonly used in sheep.

3. Bendiocarb

This is a carbamate product applied as a pour-on. These products are commonly used in insect pest control and are considered safe. The only available product is NilTime® LV. It has a nil milk withholding time and has a 99% eradication claim.

4. Organophosphates.

These products (e.g. Tempor®, Destruct) are applied as a spray or a pour-on. They are extremely effective at killing lice but are toxic. Many products have been withdrawn from the market due to safety concerns. The active ingredients are absorbed through the skin of both animals and humans. The lice are killed at feeding and by contact. Human deaths have occurred due to the improper use of these products. It is likely that they will be withdrawn from sale in the future. However they will eradicate lice and have a long persistent activity.

Eradication of lice from your herd requires a managed approach. All cattle on the property must be treated at the same time and all introductions quarantined and treated preventatively. It may also require more than one treatment to eradicate all lice.

# Weaner deer health

Barry Askin

Following on from last month's article on the drenching of weaner deer it seemed appropriate to discuss two other diseases that we often see in weaner deer over the autumn and winter months.

## YERSINIOSIS

How young deer are managed during and after weaning will determine whether or not they succumb to Yersiniosis in their first autumn/winter. Anything that stresses the animal, such as transport, bad weather, poor nutrition, trace element deficiencies or parasites, can cause clinical disease. Animals with no major stressors will usually not present with full-blown clinical disease and show only mild symptoms.

The symptoms of Yersiniosis in fawns are a foul-smelling, watery scour that progresses to a bloody diarrhoea and usually death. There is seldom the opportunity to treat a sick animal because of the speed of onset of the disease and, in the case of an outbreak, it is not uncommon for 20% of a mob to be affected. In an outbreak, it is usually too late to vaccinate and prophylactic antibiotic therapy given to the remainder of the mob may be the only approach.

Aim to reduce stress levels as much as possible in young deer and consider reducing stress levels on yourself by vaccinating your weaners with Yersiniavax®. The timing of vaccination



may be critical in determining its effectiveness. Ideally it should be done in the autumn before the bad weather and young deer have been mobbed together.

## NECROBACILLOSIS

The disease is caused by the bacterium *Fusobacterium necrophorum* which is found in the intestines of many animals. This bacterium survives well in manure-contaminated wet soil. The bacteria cannot penetrate intact skin but will enter the body via cuts, damaged skin or via the mouth. Changes in the rumen, caused for example by grain overload, can also precipitate the disease. One of the commonest entry points is through feet that have been damaged during yarding and trucking.

Animals with the disease can present in different ways but are often depressed, thin, and rough-coated poor-doers. They can have a swollen face or jaw, be lame in single or multiple limbs, and can sometimes have an infection in the throat leading to wheezing and possibly the development of pneumonia.

Animals are sometimes found dead and, when autopsied, these animals can have abscessation in multiple organs.

There is no licensed vaccine for the disease and it is almost certainly better to avoid the problem in the first place. Suggestions include avoiding rough surfaces especially sharp rocks and concrete, board yards where possible and keep them as clean as possible, use clean weaning paddocks and avoiding pressure points in laneways. Running small mobs, keeping weaners away from wire netting, and minimising time in yards can also all play a part in reducing the incidence of the disease.

Treatment of early cases with antibiotics can sometimes be successful but cases with multiple lameness issues will probably need to be culled so prevention is much better than trying to deal with an outbreak.

**If you think you are, or may, experience challenges with either of these debilitating diseases call Totally Vets today.**

# Tis seminar season!

Leisa Norris

Historically the months of May, June and, to some extent July, (the dry period) see our dairy

farmers have some well earned "down time". It is also a time for carrying out essential farm and equipment maintenance and for preparation for the season ahead.

From a Totally Vets perspective we see it as a time that we can add value to our service

to you by provision of seminars. The aim is to provide opportunity for everyone, from farm owners to new staff, to learn about new topics, affirm and/or refresh what you may already know and are doing, and to provide a forum to ask questions and create discussion. These events also have great value in building networks between farms and their staff, and to communicate and benefit from each others experience!



## Early season calf rearing preparation

Cormac Chalmers

With the dry period upon us, it is time again to start preparing for rearing of spring born calves. To set a dairy cow up for a long and productive life you must give her the best possible start. Planning ahead for calf rearing can greatly reduce the stress on staff and on the calves.

A **healthy environment** is essential to rearing healthy calves. Calves require clean, dry, well ventilated, and draught-free housing. Exposure to wet, cold, and windy conditions can have detrimental effects on calf health and growth.

Ideally the **pens** need to be twice as deep as they are wide or high to prevent draughts at the back of the shed, and with solid walls that are roughly one to one and a half meters high. Pens should be filled and emptied on an all-in-all-out basis and not contain more than 25 calves. Sanitising between batches and

having separate sick pens to isolate ill calves is a good way to minimise the risk of spreading disease.

Suitable **bedding** like sawdust or non-tanalised wood shavings should be fresh and deep, at least 150mm thick. This should be cleaned out or topped up regularly as needed. The floor should drain from back to front to aid in the removal of effluent and water. Another way to try to minimise the build up of moisture in the shed is to have all feeders and drinkers, which are prone to spilling, at the gate end of the building as far away from the warm and dry back end of the pen.

Now is also a good time to start thinking about **calf scour vaccines** such as Rotavec® Corona or Scourguard®. These vaccines need to be given three to twelve weeks BEFORE the expected due to calve date.

In order to maximise the effectiveness of the above mentioned vaccines, **colostrum storage and feeding** needs to be managed correctly. First-day colostrum is valuable and should be fed fresh. The storage of colostrum (other than first-day colostrum) should be done in multiple drums and kept in a cool place. These should be stirred twice a day and a colostrum keeper can be added to maintain the sterility of the product. Other alternatives are yoghurtising the colostrum or keeping it frozen for up to six months to be thawed in

hot water when needed. A calf needs to drink at least two to three litres of fresh colostrum during the first six hours of life to get an adequate supply of antibodies. To achieve this, calves should be picked up twice a day and given first-day colostrum regardless of if they have suckled. The regular removal of calves not only ensures that there is adequate passive transfer of colostrum antibodies but it can also help to reduce the incidence of mastitis. Calves left on cows for more than 12 hours have a higher rate of failure of passive transfer and are therefore at higher risk of disease.

Best practice **hygiene** is also vital. A clean trailer that has been disinfected with a good virucide between batches picked up, and navels sprayed with an astringent solution such as iodine (both as they are placed on the trailer AND into the pen, and until dry and shrivelled), are two areas in which hygiene is critical.

**Fresh water, meal, and straw/hay** should be made available to calves from day one. Feeding regimes vary but calves should initially be fed 10-15% of their body weight in milk each day.

Well grown heifers make much more successful milking cows. Growing them well starts from the day they are born so it is important to have a clear plan for calf management in place before the season starts.

We are holding a joint presentation with Dr Dennis Scott, at 6pm on Wednesday 20th May at Te Kawau Rugby Clubrooms in Rongotea, on metabolic issues and preparation for spring. Topics being covered include oral milk fever remedies, which can vary greatly in safety and efficacy (and there is a lot of misinformation about their use!), however the basic principles of use are simple and will be succinctly explained. Ketosis can be another major

problem which can have devastating effects including hindering of early fertility. Recent technology, now available in New Zealand to help treat this problem, will also be outlined. Also being covered will be guidelines for successful transition cow management.

During 2015 there will be a number of other seminars so watch this space! Calf rearers - be sure to keep Thursday 4th June free, and for

those interested in animal welfare (that should be all of you!) there will be opportunities to attend sessions over the next couple of months. If there are topics that you would like to know more about and possibly see a seminar on, then we would love to hear about these!

Please contact Leisa on 06 356 5011 or [Leisa.Norris@totallyvets.co.nz](mailto:Leisa.Norris@totallyvets.co.nz)

# Preventing Leptospirosis in your dog

Helen Sheard

To Lepto vaccinate or not? The case of a sick sheepdog and the conundrum of Leptospirosis (Lepto) vaccinations that may help you make up your mind.

“Gus” (not his real name) was working in the sun for only ten minutes when he collapsed. Fearing heatstroke his owner cooled him in the dam and he seemed to recover. However over the next few days he became more and more lethargic, and stopped eating.

On examination at the clinic Gus was jaundiced (both his gums and the whites of his eyes were markedly yellow) and dehydrated, and bloodwork showed he was suffering from both liver and kidney failure. He also had several areas of petechiae (small bruises caused by damage to blood vessels) and developed vomiting and bloody diarrhoea.

The question was, was this a result of heatstroke? Or was he already incubating something and working in the sun precipitated a crisis? His owner was sure there was no access to any poisons, and Gus himself was not a scavenger. All his vaccinations were up-to-date.

One of the possible causes for clinical signs and blood results like this is Lepto. The trouble with Lepto is that the only vaccine available for dogs in New Zealand (NZ) contains *Leptospirosis icterohaemorrhagiae*, which



gives cross-protection against *Leptospirosis copenhageni*. This is the main strain of Lepto we see affecting dogs in NZ, which is spread in the urine of brown rats. Recent research however has found that many rural dogs have antibodies (indicating exposure, though not necessarily becoming sick) to other strains of Lepto, mainly *Leptospirosis pomona* and *Leptospirosis hardjo*, which are not covered with the available vaccine. Lepto can be transmitted through the urine of infected dogs during the shedding phase, and contaminated water bowls are among the most common sources of infection for other dogs. Although there is no record of it happening in NZ, people overseas have contracted Lepto from their infected dog.

The most reliable test for Lepto is the rising antibody test. This involves taking two blood samples, two to four weeks apart, to see if antibodies are being produced in response to infection. Unfortunately, in the majority of cases, the animals are too sick to wait for the results. We started treating Gus on the presumption that he did have Lepto. He was in the hospital for two weeks, but has since gone home and is improving day by day. The Lepto

tests have since come back negative, though the lab suggested that anti-freeze poisoning might cause similar signs, there was no clear reason as to why Gus was so sick. Luckily it meant all the other dogs (and humans) on the farm were likely safe.

So what does this mean? Even though Pomona and Hardjo aren't covered by the vaccine we have available (and Massey is working on it!) we still strongly recommend including Lepto vaccination for farm dogs as Copenhageni is endemic in the rat population, especially north of Taupo, but exposure has been found in dogs in Wairarapa and in the South Island. Please do NOT be tempted to give your dogs a dose of cattle Lepto vaccine - it hasn't yet been proved that it is either safe, or that it works!

Many thanks to the owners of Gus for permission to write up his case, and if any of your dogs show signs of weakness, jaundice, excessive drinking or dehydration (sunken eyes, slow skin tent) then assume the worst and contact the clinic ASAP! Additionally, if you have time, make sure none of your other dogs water bowls are contaminated with urine, and make sure any cuts you might have are washed thoroughly - just in case.



## Totally Vets photo competition 2015

Gaye Stein

In 2014 we ran a competition where children could take photos and send them to us. Entrants could potentially have their photo(s) included in our annual calendar and win great prizes for themselves and their school.

# The ins and outs of using an internal teat sealant

Mark Eames

Here it is... the same old yarn from the vets about using internal teat sealant (ITS) on heifers. Why do we harp on about it? Because we feel that there are still many farms out there that may well benefit from this practice!

Have a look at the figures. If the rate of clinical mastitis cases in heifers in the first two weeks of lactation exceeds 15% it is likely there would be a significant financial benefit in using an ITS, not to mention other benefits that will be outlined below.

ITSs provide a physical barrier to prevent entry by environmental bacteria, such as *Streptococcus uberis*, into the udder. There is no antibiotic component although they are often administered in combination with dry cow therapy (DCT) antibiotics in cows. The ITS is removed either by initial suckling by the calf or stripped out at the first milking. Calves swallowing the ITS in this way has not caused any issues. There is a milk withholding of eight milkings, but no meat withhold.

Each case of heifer mastitis costs somewhere between \$100 to \$300, and you can see how this can add up when you consider the cost of drugs, labour, milk discarded and early culling.



Additionally, it is not just the first lactation that gets affected but the lifetime production of the infected gland that is reduced.

In a formative large scale Waikato study, Teatseal® administered to heifers four to six weeks before calving was shown to reduce *Streptococcus uberis* infection at calving by 84% and reduce clinical mastitis in the first two weeks of lactation by 68%<sup>1,2</sup>.

We commonly hear that all this sounds well and good but what a pain in the a\*#e teatsealing a bunch of crazy heifers in the middle of winter and what about the risk of infecting udders with insertion! These are valid arguments, however there are a number of ways we can negate these potential problems. Heifers should be trained by introducing them to the milking shed a number of times prior to the teatsealing job. The advantage with this is that it also reduces a lot of stress to the heifers and staff at calving time.

It is also critical that the ITS is applied hygienically. The milking shed is the best location to achieve this good hygiene and ensure operator (and heifer) safety. It is essential that you follow the manufacturer's recommendations and that you have enough staff that know what they are doing. Totally Vets can assist with use of ITS in your heifers by training and/or supervision of your staff,

and/or provision of extra labour to give additional pairs of hands and expertise for the task.

OK, you're still not completely convinced or maybe your heifer calving mastitis rates are not worryingly high, but you'd still like to help reduce heifer mastitis without using an ITS. A number of other measures have been trialled and a couple that have proven beneficial are:

1. Spraying teats with normal teat disinfectant two or three times per week for last three weeks before calving.
2. Picking up calves twice daily and milking animals within nine to twelve hours after calving.

**So there you go, the ins and outs of using an ITS in heifers and management of heifer mastitis. If you think you'd like to give using an ITS a go, just do it. You won't regret it. Give the Totally Vets team a call today.**

<sup>1</sup> Parker, K.I., Compton, C.W.R., Annis, F.M. et al (2007). Subclinical and clinical mastitis in heifers following the use of a teat sealant precalving. *J. Dairy Sci.* 90:207-218.

<sup>2</sup> Parker, K.I., Compton, C.W.R., Annis, F.M. et al (2008). Quarter-level analysis of subclinical and clinical mastitis in primiparous heifers following the use of a teat sealant or an injectable antibiotic, or both, precalving. *J. Dairy Sci.* 91:169-181.

We took great pleasure and had a wonderful time visiting the winning children at their schools to award their prizes. The response was so fantastic that we have decided to run the competition again this year.

Details are essentially the same as last year:

- Entrants are to be of Primary or Intermediate school age (years 1-8)
- Entrants can enter up to three photos
- Three great prizes will be up for grabs, with the top prize winner taking home a camera
- Photos are to be farm or animal themed
- Photos can be sent in from now until 14 September 2015.

**Competition entry forms contain full details and conditions. Please note the file size and that the photo must be taken by the child entering the competition.**

**Information will be sent through to schools in the Totally Vets service area and entry forms can be downloaded from our website. So to be in to win, get your entries in.**

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**PEAK PERFORMANCE STARTS WITH ONE POWERFUL DRENCH.**

Barry Beatson  
Waiaruhe Station, Dannevirke.



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Reduce the frustration of heifer mastitis by using Teatseal before calving.

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