



VET notes

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT ANIMALS ON YOUR FARM SEPTEMBER 2016



Photo Competition reminder

Gaye Stein

Entries are still being accepted for the Totally Vets Photo Competition.

Thirteen pictures will be chosen to feature in the Totally Vets 2017 Calendar, with the top three receiving some great prizes for both themselves and their school!

Children in years one to eight, who attend primary and intermediate schools within the catchment area serviced by Totally Vets, are eligible to enter.

Photos are to be farm or animal themed and **entries close 19th September 2016.**

Entry forms may be obtained from your nearest Totally Vets branch or can be downloaded from our website www.totallyvets.co.nz - follow the link on our home page.

Free Lamb Vaccine pet lamb vaccination service

Leisa Norris

Springtime means children across the country have taken to raising orphan lambs (along with an increasing number of kids - baby goats that is!) in preparation for their school Agricultural or Pet Day.

As well as supplying ribbons, we offer ourselves as judges in the pet section and, to help ensure that as many pet lambs as possible make it to Pet Day, we will again in 2016 be offering a **free Lamb Vaccine vaccination service** to all of the school children in our area - the aim being to prevent as many unnecessary deaths, and consequently very upset children, as possible in the lead up to the big day!

Lamb Vaccine is generally given at, or just prior, to docking to protect against two clostridial bugs - it gives around three weeks immediate protection against tetanus and a

sensitiser dose for pulpy kidney. These bugs are found in the soil, so are everywhere, and virtually impossible to avoid. In particular, pulpy kidney is a common reason for lambs dying suddenly. It is invariably a fatal condition and there is no treatment.

If you would like to have your pet lamb/kid vaccinated with Lamb Vaccine, please phone prior to make an appointment to bring them into your nearest clinic during the **week of Monday 12th to Friday 16th September, between 9am and 4pm.** Leave your lamb/kid in the car and come in and tell one of our business support staff that you are here. We can also put a ring on your lamb's tail/testicles at the same time - all at no charge.

There is an additional clostridial vaccine known as "5-in-1" (or, if appropriate, potentially "7-in-1" that also protects against Leptospirosis) that lambs/kids require. It needs to be given three weeks after Lamb Vaccine to boost immunity and give long term protection against tetanus, pulpy kidney and several other fatal diseases. This vaccine requires two doses given four to six weeks apart to give protection for the next twelve months. Information on this will be given when you come in for your free Lamb Vaccine vaccination.

Please do take advantage of this service - we want to see as many pet lambs/kids as possible in the show ring - we look forward to hearing how you got on!

Looking ahead

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

Dairy

- **Calf management** - excellent hygiene practices are essential throughout the season so keep up with this! So long as the weather allows, getting calves outside onto grass is generally a big help, but do keep coccidiosis prevention in place - most easily done through meal containing a coccidiostat. Also make sure not to miss the key four to eight week old window in which to disbud calves - have you got yours booked in? - **advert P8.**

- **Metri-checking** - hopefully your first batch and/or the at-risk group of cows will already have been checked and, if required, treated - this will go a long way to helping get mating off on the right foot - **article P4, advert P8.**
- **Bull preparation** - the start of natural mating may seem a long way off yet but selecting and preparing your bull team well is an excellent first step to ensure a successful mating - **article P4.**

HA HA

Q: What do you call a girl with a frog on her head?

A: Lilly.

Q: How does a dog stop a video?

A: He presses the paw button.

Q: Why do cows go to New York?

A: To see the moosicals!

Q: Why does a dog wag its tail?

A: Because there's no one else to wag it for him.

Q: What do you call a pig who knows karate?

A: Porkchop!

Q: How do you stop a dog barking in the back seat of a car?

A: Put him in the front seat.



BVD monitoring

Charlotte Gibson

Bovine Virus Diarrhoea, more commonly known (and easily said!) as BVD, is still one of the most important viral diseases of cattle in New Zealand causing substantial reproductive and production losses.

Monitoring your BVD herd status is essential in controlling this disease - this article outlines a few potential ways you can go about it.

To monitor the milking herd, using the **LIC BVD monitoring package** is the easiest option. This will tell you if you have a persistently infected (PI) animal in your milking herd and will monitor your herds' exposure over time. Fonterra takes five bulk milk samples at strategic times during the season and the information is sent to you and your vet.

If your bulk milk test comes back positive for a PI then you can individually test cows through the milk using your individual herd test

milk samples. Alternatively a vet can come out and individually blood test the milking cows.

Checking the status of replacements is a key step and the best option is to **blood or tissue (ear notch) test them as calves**. This will identify and ensure removal of any PI as soon as possible so it is not around during the next mating season. This can be done quickly and easily at the time of dis-budding.

If not tested as calves, you can wait until they are older and take **blood samples from 10 heifers** to check how high the exposure (level of antibodies) is. This level will give a good indication of whether or not you need to blood test all of them individually to find a PI.

A step by step approach is wise as cost of testing can add up quickly. The key thing is that any information is better than no information and we want to make sure any potential issue is addressed before it creates a problem!

If you have any questions regarding BVD as a disease, your BVD status and/or want advice on how to monitor your farm's exposure, then discuss with your vet what option(s) would be best suited to you and your situation.

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Sheep and Beef

- **Lambing** - maintain checks on later pregnant ewes and act quickly at the first sign of metabolic disease or lambing trouble.
- **Docking time** - having a plan in place will help ensure important tasks aren't missed - from clostridial vaccination to drenching, make sure you've got all tasks in hand at this busy time - **article P7**.

Equine

- **Spring things** - the spring flush of grass can bring with it some challenges, particularly in regards to laminitis prevention, weight management and ponies - remember prevention is better than cure! It is also timely to worm all horses with a drench containing moxidectin (such as ULTRA•MOX™) as this is often the period of risk for cyathostomosis - **article P3**.

- **Foaling** - mares should now be in the paddocks in which they will foal. Also make sure they have had their pre-foal vaccinations (primarily Tetanus and Strangles, possibly Salmonella) four to six weeks before their due date.

DEER

- **Ticks** - depending on your farm history consider the need for tick control in the coming months. Talk with your vet about options for treatment.



Horses and all things spring

Paula Radich

Spring has sprung and, from an equine point of view, there are some key things to consider. These include vaccinations, dentals, feeding, worming and, for some, foaling.

VACCINATIONS

Ensure vaccinations are up-to-date. The main two are:

- Tetanus - caused by *Clostridium tetani*, an anaerobic bacteria found in the soil which can contaminate wounds and cause tetanus. If your horse gets wounded and is not vaccinated we can administer an antitoxin that will prevent tetanus, however prevention is a lot more effective.
- Strangles - caused by *Streptococcus equi* and presents intermittently, often when the herd vaccination status lowers. It results in abscessation of the lymph nodes around

the head and spreads very quickly via respiratory secretions.

- Other potential vaccinations to consider include Equine Herpes virus and Salmonella.

DENTALS

Dental examinations are required every six to twelve months depending on your horse's age, conformation and their oral history/existing problems. Signs of dental disease are often very non-specific but can include head shaking/tossing, problems during riding, and difficulty eating. Potential issues should be checked immediately as lesions can progress rapidly and result in things such as facial swelling, oral ulcers and tooth root abscesses - all of which can be extremely painful.

FEEDING

As the weather changes so do the metabolic requirements of horses, therefore their feed needs to alter accordingly. During winter decreased grass growth may mean their diet requires supplementing with fibre (such as hay, chaff or bailage) and additional energy (especially for older horses), or less energy for those which are exercising less or "easy doers". Horses require at least two percent of their body weight as fibre daily which equates to 10kg of hay for a 500kg horse so, if their grass intake is low, additional fibre may be required.

Hay is also a valuable substitute for grass when horses are suffering from laminitis. Laminitis is often the result of metabolic disease and, with the "spring flush" of grass,

intakes (particularly of ponies!) need to be managed to ensure excess sugar intake doesn't result in an acute laminitic episode.

It is also important to ensure horses are receiving enough vitamins and minerals, especially selenium. Contact your nearest clinic for more advice on selenium blood testing, feed options and prevention of metabolic disease.

WORMING

In spring all horses need to be wormed with a drench containing moxidectin (such as ULTRA•MOX™) as they are at risk of cyathostomosis which occurs as the larvae emerge in response to stress and warmer weather. For more information and/or to plan an individualised annual worming regime appropriate for your horse(s) don't hesitate to talk with your vet.

FOALING

It is an exciting time of year and planning is required, for both mare and foal, to reduce the likelihood of any problems. Aim to have pregnant mares in their foaling paddock one month prior to the event, ensure they are appropriately vaccinated and are fed well - use a product containing enough calcium and energy. Post-foaling colostrum intake, umbilical cord care and a general health check for both the mare and foal are important. Contact your vet for more information and/or pick up a free Foaling Fact booklet from your nearest clinic and, if required, we have a foaling alarm available for hire from our Awapuni clinic.

Ten top tips for mating

Helen Mather

Mating can be said to represent the starting point for the success or otherwise of a season, so it pays to get it right. That time of the year is fast approaching, so here are 10 actions to ensure you have the best control of your mating outcome rather than leaving it to chance.

1. Minimise weight loss between now and planned start of mating (PSM):

The next couple of months pose a real challenge to meeting the nutritional needs of the herd so that milk production, animal health and reproductive performance are not compromised.

- “All” cows lose weight after calving. The trick is to feed them well enough to keep this natural weight loss to less than half a condition score. Cows that lose more than 1.0 score from calving to mating, will suffer a 20% drop in pregnancy rate compared to those cows that only lose 0.5 of a score after calving. Focus should be on the quality and balance of the diet, not just the quantity.
- Maintenance of energy intake once mating starts. Hold pastures in a vegetative state for as long as possible by carefully adjusting rotation length, topping or closing paddocks up for silage and the timely use of nitrogen or supplements.
- Consider use of Rumensin™. It works on rumen microbes to extract energy more efficiently from consumed feed.

2. Metricheck for a ‘clean repro bill of health’:

- By identifying and treating cows with reproductive tract disease fertility can be restored, time to conception can be advanced two to three weeks, and likelihood of being empty reduced 10-30%. Return on investment from treatment has been estimated conservatively at between 3:1 and 7:1, just from extra days in milk and reduced empties. Empty rates of cows that have had retained membranes will be halved

if given appropriate treatment at the right time - from 25% down to 12%!

- Examine whole-herd or ‘at-risk’ cows only.
- Best done in batches two to four weeks after date of calving.
- Tail paint all cows that calve in the first three weeks of calving one colour, then change to another colour for the next three weeks and so on. Metricheck the first batch four to five weeks after start of calving, the second batch three weeks later, with the remainder done four weeks before PSM.

3. Undertake pre-mating mineral checks:

- Copper and selenium are most important.
- Important to monitor the effectiveness of your supplementation program and to make timely strategic decisions on extra mineral input(s) if needed.

4. Ensure overall clean bill of health:

- Identify and treat lame cows early.
- Check and monitor disease status such as for Bovine Virus Diarrhea (BVD) and parasitism.

5. Tail-paint early:

- Ideally 35 days before PSM. If you have tail painted for batched metrichecking, then you will already have an advantage. Touch up the original tail-paint weekly and paint all cows you see cycling a separate colour.
- 10 days prior to PSM, count how many cows have cycled and how many are still their original colour. All cows with original paint are deemed non-cyclers; if the percentage of non-cyclers exceeds 30% of the herd, expect a slow start to mating.

6. Evaluate and treat non-cyclers early:

- CIDRs increase submission rates when used at the start of mating.
- Compared to untreated herd-mates, non-cyclers treated with CIDRs **before** PSM:
 - on average conceived 17 days earlier giving extra days in milk next lactation
 - were 31% less likely to be non-cyclers in the following season
 - generated more AB calves for rearing

7. Consider a Why-Wait-Programme to synchronise cycling cows:

- This increases the number of cows mated and in-calf in a reduced period of time, i.e. shortens the mating period.

8. Review heat detection processes to ensure accuracy:

- Who does it? Who’s involved? Who’s responsible? It’s a priority job for an experienced person. Every missed heat will cost more than \$100 so detecting that extra cow will more than pay for your efforts.
- When is it done? Four observations per day for 30 minutes will detect more than 90% of the cycling cows compared to two observations per day where only 70% of the cycling cows might be detected.
- What to look for? Ensure those involved are fully trained.
- How is it actioned and recorded? Have a clear system such as different tail-painting colours.

9. Consider use of short-gestation bulls for second round inseminations:

- Their use will help to keep calving spread more compact and decrease numbers of late calvers.

10. Bull preparation and management:

- Select bulls early so they have time to acclimatise to a new environment and each other. Ensure they are appropriate for purpose with sound feet and limbs.
- Consider short gestation bulls to tighten calving spread and minimise late calvers.
- Insist they are disease tested - BVD, Enzootic Bovine Leukosis (EBL) and Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR) **prior** to arrival.
- Invest in having them fertility tested. This includes a basic reproductive tract assessment (such as analysis of scrotal circumference - needs to be greater than 34cm!), to observing serving behaviour and analysis of semen quality.
- Ensure you have enough! One bull is required for every 30 cows (or 25 heifers) not yet in-calf at natural mating start date **multiplied by two** for two rotating teams.
- Take time to train them to remain in the paddock.
- Remove, treat, and rest immediately if lame or ill.

If you want help with a tailored mating action plan specific to your herd don’t hesitate to give your vet a call.



Up close and personal with foot-and-mouth disease

PART TWO

Leisa Norris

In May this year I was privileged to be part of the third group of 10 New Zealand (NZ) veterinarians to visit Nepal as part of the European Commission for the Control of FMD (EuFMD) Real Time Training Course.

This amazing opportunity was afforded to NZ by the generosity of Australia, who has a

governmental arrangement with Nepal to send five such groups each year. One of their weeks have been "given" to us each year since 2014. My two week trip was originally scheduled for early May 2015, but due to the massive (M7.9) earthquake on April 25th, the trip was delayed. Nearly 9000 people lost their lives and more than 85,000 homes were damaged or destroyed. In places much of this damage was still evident.

My role as an Initial Investigating Veterinarian (IIV), of which there are 30 throughout NZ that are the first point of contact for investigating suspect exotic disease, stood me in good stead for selection. Early recognition of FMD, in order to minimise its spread, is key as the longer it goes unnoticed the more extensive an outbreak would become. Early recognition relies on people having the knowledge, skills and experience to identify it.

Besides the obviously incredible experience of being able to see FMD in the flesh, the experience of being in Nepal was just as amazing. It was a real eye opener to a different

way of life and a different reality - many people spending most of their day on seeking food and/or water, ensuring they had shelter, and tending to their animals or crops. It was certainly a once in a lifetime experience and my children are already very sick of my "children in Nepal" speech!

Needless to say I was overly particular with my personal biosecurity when returning to NZ! The clothes that I wore on farm in Nepal were "donated" to charity and left over there. My other clothes were all hot washed and disinfected with citric acid, as were all other personal belongings. We were "made known" to NZ immigration and biosecurity so were appropriately questioned before being allowed to return home! As an additional safety measure, once back in NZ, we were under a strict seven day stand-down period from having any contact with animals.

I am hugely grateful for the support from Totally Vets, Ministry for Primary Industries and EuFMD for enabling me to have a truly unforgettable experience!





Scabby mouth

Juan Klue

Scabby mouth is a highly infectious viral disease that can affect sheep, goats and humans. It is a common disease and mainly infects young lambs and hoggets but older stock can be affected as well.

Outbreaks can occur throughout the year, but are most prevalent in late spring and early summer. The infection rate can be high but the death rate is usually low. Production losses and costs occur because scabby mouth can prevent young animals from suckling and grazing properly, causing reduced growth and/or they can become fly struck due to their lesions. Additionally lactating ewes can get lesions that develop on the udder which can then predispose to mastitis and consequent lamb starvation.

Trauma to the skin aids in the establishment of scabby mouth, and this is where the scabs or lesions will form. Causes of trauma include grazing around thistles or matagouri, erupting teeth, and head butting through fighting. The lesions appear as thick scabs which are normally found on the lip margins but these can extend to inside the mouth and over the tongue; the entire muzzle, head and ears; between hooves and behind fetlocks; and to the udder and vulva of ewes. The lesions generally cure by themselves within a few weeks of infection, as long as there is no secondary bacterial infection.

Treatment is often not worthwhile unless there is secondary bacterial infection and vaccination usually proves effective in preventing infection. The vaccine is a live strain, so it is important that farms have already been identified as previous carriers of the disease. A single dose of vaccine is administered to young lambs/goats at docking by way of a wire applicator which is scratched across the skin inside the thigh of the animal.

Care needs to be taken by people handling the vaccine because self injection with the applicator will transmit the disease to humans. The vaccine should also be handled carefully to keep it viable. Antiseptics or fly strike spray used at the same time may inactivate the vaccine. A scab should form at the inoculation site. Test the effectiveness of vaccination by checking approximately 20 lambs seven to ten days later, to ensure a scab has formed and the vaccine has "taken". After an initial infection, sheep will usually develop immunity lasting months. Some sheep may become reinfected soon after recovery (before protective immunity has been developed), although the symptoms will be fewer than the initial infection and may not last as long.

If scabby mouth is a problem on your property don't hesitate to have a chat to your vet about what options you might have for management and control in your stock.

Production animal team jumps aboard social media train!

Carla Sheridan



Well, we've finally done it! To keep up with the already awesome Companion Animal and Equine Facebook pages, the Totally Vets production animal teams has, at last, moved into the 21st century and opened their own Facebook page!

Visit our page at www.facebook.com/TotallyvetsLAProduction and take look ... 'Like' and 'Share' our page and be in the draw to win over \$1000 worth of MerialAncare drenches (to be drawn in September) or \$800 worth of Boss® drench from Alleva Animal Health (to be drawn in October).

Our aim is to keep you up-to-date with posts on current animal health issues/outbreaks, promotions, competitions, articles, interesting cases that our vets have seen and will also definitely include a light-hearted look at the general shenanigans our production animal team occasionally get up to!

Additionally, if you have any interesting stories and/or photos or tales relating to your experience with our production animal vets, technicians or wider Totally Vets staff, that you think the world needs to know about please email Carla.Sheridan@tvg.co.nz.

Your feedback is always valuable to us and we look forward to hearing from you!



Preparing for docking

Rachael Fouhy

Docking time can be busy and ensuring that everything gets done when it needs to be can be a challenge! Things to think about include:

CLOSTRIDIAL VACCINATIONS

The aim of pre-lamb vaccination is to provide protection to both the ewes and their lambs - it will provide them around 12 weeks of passive protection, but after this they will need to start their own vaccination programme, commonly at weaning or at the pre-weaning drench. However, in recent years, farming practices have changed and the introduction of crops and grasses to maximise pre-weaning lamb growth rates has become a common practice. This increase in growth rates may increase the risk of pulpy kidney on some properties, making clostridial vaccination even more prudent. In such cases it would be wise to start an early vaccination programme, commencing at docking with a booster four to six weeks later OR pre-weaning with a booster at weaning.

VITAMIN B12 SUPPLEMENTATION

Vitamin B12 is produced by ruminants within the rumen provided there is adequate cobalt in the diet. Due to many parts of the country being affected by low cobalt levels in soils, lambs often require B12 injections to

maximise their growth rates. As a general rule this is required once the pasture conditions change and the grass enters a reproductive stage. In the Taranaki area a widespread sampling survey has demonstrated that there is no need to supplement lambs at docking, even on farms that have a history of low levels in the New Year.

FLYSTRIKE PREVENTION

Applying flystrike prevention/dips at docking provides lambs protection in the post-docking period. There are a variety of products on the market with a range of protection lengths from four up to twelve weeks. It is important to check the wool withholds on the products, especially if you are supplying Wools of New Zealand who have some extended withhold periods.

SHEEP MEASLES

One of the great things about docking is the enjoyable social time that occurs when friends, family and neighbours come and help. It also provides a great opportunity for a sheep measles infection to set up on the farm via the arrival of un-wormed dogs - ALL dogs coming on farm must have been treated, even the town dwelling poodle! Sheep measles rates are particularly high in the Taranaki area, with many farmers having issues last season, which can result in the down grading and, in some cases, condemnation of lamb carcasses at the processing plants. For more information check out www.sheepmeasles.co.nz and/or talk with your vet.

DRENCHING

As a general rule there is no need to drench lambs at docking. They are not old enough to have an established worm burden and the milk they receive provides protection. If you are docking some older lambs (six to eight weeks old) then there may be some individuals that require a drench but there is no reason to drench them all - again, talk to your vet if you have concerns.

EWES

Docking is a good time to condition score ewes and assess feed availability. As docking coincides with peak lactation ewes will be at their leanest. However getting a handle on how much weight they have lost, what condition they are in, along with the current feed covers and budgeted pasture, allows for some plans to be made in regards to weaning decisions.

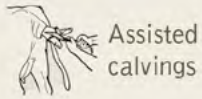
SCABBY MOUTH PREVENTION

This year we will be supplying Phenax® Classic Scabby Mouth vaccine again. Scabby mouth prevention is essential on farms that have a history of infection, it is not something you can stop once you have started. See **article P6**. Key points to remember around vaccination include:

- Keeping vaccines cool until needed for use
- Ensuring the person applying the vaccine makes a good sized scratch or "X" and that the skin is broken.
- Make sure that lambs are checked seven to ten days after vaccination to ensure that the vaccine has taken - this is essential as checking for "takes" is the only way to ensure that the vaccine has been successful.

Did you know that endometritis cows don't self cure?

Identify your at risk cows & book in your first batch for metrichecking now!



Assisted calvings



Dead calves/ stillbirths



Retained membranes



Vaginal discharge



Down cows



Did you know we offer minimal stress, pain free calf disbudding?



Book in with your nearest clinic now to make sure you don't miss out on your window* of opportunity!

Local anaesthetic is administered and anti-inflammatory/pain relief can be provided post disbudding on request.

Other tasks that can be undertaken include:

- extra teat removal
- non-surgical hernia repair
- 7-in-1 vaccinations
- tagging

*If calves are disbudded by us between four and eight weeks of age and horns regrow we will revisit at no extra cost to you.



ARE YOU READY FOR DOCKING?



JOB DONE

Call in to your nearest clinic for all your docking supplies

