



VET notes

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT ANIMALS ON YOUR FARM

OCTOBER 2016

Book in your bulls!

Barry Askin

Reduce the risk of introducing sub-fertile bulls to your herd by using our fertility testing service!

Our testing provides assurance that your bull team is sound by collecting semen, for microscopic evaluation, via an artificial vagina while the bull mounts a teaser heifer/cow. Additionally this allows visual assessment of the bull's penis in an erect state, his libido, ability to mount and scrotal measurement. We can also test for potentially devastating diseases such as Bovine Viral Diarrhoea, Enzootic Bovine Leucosis, Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis and Trichomonas.

All you need to provide are yards with good footing, strong rails to attach the teaser bale, a race, a quiet non-pregnant heifer/cow (of similar size to the bulls being tested), and two people to help.

Time taken is variable but ranges from one to twenty bulls per hour. At a maximum of \$45+GST per bull the cost for bull fertility testing is one you can't afford not to have!



Trevor Cook (left) was one of three winners at the Farmax Sheep and Beef Consultant of the Year Awards

Congratulations to Trevor!

Catherine Toyne

In early August our very own Trevor Cook was one of three winners at the Farmax Consultant of the Year Awards taking out the Beef+ Lamb New Zealand Sheep and Beef Rural Professional of the Year.

This is a prestigious award that attracts the leading consultants in the country. To win this award having come from a veterinary background is a first which has been well recognised by the industry. As part of the prize package, aside from the honor and recognition, Trevor won a new tablet and, even more excitingly, professional development funds

for an agricultural project. Trevor has chosen this project to be a study of and modelling of different ways that we can utilise hill country farms to generate more profit.

In his acceptance speech Trevor expressed his vision of the farming opportunities that we need to exploit and that a collaboration of minds was a powerful way to achieve this... "Skills and expertise are shared amongst us and bringing them together is the way to capture all of the talent that can help support change". Trevor is a rare jewel - he has the technical skills and holistic knowledge, the love and passion of farming, alongside the deep understanding of and ability to communicate with people - a combination that has made him the outstanding consultant that he is.

Congratulations Trevor, we're very proud to have you as part of the Totally Vets team, and we look forward to hearing the results and outcomes from your project!

Velveting on the horizon...

Hamish Pike

With velveting approaching two really important key areas to consider are:

SHED PREPARATION

Check and maintain if required:

- **Crushes, gates and pen doors** - ensure all latches/hinges are working well and that holes/gaps in pens are minimised.
- **Walls** - gaps that allow light to come through often invites a stag to aim for it, so try to block it and, by doing so, minimise velvet damage and animal injury.
- **Shed Cover** - fully covered sheds will usually be cooler, thereby reducing the chances of overheating, however adequate ventilation is essential.
- **Flooring** - ground that is too muddy/wet is unsafe for sedated animals can also lead to compromised hygiene.

SEDATION

Xylazine is the sedative drug most often used during velveting. It affects the animal's cardiac (heart) and respiratory (lungs) systems and can also heighten the risk of overheating, so minimising stress on stags at the time of velveting is critical.

Other important management considerations following sedation are:

- Consider re-scheduling if the day is too hot, yards too wet or deer too stressed.
- Post-velveting deer need to be monitored so should be released into a shady paddock with easy access to water.

See our website for the full story!

Looking ahead

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

Dairy

- **Weaner management** - plan your strategy for weaning and know what criteria you will use, the two primary ones to consider being calf weight and meal intake. Assess the risk

of coccidiosis, need for parasite control and ensure excellent grazing management.

- **Non-cycler management** - cows that have not yet cycled leading up to the planned start of mating are a key group and need to be a management priority - **article P4**.
- **Bull preparation** - the start of natural mating is only a month or so away so it's time to make a move to select and prepare your bull team to help ensure a successful mating - **article P1**.



Drench efficacy testing - Do it early!

Ginny Dodunski

Completing a faecal egg count reduction test (FECRT) may seem a little like having a prostate exam - a painful job - and you might not like the result but, like all things that keep us awake at night, we sleep much easier once we actually know what is going on and can make a plan to deal with it! So this year would be a good time to get on with it...

An issue that I am encountering here in Taumarunui, and have been also been caught with in the Manawatu and Tararua, is that we wait too long to start the test and this ends up compromising the results. It's important that we choose a time when all the important worm species are present in reasonable numbers.

Ostertagia is particularly important here - it is most prevalent in early spring, plus it is one of the biggest offenders when it comes to drench resistance.

If we wait till the end of summer to get started there is a high chance that Barbers Pole worm will be on the rise and can 'swamp' all the other worm species. Later in the autumn we get the same situation with Trichostrongylus (black scour worm).

It is very frustrating to go to the effort of doing the testing and find that we have only generated useful information about one worm species! The solution here is to try and get on with the test before Christmas. This might seem like a bridge too far with all the other jobs going on at that time, but if it can be tied in with a pre-wean drench or the weaning of earlier lambs it can be made to work.

Talk your vet about the best timing for a FECRT at your place, and how we can help make the job easier.

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Sheep and Beef

- **Calving** - have a "calving kit" prepared and ensure it contains at least five litres of lube - it can be the difference between getting a calf out successfully or not! Check pregnant animals regularly and act quickly at the first sign of any trouble.
- **Docking time** - if not done already, make a plan for docking to help ensure important tasks aren't missed - from clostridial

vaccination to drenching (see Ginny's **article P2**) make sure you've got all tasks in hand at this busy time!

Equine

- **AI/mating** - plan ahead and prepare well for mating, including sire selection and overall mare health - teeth, feet, parasite control, trace mineral status, nutrition etc.
- **Foaling** - for those mares yet to drop, ensure they are now in the paddocks in

which they will foal and have had their pre-foal vaccinations 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.
- **Velvetting** - it's nearing that time again so ensure you're ready - **article P2**.

Salmonella strikes

Allie Quinn

Salmonellosis is an important bacterial disease of all animals including humans.

Salmonella can strike in any livestock management system. It is a very hardy bacterium that has been shown to survive up to two years in the environment, although it is susceptible to sunlight and drying out. Animals are primarily infected by ingestion and the most important sources of infection are:

- **Clinically affected animals** - intermittently shed salmonella bacteria in their faeces.
- **Sub-clinical (carrier) animals** - shed high numbers of salmonella bacteria into the environment at times of stress. Precipitating factors include recent transport, poor weather, pregnancy, increased stocking density or feed changes. Such animals often do not appear ill, apart from perhaps having poor condition.
- **Contaminated water, feedstuffs and environments** - birds in calf meal bins, feed pads and in milking shed feed troughs could all potentially start new infections.

There are a wide range of **clinical signs** including mild to severe fowl smelling diarrhoea containing blood, and even pieces of gut lining, depression and elevated body

temperature. Affected animals will usually be anorexic and will not drink which commonly results in severe dehydration leading to death. Pregnant cows may abort. Affected sheep are often simply found dead. It is most common in two-tooth and older ewes during mid-late pregnancy through late summer to winter. Deaths can range from a few isolated animals up to 20-30% of the flock.

Diagnosis of salmonella infection is usually via faecal cultures and tissue sampling from recently dead or aborted animals. Any animal which has suspected (or proven!) salmonella should be isolated from its herd mates as soon as possible. Infected milking cows should be brought into the milking shed last. Boots, hands, aprons and concrete flooring should be both washed and disinfected.

Early antibiotic **treatment** of infected animals is vital. Delaying of treatment, by as little as 48 hours, can cause irreversible damage to the gut and lead to severe dehydration and consequent death. Advanced cases may also require anti-inflammatories and/or oral electrolytes or even intravenous fluid therapy.

Vaccination reduces the chances of an outbreak and can also, when used in conjunction with other control measures, reduce the severity of the disease in the face of an outbreak. Ideally cows should be given a booster vaccination every 12 months to remain protected. If given between eight and three weeks prior to calving it will also ensure colostral transfer of antibodies from cow to calf (via colostrum) giving protection to them for around eight weeks.

Please note that, whilst the Salvexin®+B vaccine protects cattle and sheep against the four most common strains of salmonella (*S. brandenburg*, *S. typhimurium*, *S. hindmarsh*, *S. bovis-morbificans*), there is NO proven cross-protection against other strains so it is possible for sporadic outbreaks of the disease to still occur.

Finally, salmonella is a **zoonotic** disease. This means humans can catch it from working with infected animals. Appropriate hygiene methods (such as wearing gloves, use of disinfectants etc) must be applied when handling potentially infected to stock. Un-pasteurised milk from an infected herd can also lead to transfer of disease to humans.

If you would like further information and/or have suspected cases please do not delay in contacting your vet.



No nonsense on non-cyclers!

Craig Dickson

In the lead up to mating, there are indicators you can be monitoring to help ensure you get a good outcome. Monitoring, particularly of pre-mating heats and submission rates, allows early detection and timely response to potential issues.

Key targets to monitor include:

1. **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 OR above BCS 5.0 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
2. **Submission rate (SR)**, particularly in the first 10 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 continued low payout there may be a temptation to leave intervention till later, on the basis that there will be less to treat.



The logic here is true, however 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.

Call your vet to book in a reproductive consult - preparing and planning ahead will go a long way to help towards a successful mating!



JOINT MILK QUALITY WORKSHOP SAVE THE DATE!

WILL YOU CONTROL MASTITIS OR WILL IT CONTROL YOU?

Featuring speaker Jess Shelgren
Fonterra Co-operative Senior Vet

Shannon/Foxton Workshop

Tuesday 15 November 2016

Rongotea/Sanson Workshop

Thursday 17 November 2016

Tararua Workshop

Tuesday 22 November 2016

Workshop details will follow soon...

