



VET notes

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT ANIMALS ON YOUR FARM SEPTEMBER 2015



Free pet lamb vaccination service

Totally Vets is again offering a free vaccination service for pet day lambs with the aim of preventing as many unnecessary lamb deaths (and very upset children!) as possible in the run up to pet day.

Ring your nearest clinic to book a time to bring your pet lamb(s) in during the week of the 14th-18th September 2015, between the hours of 9.00am and 4.00pm. We will be happy to vaccinate them and apply docking rings if required.

Good luck for pet day, we look forward to hearing how your pets performed!

Tails tell tales

Ryan Carr

Getting slapped in the face with a poo covered tail during milking is no one's idea of a good time!

Having heavily soiled tail ends flying around could also be a risk for spreading mastitis bugs. However there are rules put in place in the animal welfare codes (Painful Husbandry Procedures 2005) that limit what is allowed to be done to manage cow's tails. Based on the code, your options to manage cow's tails are:

1. Regular trimming of the hairy switch.

This can be done with simple shears or scissors or a specific gizmo (ordered through Shoof) that can be attached to a cordless drill. This is best done around calving when the season is wettest and usually only has to be done once a season, though you may decide to repeat.

2. Removing ONLY the last two or three vertebrae of the tail. This is obviously a

one-off permanent fix but is significantly painful and the welfare code states that trimming is preferred and should be tried first. If this is carried out only the last two to three vertebrae (bones of the tail) can be removed and this must only be done with rubber rings. Once the ring is applied, the tale must be left to fall off on its own or it can be cut off after a minimum of seven days.

The Painful Husbandry Procedures Code of Welfare is being reviewed at the moment and the rules around tail trimming (and other painful procedures) may well change in the next year. There has also been a recent change to the Animal Welfare Act 1999 (the law) which allows MPI welfare officers to hand out hefty on the spot penalties if they find breaches of animal welfare on farm (such as tail ends removed too high).

Considering this, and the need to maintain a good public image for the dairy industry, it makes sense to stick to the rules when it comes to tails. If you would like any further information then don't hesitate to talk with your vet!



Totally Vets current stock health

The middle of August saw a spell of severe weather hitting the country with snow to low levels in many areas. This put a check on growth and added extra pressure to feed availability.

Dairy

The lowered milk payout will focus attention on ensuring your animal health spend is truly returning a benefit to both your stock and your bottom line.

For us, calving so far has been reasonably quiet so presumably that translates as most people are having a pretty good run. The rain

HA HA

Religious Cowboy

The devout cowboy lost his favourite Bible while he was mending fences out on the range.

Three weeks later, a lamb walked up to him carrying the Bible in its mouth. The cowboy couldn't believe his eyes.

He took the precious book out of the lamb's mouth, raised his eyes heavenward and exclaimed, "It's a miracle!"

"Not really," said the lamb. "Your name is written inside the cover."

Non-cyclers... successful mating starts now!

Craig Dickson

In the lead up to mating, there are indicators you can be monitoring to help ensure mating is not compromised and you get a good outcome. Monitoring allows early detection and timely adjustment, particularly if you're not meeting key targets.

Body condition score (BCS) at calving is your first indicator of the probable success of mating. Cows at less than BCS 5.0 at calving have six week in-calf rates lower than if they had calved in the optimal BCS range of 5.0-5.5. Achieving these herd targets will put you on track for a great mating:

- Not more than 15% of cows below BCS 5.0 at calving
- Not more than 15% of cows 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 below BCS 4.0 at mating

- Cows maintain or gain BCS from the start of mating

Submission rate (SR), particularly in the first ten days of mating, is an excellent monitoring tool. Low SR can be a consequence of too many non-cyclers in your herd at the start of mating. To aid in actually knowing these numbers, **pre-mating heat detection** (having tail paint on 35 days prior to planned start of mating and recording these early heats) gives important information and the option of managing a non-cycling problem early.

The message with non-cycling cows remains the same, to **treat this group early**. In the face of a low payout season there may be a temptation to leave intervention of those cows not cycling till later, on the basis that there will be less to treat. The logic here is true, the longer you leave intervention the fewer cows there will be not cycling. Unfortunately while you have been waiting for this group to reduce in number it has been costing you days in milk next season. Remember the economic driver behind treatment of non-cycling cows is the average 16 days extra in milk and this benefit is **ONLY** achieved through early intervention.

The good news is, even in a low payout environment, you are still making money from treating non-cycling cows. At the present \$3.80 forecast, \$1.00 spent on non-cycling cows will return around \$2.80.

Call your vet today to plan ahead for a successful mating!

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and cold has seen an increase in metabolic problems so keep focused on transition management. Dirty cows end up empty cows, so ensure there's a plan in place for dealing with them. Be sure to keep accurate records of any at-risk cows (prolonged/assisted/dead/twin calvings, retained placentas, metabolic problems) and to at least metri-check and treat this group, if not the whole herd.

Also keep an eye out for lame cows beginning to appear in the herd. With spring being such

an intense period it is easy to let the number of cows with sore feet creep up. Take the time to observe, draft and treat lame cows early to avoid creating big issues in the weeks ahead.

Sheep

Sheep scanning rates are variable, with increased numbers of dries, although twinning rates have held up. The feed supply is tight, so we are seeing large numbers of lighter ewes, lambing onto shorter feed. Expect higher losses as a result of liver damage in ewes

that suffered badly from facial eczema in the autumn.

Beef

Expect, and be prepared for, possible metabolic issues in early calving cows that are on shorter feed. Additionally we have seen several cases of scouring in beef calves on their mothers. Although potentially hard work, administration of a course of electrolytes to such calves will help ensure their survival.

Good practice at docking time

Barny Askin

Docking time will likely be upon you before you know it and, when it comes to docking, there are a few minimum standards to apply that require some preparation.

No painful procedure(s) should be performed on animals under 12 hours old. Lambs should be docked within six weeks of birth with tails left long enough to cover the vulva in females and a similar length in males. Seaming irons or conventional rubber rings are the recommended techniques.

When castrating, ensure use of the correct size of rubber ring. The ring should be placed above the testes and below the teats. When scrotum shortening (cryptorchid) place the ring below the testes and push the testes up

into the cavity. Castrating rams at a few weeks old allows use of rubber rings and avoids need for surgery. However, this age recommendation will likely be impractical for the commercial farmer, where docking and castration is generally done at the same time - it may be achievable for the small block holder though.

To minimise the risk of infection, the equipment and area used as well as the lamb and the operator's hands, should be clean and dry. Try to avoid docking/castrating in wet weather as this increases the risk of infection.

We are also often asked a lot of questions about vaccinating lambs at this time of year. Hopefully the explanation below will help clarify the situation.

Best practice is to give lambs born from previously **unvaccinated** ewes one injection of Lamb Vaccine at docking (four to six weeks old). This will give them immediate protection against tetanus at docking time and a sensitiser to pulpy kidney. They should then receive an injection of Multine® 5 in 1, Covexin® 10 or Ultravac™ 5 in 1 or 6 in 1 vaccine four weeks later (can coincide with weaning). All lambs kept beyond this time

should receive a booster of the same four weeks later (can coincide with drenching). 5 in 1 products protect against the clostridial diseases pulpy kidney, blackleg, black disease, malignant oedema and tetanus. Covexin® 10 and Ultravac™ 6 in 1 also protect lambs against "sudden death syndrome" a disease that can affect fast growing lambs on lush feed. These last two vaccines are increasingly being used, particularly in valuable stock.

Where capital stock have received a sensitiser and booster as lambs then only a booster will be required for a pre-lamb vaccination as a hogget the following season.

For lambs born from previously **vaccinated** ewes no vaccination is required at docking, but a sensitiser and booster of Multine® 5 in 1, Covexin® 10, Ultravac™ 5 in 1 or 6 in 1 at 12 and 16 weeks old are required to give 12 months protection.

Finally, if you are vaccinating for scabby mouth at docking time, remember to check that you have had a successful take. If you are uncertain what this looks like please talk to us at the clinic.





Crypto

Mark Eames

One of the most common causes of scouring in young dairy calves is infection with *Cryptosporidium Parvum*, commonly referred to as “Crypto”.

Crypto is a protozoan parasite as opposed to a virus or bacteria, and one of the most important aspects to this bug is that it infects humans, so is a real public health issue. Children are particularly at risk.

Disease occurs in animals aged between four days and four weeks and is generally more severe the earlier a calf is infected. Diarrhoea appears about four days after infection and lasts for four to seventeen days. In young calves the faeces may be watery and yellowish (i.e. appearing very similar to rotavirus), or may be mucoid, pasty, grey and slimy.

Re-infection or “super-infection” with other viruses or bacteria is not uncommon and

probably explains the longer duration of diarrhoea in some cases. Crypto on its own does not cause a high number of deaths but, since super-infection is common, deaths may occur from other organisms.

The infectious dose required to cause disease is very low and contamination of feed and water troughs with faeces is probably the most common source of the bug. It is another very good reason to raise and cover troughs to prevent calves from pooing in them. Adult cows are also carriers of crypto without showing signs of disease and hence can also be a major source of infection.

Growth rates can be affected markedly according to the degree of gut damage that has occurred and this effect may last for several weeks following recovery.

Crypto is not always confined to calves kept indoors but can be as much of a problem on pasture, especially for late spring-born calves. This parasite thrives in damp conditions and wet paddocks so calves at pasture can be very susceptible to infection, particularly if conditions underfoot are muddy around feeders.

The fact that infection often presents alongside rotavirus or coronavirus means that vaccinating cows with Rotavec® Corona or Scourguard® pre-calving can help control crypto as well. Other important control measures include sound colostrum feeding practices and maintaining good hygiene in the calf sheds. The fact that crypto affects humans means that it is also very important to practice good personal hygiene such as not wearing calf rearing clothes home and washing hands after working with calves and especially before eating.

A laboratory diagnosis is required to be certain that crypto is involved before we can prescribe targeted treatment. The only product available that specifically targets crypto is Halocur®. Administered orally to calves after feeding (daily for seven days), it can reduce the severity of diarrhoea and prevent the infection spreading to other calves. Treated calves have also been shown to require fewer antibiotic treatments, as well as less rehydration therapy.

If you are having issues with scouring calves don't hesitate to give your vet a call.



Niamh and Josie

Gossip

Congratulations to **Ryan** and **Catherine** on the birth of their second daughter Josie Michelle on 23 June. Catherine and Josie are doing well and in Ryan's words “Josie is healthy and growing like stink and Niamh is adjusting very well”.

Carley from Feilding reception is now on maternity leave and we are missing her smiley face behind the counter. Carley is due around the end of September and we can't wait to hear if the new arrival is a boy or a girl!

It was fantastic for the Feilding branch to be nominated again for the **Rural Business of the Year** at the Feilding and District Excellence in Business Customer Service Awards. We

Thoughts on Ticks

Hamish Pike

Ticks can be found on many different animals including cattle, deer, sheep, goats, dogs, rabbits, birds and humans!

There are many different species of ticks but *Haemaphysalis longicornis* is the only one found in New Zealand. There are three stages - larvae, nymphs, and adults - all feeding off separate hosts, not necessarily of the same species.

Unfed nymphs overwinter on pasture and will find a host in August/September, engorge with blood and then drop to the ground to moult into an adult. The adult will then again find a suitable host and engorge during the late spring/summer and then again drop to the ground to now lay eggs. The eggs then hatch and larvae emerge and engorge over summer/autumn before dropping to the ground to moult into nymphs. The nymphs are most resistant to the cold and therefore are most likely to survive the winter. Therefore it is this that regulates the seasonal pattern. However, in years where winters are mild, larvae and adult ticks may also overwinter leading to higher peak adult numbers in the late spring/summer period.

Nymphs and adult ticks are commonly found on the head, ears, udder, axilla and groin and lower body extremities of animals.

Theileria orientalis is a protozoan parasite carried by the tick and is injected into the bloodstream when the tick bites the animal.



Cattle are the only species known to be clinically affected by *Theileria orientalis*.

Young calves are also at risk of *Theileria orientalis*, as well as potentially immune suppressed animals like cows close to calving, those in peak lactation, or where underlying disease is present (such as Bovine Virus Diarrhoea).

Both ticks and *Theileria orientalis* can both cause anaemia by:

- Ticks feeding on the blood of the host.
- *Theileria orientalis* infecting the red blood cells of the host.

Young animals such as lambs, fawns and calves, are most at risk of anaemia caused by ticks.

Adult ticks peak in number in early summer coinciding with peak farm numbers of lambs. Deaths as a result of blood loss in lambs (and calves) are however rare and their effect on lamb growth rates is probably minimal, at least in Manawatu. The biggest threat by ticks in this region is to deer, and particularly newborn fawns, where deaths due to tick anaemia are not uncommon. Velvet antler can also be damaged as a result of heavy tick infestations in adult stags. Young calves are also at risk

in high tick population areas and therefore clinical disease is rare in Manawatu.

Bayticol® pour-on is registered for cattle and deer, and provides protection for approximately three to six weeks. It is a synthetic pyrethroid with a nil meat and milk withholding period.

Ticks are practically impossible to eradicate from a property but there are a few management methods to reduce tick infestation of animals from pasture, such as keeping pasture as even as possible whilst maintaining optimum feed availability. Topping of rank pasture is not recommended to control ticks unless the cut debris can be removed (trampling and eating by adult stock is a more effective method of removing ticks).

When buying cattle from outside the region, it is recommended that cattle are treated with Bayticol® five days BEFORE departing from the farm of origin. This will ensure that any ticks feeding on the animals are eliminated and hence will reduce the risk of importing *Theileria*-infected ticks on to your property. This will go some way in reducing the impact that *Theileria orientalis* may have on your farm in the future.

If you have any questions or would like advice on managing a tick problem, please feel free to contact your Totally Vets Veterinarian.

take pride in providing a high level of service to all of our customers and look forward to attending the awards night and being a part of the celebrations.

The **Totes Amaze** indoor netball team, from our Awapuni clinic (plus Catherine the superstar import!), are improving in leaps and bounds, now showing some impressive skills on the netball court. With significant wins over the

past few weeks, hopes of making our first ever play off are building! An added bonus is seeing many of our clients courtside.

Purchasers of Teatseal® this year went in to a draw to win a chilli bin. This was won by **Kevin Claridge** of Ashford Farms Company. Hannah and Luka thought it was great that it was big enough to sit on!



Hannah Claridge with Luka

Is she on heat or just a wannabee?

Greg Smith

Heat detection is a critical task. A missed heat means three weeks less milk the following season and a lost opportunity to produce a heifer replacement calf.

The cost of each missed heat is around \$150 to \$200 and, although a missed cow will generally have time to cycle again before the end of mating, she could just end up empty.

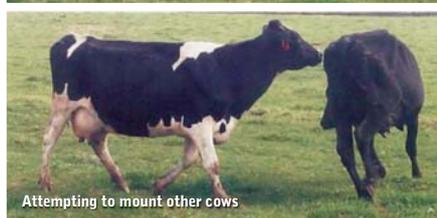
There are several types of heat detecting error:

1. Simply missing a cow that is having a heat.
2. Identifying a cow that is showing heat-like behaviour, but is not actually on heat.
3. Recording error - the wrong number is written down and/or drafted.

The signs that confirm a cow is MOST likely in heat are:

- a. The cow that is **standing to be mounted** is on heat.
- b. The **tail paint is completely removed** +/- mud marks on the flank.
- c. The **heat-mount detector has been activated**.

Other signs you MAY see from a cow in heat include her attempting to mount other cows; she is restless/bellowing; has poor milk let-down; has mucus around the vulva or mud



marks on the flanks; tail paint is rubbed but not removed; her heat mount detector is lost.

Cows with **at least two of these “may be” signs** are **possibly on heat**, ie. Some will be and some will not be! Use the guidelines below to decide on whether to inseminate now or wait for further signs:

1. If the cow has not been inseminated since the start of mating but you believe the signs to be reasonable then inseminate. Make a note (eg. put a question mark) in the AI book to record that there was some doubt with this insemination.
2. If the cow had a previous insemination and it was 20 or more days ago then inseminate.
3. If the cow had a previous insemination and it is less than 20 days then inseminate if the previous heat was weak (eg. marked with a question mark). If the previous insemination is NOT marked with a question mark then look for more evidence of heat and either wait if further signs are not seen or inseminate if further signs are observed.

One final comment on the correct use of tail paint. Apply a strip:

- No more than 20cm long.
- No more than 5cm wide over the rear segment of the backbone.
- Thick enough to cover the skin with some hair fibres still visible.

If you would like any further information or to organise some on-farm staff training then don't hesitate to give the Totally Vets Team a call.

Caring for orphan lambs

Sarah Clarke

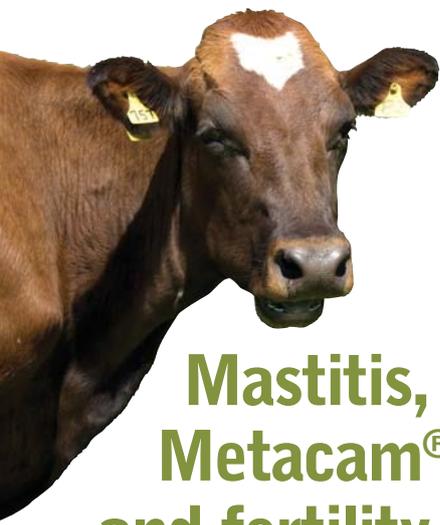
Whether it's a lamb for school pet day, or a triplet that a ewe rejected, pet lambs are firmly

embedded in rural New Zealand culture. There are several things that are key to successfully caring for an orphan lamb.

HYPOTHERMIA, or a below normal body temperature, may result if your lamb is cold. Check if it will suckle by putting your finger in its mouth. If it won't suckle, then it will need

feeding by stomach tube, by either yourself or a vet. If your lamb is unresponsive or comatose, then it will need an injection of dextrose into its abdomen **before** it is warmed up, so call your vet urgently.

COLOSTRUM is rich in protein, energy and antibodies, so is vital to lamb survival and in establishing a healthy immune system. Newborn lambs need to consume 15% of their



Mastitis, Metacam® and fertility - what's the connection?

Helen Mather

Many of you have already experienced the multiple benefits of treating sick cows with non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). But did you know that treating mastitis post-calving with Metacam® in addition to an antibiotic can have a big impact on herd reproductive performance?

Inflammation is the body's response to injury or infection. However sometimes the inflammatory response itself can be a major cause of tissue damage. Signs of inflammation include redness, heat, swelling, pain and loss of function.

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as Kelaprogen, Metacam®, Rimadyl®LA and Flunixin for cows work in a similar way that

bodyweight in colostrum, with at least half of this within the first six to twelve hours of life. The remainder should be fed over the next 12 to 24 hours of life and ideally continue colostrum feeding for three or four days before transitioning onto milk.

MILK is essential but the key thing, is NOT to over-feed lambs. If lambs drink too much, or drink their ration too fast, milk will go into

ibuprofen works for people. NSAIDs have the following effects:

- analgesic (pain relief).
- anti-inflammatory (reduce inflammation).
- anti-pyretic (reduce fever).
- anti-endotoxic (reduce endotoxins, which are produced by bacteria and have many negative/toxic effects on body tissues).

These effects make Metacam® useful when treating a wide range of conditions, making cows feel better, begin eating faster, recover and start functioning again more quickly. Interestingly, new research has shown that NSAID use in cases of mastitis that occur after calving has the ability to positively affect your herd's reproductive performance.

Cows that have had a case of clinical mastitis:

- demonstrate a lower conception rate at their first insemination.
- have a longer calving to conception interval.
- need more services for conception.
- display an increased risk of embryo loss or early abortion.

In a recent study it was found that, compared to healthy cows, the odds of becoming pregnant were reduced by 29% for cows with mild mastitis and by 46% for cows with moderate to severe cases of mastitis. Infertility is the greatest reason for a cow to be culled.

Cows with a clinical case of mastitis or a high cell count have lower conception rates. It is thought that inflammation caused by mastitis affects:

- the ovary and its ability to produce high quality eggs for fertilisation and;

the first stomach (rumen) instead of the third stomach (abomasum) where it is digested. Undigested milk in the rumen causes bloat and can make a lamb sick as bacteria grows and feeds on the milk. If your lamb suffers from bloat give us a call to discuss - these lambs may benefit from the addition of yoghurt to their milk ration, a recipe we would be happy to give you!

- the ability of the cow to maintain an early pregnancy.

Recently released results from a large international study (The FERTILE study) found that cows treated for post-calving mastitis with the anti-inflammatory Metacam® in addition to an intramammary antibiotic:

- were 10% more likely to conceive to the first service than cows receiving antibiotics alone.
- had a 16% higher bacteriological cure rate for mastitis infections.
- had reduced individual cow somatic cell counts.
- required less inseminations in order to conceive.
- had a 9% increase in probability of being pregnant at 120 days after calving.

The effects of mastitis on udder health and milk production are well understood. It is now clear that mastitis can have an influence on the long-term future of dairy cattle by affecting both their likelihood of being culled for high somatic cell count and clinical mastitis, and by affecting their ability to become pregnant and remain in the milking herd. Cows with mastitis in the MAMMARY study were 42% less likely to be culled when Metacam® was added to standard antibiotic therapy.

Using an NSAID in combination with your standard post calving mastitis treatment not only helps in recovery at the time but also has the potential to provide significant long-term benefits for your herd.

Talk with your vet to find out more about how Metacam® might fit in to your mastitis treatment plan.

DOCKING of tails and/or testicles is often mostly easily done by placing an elastrator (rubber) ring around the tail/testicles. See Barny's article on docking lambs on page three for further detailed information on this.

Further information about care of orphan lambs is available from our branches or on our website, www.totallyvets.co.nz.



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