



# VET notes

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT ANIMALS ON YOUR FARM

FEBRUARY 2017



## Totally Vets Group Fishing Competition

Save the date!

The 2017 Totally Vets Group Fishing Competition is to be held on **Saturday 1 April** - book it in on your calendar and start working on those stories of the big one that got away!

Boat launch is again from Whanganui boat ramp at sunrise (weather permitting) with weigh-in at 3pm.

Last year's competition saw a record number of entries and we are hoping for the same again. We already have sponsors stepping forward and are looking forward to putting up some really good prizes.

**Pick up your entry form from any of our clinics or email Carla, [Carla.Sheridan@tvgs.co.nz](mailto:Carla.Sheridan@tvgs.co.nz) for more details.**

**Looking forward to seeing you all there!**

## Feilding and Awapuni staff changes and updates

Heidi Pihama

We have had a few changes with staff and roles in the last quarter of 2016, which has been one of the busiest seasons we have seen in a while, so we thought an update would be good.



Last October we welcomed **Erin Bryant** into our busy customer service team at Awapuni. Erin came to us from PGG Wrightson in Marton and has a great knowledge of large animal farming practises and products. Her welcoming and bubbly personality has been very well received by our clients.

She is also a shearer and a qualified massage therapist. There is not much that this young lady cannot do!

**Reuben Harland** has changed his role from Territory Manager to assisting the Production Animal Team in Feilding as a technician. Reuben is still working in customer service every Friday in the Feilding Clinic and is a valuable team member assisting our clients in the clinic. Reuben is now able to use his practical on farm knowledge and experience, combined with his technical knowledge to assist in this area of the business and is really enjoying his new role!

We are very excited about the return of veterinarian **Emma Scott** to the Feilding Production Animal Team in a part time role. Emma started her career in Feilding with Manawatu Vet Services when she graduated in 2001, having recently had time away to focus on her four beautiful children. Welcome back Emma!



The Feilding Clinic welcomes a new receptionist to the team. Her name is **Renee Thorstensen** and she is a newly qualified vet nurse from UCOL.

# Looking ahead

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

## DAIRY

- If not done already get your pregnancy scanning booked in today as the longer you wait to do it, the less information you gain! Pregnancies are best aged between six and 12 weeks after mating.

- Clinical mastitis – monitor cows and be aware of a rising bulk milk somatic cell count (BMSCC) particularly if feed is tightening and milk volume is decreasing. Prepare early for drying off and book in your Milk Quality Consult with your vet.
- Lameness problems have been widespread and challenging in the first half of the season and may worsen with dry hard ground. Monitor cows daily and act as quickly as possible to assess and treat those with sore feet.
- Facial eczema was a huge problem last year so, farm location and weather depending, preventative zinc treatment should have

been started. Also consider doing some spore counts.

- For those who winter milk, monitor Autumn calving cows' condition, BMSCC and your feed quality/quantity. Dry off according to calving dates and administer dry cow therapy where appropriate.

## SHEEP and BEEF

- Monitor for signs of Barbers Pole (pale gums, depression, exercise intolerance, increased breathing) and drench at the first sign of trouble as every year we see a number of deaths from this disease.



# Preparations for tupping

Juan Klue

Planning and preparing well for tupping will go a long way to help ensure you have a successful season.

Every year we perform post mortems on aborted or still born lambs, or those having died just after birth. On investigation it is often found that a fair proportion of these lamb deaths can be attributed to infection of the ewe during mating/pregnancy with *Campylobacter* or *Toxoplasma* pathogens and would have been preventable by **vaccination**.

Toxovax® is a live vaccine used in maiden/naive breeding ewes to prevent losses caused by *Toxoplasmosis* induced abortion storms, stillbirths and neonatal deaths. Only one vaccination is required and should be given at least four weeks before teasers or rams are introduced and generally confers lifetime

protection. However, if two-tooths were vaccinated as hoggets the previous season, you may want to consider revaccinating this group due to stresses brought about from last summer (such as feed shortages, parasitism, viral pneumonia etc), leading to poor vaccine responses in this age group. Toxovax® has a short shelf life and is made on demand so ensure your order is placed at least four weeks before you need to use it (that is at least eight weeks before tupping!), to ensure supply.

Campyvax4® is a vaccine used in breeding ewes to prevent losses caused by *Campylobacteriosis* induced abortion storms and neonatal deaths. A sensitiser and booster vaccination should be given four to eight weeks apart. Ideally they should BOTH be given prior to mating or, at a minimum, the sensitiser (this can be given at the same time as Toxovax®) needs to be given beforehand (if needed the booster CAN be given after mating). For farms buying in ewes of unknown vaccination history, or those farms beginning a vaccination programme, a full course (sensitiser and booster) is recommended. An annual booster vaccination thereafter is advised but, if this is not

achievable, then aim to booster your two-tooths if they were vaccinated as hoggets and also those ewes on properties in high risk situations, such as following a recent abortion storm.

When it comes to **mating ewe hoggets** it is crucial these animals are selected early and become a priority stock class. They require preferential feeding to achieve live weights of 40kg or over at the beginning of mating. Other points to note include:

- Vaccination as outlined previously is strongly advised.
- Monitor for parasitism by way of faecal egg counts and clinical signs, especially for Barbers Pole, and drench appropriately.
- Use teaser rams from 17 days prior to the introduction of entire rams. This means more hoggets are in their second more fertile cycle at the planned start of mating equating to a higher scanning percentage.
- Mate them separately to mature ewes using a minimum ratio of 1:80 for adult rams and 1:50 for ram hoggets in easier country in smaller paddocks. Ram hoggets have smaller sperm reserves thereby increased numbers are required.

**For further information and/or for help in preparing your flock for tupping don't hesitate to give your vet a call.**

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- Mating preparations – ensure all ram palpations/testing has been completed and reproductive vaccines are ordered – **article P2.**

## DEER

- Early in the month is a good time to vaccinate hinds against Leptospirosis, whilst later in February or March, depending on birth date, fawns can also be given their first Lepto shot, along with Yersiniavax® for Yersiniosis.

## EQUINE

- Weaning is a potentially stressful period for youngsters so ensure excellent nutrition for young stock. Consider the need and plan ahead for branding, identification/registration and vaccination(s).
- Horses travelling to shows and events and competing require access to fresh water and keep electrolytes on hand.



# Time to get on top of BVD!

Joanna Purdie

Bovine Virus Diarrhoea (BVD) is widely recognized as the most important viral disease of cattle in New Zealand (NZ).

Around 80% of NZ herds have been exposed to BVD virus and the National BVD Steering Committee estimates that at any one time around 15% of dairy herds have an active infection. BVD is extremely costly and having an active infection in your herd leads to substantial financial losses... So what can you do about it?

Many of our clients use the Livestock Improvement Corporation (LIC) BVD monitoring package to keep track of the level of infection in their milking herd. Lately we are seeing quite a few positive PCR's. In most cases this means there is a persistently infected (PI) animal in the milking herd.

In such cases it is also not uncommon to have the bulk milk antibody show high or very high exposure. This generally means there is an active BVD infection in the herd and we need to question where this exposure is coming from.

The simple way of thinking about BVD exposure is IN, OUT, OVER:

**IN** = bought in stock. Any cattle coming onto the property. This includes the unborn calves of pregnant cows! When buying in new stock, always consider the BVD status of the property they are coming from. If the status is unknown, it is highly recommended that you **quarantine** the new animals and have them tested **before** they have any contact with your existing herd. You have every right to ask for certification proving that bought in stock (especially bulls) have been tested negative for BVD and/or have been vaccinated.

**OUT** = cattle leaving the property and returning at a later date such as heifers or carry-over cows going away grazing and coming back pregnant. Assess the risk that your stock may have been exposed to BVD while away on a grazing property. Could they

come into contact with stock from other properties? If they are exposed to BVD while pregnant, they could produce a PI calf.

**OVER** = could your cows be encountering BVD at boundary fences? Are your boundaries double fenced and/or well demarcated to create separation such as by a train track, road or river? Just touching noses with neighbouring stock can be enough to infect your cows.

Once we know where the BVD exposure is coming from, we can identify ways to protect your herd. If farm biosecurity is low and difficult to improve, vaccination can be an extremely effective strategy. Vaccinated stock are far less likely to be infected if they are exposed to BVD. This means they won't become a temporary carrier and shedder of BVD and most importantly they won't produce a PI calf.

**Your vet can help you identify the BVD risk on your farm and come up with a management plan to minimise your losses to BVD, so talk to them today and take control of BVD this season!**



# Drought

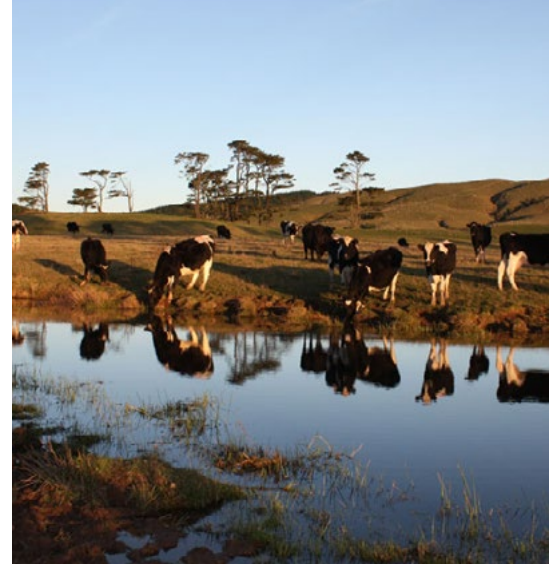
Steve Harvey

A drought is when there's a rainfall deficit over an extended period of time which restricts or prevents a human activity such as farming or power generation.

Extended dry periods are experienced in New Zealand (NZ) most years but whether or not they are classed as drought depends on a range of different factors. Soil moisture deficit, measured in millimeters (mm), is used as one index of drought. It measures the amount of soil moisture available to the roots of pasture plants and is generally higher in summer when evaporation rates are higher. In turn, this can lead to the ground drying up and can also reduce the volume of water in rivers/streams, lakes/dams and subterranean reservoirs.

The impacts of drought can be economic, environmental and social. Drought can affect farmers by shriveling crops or drying out grass so that livestock don't have enough to eat (or drink). These losses then flow through into downstream production and other sectors, such as retail, where shortages can cause price increases. Drought also increases the risk of fire, as well as depleting water flow in storage which, in turn, can cause problems for the production of hydroelectric power. Drought can also mean that rural and urban populations have water restrictions imposed on them.

Drought can occur almost anywhere. Apart from the West Coast the whole of NZ, particularly the northern and eastern areas of both islands, is likely to become a little drier over the next few decades if climate change progresses as predicted. Consequently, stocking up in the hope of a wet season with an abundance of feed is most likely asking for trouble! It is better to have fewer stock and, if you do end up with a surplus, it will provide



good insurance for the rest of the season or can be conserved and sold.

Monitoring daily rainfall records and doing regular pasture cover assessments should be part of your routine farm assessment programme. Lack of rainfall, low soil moisture, poor pasture growth rates and dwindling feed supplies are all obvious indicators of a longer than usual dry spell and should act as triggers for action.

# Face-Guard™



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VOUCHER\*

\*One voucher must be won from each participating Vet clinic.



The promotion commences 5/1/2017 and ends on 28/4/2017 at participating Vet clinics. Text entries must be received by 5.00pm 1/5/2017. See instore for full terms and conditions.

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