



VET notes

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT ANIMALS ON YOUR FARM

MAY 2016



Bobby calf focus sessions

Get a head start on being prepared for calving this season!

You are invited to attend a FREE one and a half hour interactive session focused on increasing awareness on how bobby calves are managed within the dairy industry. Developed by DairyNZ, Totally Vets group are offering the opportunity to attend sessions in:

Dannevirke Thursday **19th May**

Feilding Thursday **26th May**

Carterton Tuesday **31st May**

Pahiatua Tuesday **7th June**

For more information and/or to register please go to the DairyNZ website www.dairynz.co.nz/bobbyfocus or contact Gaye Stein at our Awapuni Clinic on 06 356 5011 or email Gaye.Stein@tvj.co.nz.



Lambs aboard!

Ginny Dodunski

The rain may have come too late in the lower North Island to have ewes in top condition for mating, but hopefully many were at least gaining well by the time the rams went out.

The Ruapehu/King Country has had a blinder of a summer, and many farms may be facing the prospect of more triplets than they have ever dealt with in the past. It is rare to manage to dock much over 220-230% in triplet mobs, and it is not uncommon for them to dock as low as 150%.

Triplet management is an art and there are almost as many approaches to their management as there are farmers! In my opinion to "ignore them and hope for the best" is to pass up an opportunity and, under this scenario, when they perform badly they are a real cost - lots of dead ewes and a group of small lambs...

So some basic principles that will help their performance are:

- They must NOT lose weight in the five weeks pre-lamb.
- They need to be increasing their intake in the three weeks pre-lamb - ensure RESIDUALS are NOT less than 1200kgDM/ha.
- You need to accept that in achieving this you will get some bearings. Do NOT under-feed to reduce bearings, you will impact lamb survival too much.
- Pick your winners, go through them after scanning and get rid of the very old, very thin, and those with poor teeth and/or feet.
- Alternatively make a plan to really nurse these ones through - this can work if done well on a high quality feed source, from scanning onwards, NOT the week prior to lambing.
- The remaining ewes still need to be protected from health challenges such as parasites, lice and sore feet.
- They need to stay upright - shorn or checked regularly for casts.
- Lamb them onto good covers - AIM for 1400kgDM/ha even if you don't quite get there!
- Lamb in paddocks with a better docking history.

You have time now to plan to do something different with triplets this year so, go on, do it!

Looking ahead

Potential animal health issues, tasks to consider and reminders for May include...

Dairy

- **Drying off** - as feed tightens and milk production is decreasing be sure to monitor cow body condition to ensure it doesn't drop too low. Make holistic decisions around which cows to dry-off when and book in

your Milk Quality Consult sooner rather than later!

- **Herd testing** - Bulk milk somatic cell count will be rising in late lactation. Seriously consider investing in a herd test that will give very valuable information to assist in making both dry-off and dry cow therapy decisions.
- **Trace element monitoring** - pre-winter is a good time for liver biopsies (either standing or from culls) to ensure adequate levels of trace elements, particularly copper.

- **Leptospirosis vaccination** - autumn is a perfect time to boost your herd prior to winter (being the highest risk period). Ensure that young stock are included in this and that the interval between annual vaccinations never extends beyond 13 months.

Sheep and Beef

- **Mating** - is hopefully almost all but complete but continue to monitor plane of nutrition and ensure maintenance of adequate ram ratios.



Heads up on horse's hooves

Joao Dib

The old adage "no hoof, no horse" sums it up ... Good quality hoof horn is dry, hard, tough and not brittle, soft or spongy. Nutrition, environmental conditions, drugs and trauma can all have an affect on hoof quality.

The hoof wall essentially consists of two layers; the outer insensitive layer that should be dense and tough, with a moisture content of 15-20%. In contrast, the inner sensitive layer has a moisture content of around 45%. Interlocking sheaves of cells hold the two layers together. Blood and lymph vessels provide essential moisture to the inner layer while moisture to the outer layer relies on the process of diffusion which means excellent circulation to the foot is critical.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

A hoof that is **too dry** will be inflexible, have poor shock absorbing function and it may contract and tighten around sensitive tissues. Conversely, cracking and peeling hooves are the result of **too much moisture**. A horse kept in muddy conditions will have a softened external hoof wall and pressures from within the hoof capsule may cause the foot to flatten and spread out. The mud draws out moisture and oils from the hoof wall and, as it dries out, it attempts to bend and warp but it is prevented from doing so by the strong hold that the inner wall has on it. To release stress cracks develop. Cracks may become packed with dirt and over time they spread upwards. Excessive moisture also alters the natural varnish-like layer that helps control the moisture content of the hoof capsule... So, preventing horses from standing solely on muddy ground will go a long way to prevent excessive outer wall drying and cracking. If you do not have a well drained paddock, consider building up an area of a few square metres by using lime or similar.

NUTRITION

Essential amino acids such as DL-methionine and biotin (and other nutrients) have been shown to improve horn growth rates and hardness. There are several products on the market that are useful when supplementation is necessary. Generally, if nutrition is adequate, poor management and genetics may be the cause of poor quality hoof wall.

GENETICS

Conformation is a critical aspect to address as a foot must be "in balance" in order to adequately support all the weight upon it. A well balanced hoof capsule will have a better chance to retain its integrity and will minimise the risk of painful conditions on the structures above it.

TOPICAL PRODUCTS

If the wall is beginning to crack lanolin, fish oil and other combinations can be applied to the hoof wall in order to restore pliability and to stabilise moisture content. There are a large array of hoof preparations that can help hoof wall integrity, but they are not all created equal, so be sure discuss potential suitable options with your vet.

The above is just a superficial overview of a very complex and important topic. For more information don't hesitate to call your vet.

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- **Planning for winter** - prepare an autumn/winter feed budget and relate it to body condition score management, consider timing of winter shearing, iodine supplementation and book in your scanning.

Deer

- **Mating** - continue to monitor stag health and condition through mating and act quickly at any sign of a problem.

Equine

- **Planning for winter** - regular hoof care (article P2) will help decrease the risk of foot abscesses and timely dental checks will help, particularly in older horses, ensure maintenance of condition through winter.
- **Vaccinations** - now is a good time to make sure all your horses are up-to-date with all their vaccinations, particularly mares that are in foal.



Liver fluke

Charlotte Gibson

Have you checked your cull cow and/or sheep kill sheets and found evidence of fluke? Are young stock grazing in possible fluke prone areas? If the answer is yes, you should do something about it.

Fasciola hepatica, or liver fluke, is a flatworm parasite that causes damage to the liver and bile ducts of infected cattle and sheep. It is an important cause of production loss in New Zealand (NZ) in the beef, dairy and sheep industries. Economic losses occur due to ill-thrift with consequent reduced meat or milk production. Adult fluke can live in the liver bile ducts of infected cattle for years.

The disease is generally seen from January to July. The "chronic" form is more common, in which case sheep and cattle lose condition, have poor milk production, show chronic diarrhoea, develop a soft fluid swelling under a jaw ("bottle jaw"), become weak and may die. Closer examination will reveal pale eye linings and gums caused by the loss of blood. In NZ the chronic form probably has the greatest potential impact.

Diagnosis is best confirmed by post-mortem examination. Alternatively, there is a blood and faecal test available, and surveillance from the slaughter premises can provide evidence of the extent of liver fluke infection in animals from the property.

There is a range of drenches that are effective against (will kill) liver fluke but they vary according to the age of the flukes that they target. Some are effective against all lifecycle stages (such as Genesis™ Ultra pour-on,

Switch Fluke 10 oral, Ivomec® Plus injection) whilst others will only kill adult fluke (such as Arrest™ C). There are also various products available that are useful in the control of liver fluke. Products also vary in their mode of application - oral, pour-on or injectable. The other thing worth noting is a variation in the withhold period associated with these different treatments. A lot of them have very long withholds so they are best to use in the early dry period, or on heifers as a quarantine drench to protect your home farm and stock.

In summary, be wary of diagnosing fluke solely on the visual appearance of animals. Checking your post-mortem sheets is the easiest way to know if liver fluke may be causing a problem in your herd. Don't hesitate to contact your vet for a discussion and/or advice on the best treatment options for your stock.



Things to know about internal teat sealant...

Allie Quinn

The two main groups of dry cow treatment (DCT) are those containing antibiotic and those that contain an internal teat sealant (ITS). DCT has two important roles in mastitis control - firstly it treats existing subclinical infection (antibiotic DCT), and secondly, it helps prevent new mastitis infection in the dry period and around calving (antibiotic DCT and/or ITS).

ITS, such as Teatseal™, are non-antibiotic inert substances that form a plug in the teat canal. When correctly used these products are especially valuable in preventing mastitis during the dry period and at calving. An ITS can provide protection for at least 14 weeks - far longer than the expected activity of even long acting antibiotic DCT. In heifers insertion at four to six weeks prior to calving is recommended.

Several New Zealand (NZ) and overseas trials have shown that, used either alone or in combination with an antibiotic DCT, ITS can reduce mastitis by 30%-50% from dry-off through to mid lactation. For heifers, ITS use is a common and effective strategy for preventing mastitis. A recent Waikato study showed that Tealseal™ administration to heifers four to six weeks before calving reduced clinical mastitis in the first two weeks after calving by 68%.

DCT administration is a job that requires patience and suitable facilities but the cost-benefit of preventing mastitis, particularly in heifers, is worth the effort. Cost benefit

calculators, such as the DairyNZ SmartSAMM calculator, are readily available to quantify mastitis costs and assist in deciding if ITS use is a cost effective option for your herd and/or heifers.

However, **there is NO room for shortcuts!** To get the benefits, and to avoid complications, care must be taken to insert DCT correctly and hygienically, especially ITS. Treated animals need to be monitored and checked according to SmartSAMM recommendations.

ITS is best stripped out manually after calving at the first milking. Start by stripping from the very top of the teat to ensure all product in the teat canal is removed. Strip each quarter 10-12 times and ensure staff do NOT confuse ITS flakes with clinical mastitis clots. Alternatively, calves are normally able to suckle and remove the ITS with no adverse effects. There is no meat withholding period on ITS registered in NZ.

For more information and advice on DCT talk to your veterinarian.

AVAILABLE IN

20L	100L	200L	1000L
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- 3** KEY BENEFITS
- 1 **FAST PENETRATION SPEED**
 - 2 **DELIVERS SUPERIOR TEAT CONDITION TO HELP PREVENT MASTITIS**
 - 3 **MULTIPLE DILUTION RATES 1:4, 1:7, 1:9**

FOR MORE INFORMATION
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WWW.DEOSAN.CO.NZ