



Eltham Vet Services



JULY 2023 SHEEP AND BEEF NEWSLETTER

Most farmers will be happy to see the back of the 22/23 season. Even though we had pretty good grass growth for most of the season I think we have done well not to develop webbed feet with the amount of rain we experienced. We also haven't had to look far afield to see how lucky we are to live in Taranaki where, due to our soils and waterways, we can handle the increased rain unlike our neighbours to the east of us. One good thing to come out of the wet summer is most farmers are very happy with the condition of ewes going into lambing and we have certainly seen some good looking ewes with our early pre-lamb conveyor work.

Hopefully the weather gods shine on us and seeing as we have already had a good chunk of our annual rain fall this year, we get some warm settled weather this spring. You never know this might be the spring remembered for good weather, a change in government and a rugby world cup win!

In more believable news, our first golf day in a few years was a success, with most of us getting a good chance to get up close with an Olympic medal or two and Eric Murray entertaining us all with his very honest talk around what it takes to be a high performing athlete. I certainly came away from it glad I never followed my dream of becoming a Olympian because it sounds bloody tedious and far too much like hardwork.

Leon

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CONVEYOR

Once again Erin is out and about this winter helping farmers with their Prelamb animal treatments with our Daytech Conveyor.

If you are running out of time to get those ewes in and get them sorted before set stocking, give Erin a call or email on 067648196 or erin@elthamvetservice.co.nz, to discuss how the conveyor can be put to use on your place.

PRE-LAMB EWE DRENCH ie. WHAT TO DO WITHOUT CAPSULES?

We've been fielding endless questions about what the best option for pre-lamb ewe treatments is to replace drench capsules. Whether to drench or not this pre-lamb period is the question on everyone's mind and this hasn't been made easy by the removal of Bionic capsules from the market. The time around lambing is when your ewe is most susceptible to internal parasites due to a reduction in her immunity over this high stress period (periparturient rise) and seasonal increases in pasture burdens with maturation of inhibited larvae. The need for drenching is directly related to condition of ewes and feed available. Ewes in good condition with good nutrition over the lambing period do not require a drench. However, if you have lighter ewes or those that may come under increased stress (i.e., twin and triplet bearing ewes) drenching them pre-lamb will allow them to wean heavier lambs and hold condition through spring.

The timing of your drench is important if you want to reduce the peri-parturient rise as this occurs from around 2 weeks prior to lambing and lasts up to 8 weeks. To have any effect on this increased output of parasites from your ewes over this period you must drench as close to lambing as possible or use a long-acting product.

Due to the loss of the capsules, the only option this season for long-acting products is a moxidectin injectable called Marathon. Our recommendation is, if you are using long acting injectables, it is best to follow up with an exit drench at the end of the persistent period. For most people this would fall around the time of docking.



MINERAL DRENCH PRELAMB

We have one of the lowest uses of trace element supplementation in our stock in Central Taranaki compared to the rest of NZ. Which doesn't mean we are immune to the effects of deficiencies; it just means we have a way to go to catch up to other NZ farmers.

With many farmers wanting to move away from anthelmintic drenches pre-lamb, a mineral drench is a great way to make sure you are still giving your ewes and lambs the best chance at hitting the ground running this spring.

Both LSD (livestock survival drench) and HealthyEwe are good options which provide iodine, Selenium, Cobalt, vit A and vit E which all have important roles in both the ewe and lamb. These vitamins and trace elements are crucial to maximising the ewes' immune function and milk supply and the lambs growth rates. For around 30 cents a dose, it is worth doing. You only have to save 3 lambs/1000 ewes to make a return on your investment!

CLOSTRIDIAL VACCINATION FOR EWES

Another must do for your ewes prior to lambing is vaccination against clostridial diseases such as pulpy kidney, blackleg and tetanus. Boosting ewes allows the transfer of antibodies to these diseases through the milk to your lambs protecting your future income! For those sheep which have been vaccinated before just the one injection 2-6 weeks prior to lambing but any stock that haven't been vaccinated before for these diseases will require two injections 4 weeks apart and the 2nd shot at least 2 weeks prior to lambing.

No matter what you choose to vaccinate your ewes with prior to lambing don't forget to follow up with a clostridial vaccination at docking as by this time any protection passed down from the ewe will have waned. We saw an increase in sudden deaths over summer, so making sure your lambs get a booster 4-6 weeks after their first vaccination is key to avoiding some of these unexplained losses. More to come about this in the next newsletter in summer.



COPPER DEFICIENCY

This is a repeat article from last years newsletter as it doesn't seem to be sinking in!

Copper deficiency is more common in cattle and deer than in sheep and most cattle in our area require copper supplementation due to marginal to severe deficiency in the region. In New Zealand copper deficiency is often caused by the interference of other elements, especially molybdenum, sulphur, iron and zinc.

For reasons not fully understood, copper levels in animals are lowest in early spring. Copper is required for a wide range of bodily functions and deficiency can result in many possible signs including: **reduced growth rates in young stock**, scouring, **poor fertility**, nerve problems (swayback) and fragile bones.

The trick with copper is that it is stored in the liver and released when needed. Think of it like the farm water supply where the liver is the water tank, and the blood is the trough. Checking the trough (blood samples) will tell you when you are out of water but if the trough is full, you can't tell when it will be empty unless you check the tank (liver biopsies or liver samples collected at the freezing works). Liver copper testing done in autumn/early winter can be used to predict if levels will be adequate in spring.

Most farmers are good at remembering to supplement their cows' pre-winter however not many growing stock are treated with copper. Due to the effects of low copper on growth we would recommend also treating your growing cattle at least once a year (prewinter again) if copper is known to be a problem on your farm. Copper can be given by injection (lasts one to three months) or capsules (last six to nine months).

Supplementing with copper without monitoring copper levels can result in poisoning so please contact your vets before starting on any supplementation plan. To reduce the risk of poisoning, copper should not be given with any other animal health treatments. Avoid treating stressed animals and minimise time off feed before and after copper treatment is given.

Golfing Honeymoon

Jim decided to tie the knot with his long time girlfriend. One evening, after the honeymoon, he was cleaning his golf shoes. His wife was standing there watching him. After a long period of silence she finally speaks. "Honey, I've been thinking, now that we are married I think it's time you quit golfing. Maybe you should sell your golf clubs." Jim gets this horrified look on his face.

She says, "Darling, what's wrong?"

"There for a minute you were sounding like my ex-wife."

"Ex wife!" She screams, "I didn't know you were married before!"

"I wasn't!"



MYCOPLASMA BOVIS SURVEILLANCE TESTING

We are still participating in the M.bovis testing for the beef surveillance for MPI. So far we have done close to 1500 tests with no reported positives which is great news for our beef herds. As a reminder for those of you doing BVD testing in your service bulls for sale that you can get a discount if you add in M.bovis testing. By doing your BVD testing as part of the M.bovis surveillance you are saving around \$10/animal on the BVD test

There is also some testing available for all other classes of stock (must be at least 6 months of age), so if you are looking at testing any R1s or cows for BVD, contact Adrian here at work to discuss your options. You are charged \$2/head levy by your meatworks to cover some of the M.bovis eradication costs, and will be until we can prove we are M.bovis free so the more testing we can do the sooner this levy will be removed.

REVIVING NEWBORN LAMBS

Exposure is one of the number 1 causes of lamb mortality nationwide, and a big driver in losses between scanning and docking which can be a huge financial cost to farmers. With the increase in scanning percentages this season it means an increase in multiples (especially triplets) which usually have lower fat stores and are more prone to exposure. Lambs born during a heavy cold snap can exhaust their energy stores just trying to keep warm. Too weak to feed off their mother, they will starve and die.

Injecting a 20% mix of dextrose directly into the lamb's abdomen can give them the energy boost they need to survive. This technique is known as an intra-peritoneal injection. It can be done by the farmer, on the spot, and gives good results.

THE HOW TO ..

- Commercial dextrose mixes are 40% which is too strong so you will have to come get a solution made up to the correct strength here at the vets. There are instructions on how to do this yourself on the Beef and Lamb website.

- The dosage rate is 10ml of dextrose per kilo of lamb weight. Usually this means you are giving a 40-60ml dose. Warming the dextrose first will help but is not always possible. If you are doing a lambing beat in cold weather, keeping the mix inside your shirt against your skin will help warm it while you work.

- Sit the lamb on its bum between your legs, Spray the area to be injected with iodine and push the 18g 1/2 inch needle in just in front of the navel (ie. on the head side) pushing in at a 60 degree angle towards the chest. You may feel a popping sensation as the needle pierces the abdomen. Inject the dextrose, if you see a swelling under the skin you have not gone in far enough

After the lamb has received the dextrose, it can then be warmed up and put back with the ewe, ideally with a lamb cover. It will need to be closely monitored to ensure the ewe has accepted and fed it.



Grandma's Eyesight

Tony moves into a nudist colony. He receives a letter from his grandmother asking him to send a current photo of himself in his new location. Too embarrassed to let her know that he lives in a nudist colony, he cuts a photo in half and mails it.

The next day he discovers that he accidentally sent the bottom half of the photo. He's really worried but then remembers how bad his grandmother's eyesight is, and hopes she won't notice.

A few weeks later, he receives a letter from his grandmother, it says: "Thank you for the picture. Change your hairstyle... It makes your nose look so short." Love Grandma

