



Eltham Vet Services



January 2022

With encouragement from a few of our Drystock farmers we have put together another newsletter primarily directed towards sheep and beef. Hopefully with your feedback and ideas we can help make this more common place in your “letterbox”! We will aim to send a newsletter 3-4 times a year with relevant topics and information on new products. If you feel there is something topical to put in one of these newsletters please feel free to talk to me and we will do some homework. We will also incorporate a “what’s coming up box” to jog your memory for what’s next in the coming months.

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Drench Testing

There has been plenty of talk around drench testing in the last few years but still we only have a small percentage of our drystock farmers who actually know what their resistance status is. I know it is just another job and cost that you have to consider during a hectic time of the year however the cost of not knowing whether your drench is working is much higher. AgResearch have put the cost of drench resistance/ineffective worm control at around 10-15% production loss which may cost you anywhere between \$10-17 per head at the current schedule price on a 17kg lamb. This should be enough incentive in itself to do a drench test this year to make sure you are using the right product for your farm!

The best time to drench test is when the worm numbers are at their highest which is usually Feb/March. A dry summer will mean lower worm counts however give us a call to pencil in your drench test for this season and we can discuss your options.



BOSS® Triple Combination Mineralised Drench for Sheep controls internal parasites with the power of three individual drenches all packed into one convenient combination dose. Proudly New Zealand's own triple star for worm control. **Purchase a 20L and receive a \$30 New World voucher*.**

What's Coming Up This Month

- **Book in ram testing.**
- **Order Toxovax and Campyvax now!**
- **Book in Drench Test or Drench Check**
- **Consider Haemonchus/Barbers pole with your next drench choice**
- **Fly Treatment**



Minimising the Effects of Worms in Growing Calves and Lambs by Reducing Pasture Larval Challenge

It has been repeatedly demonstrated that one of the most important factors in maximising growth rates of young animals is minimising the effects of worms. The obvious reason is because the worms 'steal' some of the energy eaten by the animal but it is now known that high worm burden pastures also reduce the animals' intake. With this in mind it is obvious that if we reduce pasture contamination, lambs and calves will grow better. Experimentation has shown that un-drenched lambs challenged with 1000 worm larvae per day will still grow considerably better than lambs challenged with 5000 larvae per day and drenched monthly. Lambs fed on clean pasture will outdo lambs on contaminated pasture even when they are drenched every 21 days.

So, if drenching isn't the perfect answer what else can we do?

- Crops are a great way to produce 'clean' feed. Only grazing young stock post drench helps keep the crop this way.
- Mixed grazing is the optimal way to reduce pasture challenge. Grazing lambs with a few mixed aged (MA) cows or dairy heifers with some MA ewes, drops the larval challenge as the older animals effectively Hoover up the infected larvae and the opposing species are affected by different worms. Ideally, mixed grazing means using animals of a different species and of lower risk. If this is not possible then the most different stock class available is best e.g. reducing the risk to lambs by grazing with terminal ewes.
- Rotational grazing or pasture resting is another way to reduce pasture contamination although may not be practical due to the logistics of moving lambs more often and away from traditional lamb paddocks and the time paddocks may need to be rested to reduce the burden – in some cases 3-5 months!
- Nutrition is very important in building and maintaining gut immunity to worms, so the better fed your animals are the lower the worm output onto pasture will be. This is especially important in ewes around lambing time to help reduce the periparturient rise in egg output onto pasture.

Most worm control programs are centred on drenching, but a balance needs to be found between protecting productivity, maintaining refugia and minimising the development of resistance. The priorities of farmers, vets and industry are not always the same, but together we have to come up with responsible methods of reducing the impact of worms on farms as well as maximising the longevity of drench families we have at our disposal. Implementing other management strategies along with smart drenching policies is the best way to achieve this balance. With this in mind, it is not too late to book in for a drench test to make sure the drenches being used are working.

Which Cattle Drench Should I be Using?

There has been plenty of noise around drench use in sheep and lambs that the humble cow seems to be left out. Drench resistance certainly doesn't incite the same fear with cattle as it does in sheep, however the same principals apply and ineffective drenching can cost you plenty in production in all growing cattle.

For many who read this newsletter the two most important questions when buying cattle drench are:

What's it gonna cost me? and What do I get for free?

As we know now, the most expensive drench is one that doesn't work, so with that in mind here are a few rules of thumb next time you are in the market for a cattle drench:

- ◆ Weighing animals is the only way to accurately measure how much your animal requires. Weigh 5 or 6 of the best grown and dose all stock to this weight.
- ◆ Combination drenches are by far your best option and the more combos the better! Any combo containing levamisole will help protect against *Cooperia* which is a major cause of ill thirft in R1s.
- ◆ Oral drenches are still deemed gold standard and a very cheap way to get a double (***Corporal or Turbo Advance***) or triple (***Matrix C***) combination into your stock without breaking the bank.
- ◆ Pour-ons and injectables are more user friendly but be very careful of how they are applied and dose rate as they can be easy to misdoes and either give too much or not enough.

There are several products such as ***Genesis Ultra*** and ***Icon Injectable*** that will also treat against liver fluke.

A newly released oral called ***Switch Fluke*** also joins this group of flukicides but has the added bonus of also containing abamectin and levamisole so not only does it tackle all 3 stages of liver fluke but will work against resistant roundworms as well.

Feeding Working Dogs Over Summer

Dogs being too light is one of the number one concerns raised by dry stock farmers when asked about dog health yet very few look past the price tag when it comes to dog food.

Unsurprisingly the energy requirements of huntaways or heading dogs are at least two to three times higher than pet dogs, and on some farms considerably more. It has been estimated a Huntaway will need to consume up to 5000 Calories to replenish losses after a hard day's work; twice what we would need.

A recent survey showed that one of the most common health concerns farmers had for their dogs was that they were underweight. Most dogs are fed a mix of commercially prepared biscuits and farm-kill meat. Many dogs flourish on this diet, but there are some points to be aware of:

- Meat in NZ has been found to be marginal or deficient in several minerals including iodine, B vitamins and A & E vitamins.
- Without bones, a meat-based diet alone is severely deficient in calcium. However, feeding bones has the accompanying risks - gut blockage, perforation, and constipation.
- Energy is required for all functions in the body, including digestion. If the diet is not easily digestible or is chilled, there can be a loss of energy from the body, simply through trying to warm and digest the diet.

Most dry diets contain 3-4 times the nutrients of wet food on a dry matter basis so are more economical to feed.

Points to consider when choosing a working dog diet:

Look for a high-calorie, low-bulk diet - this ensures that the dog doesn't fill up with low energy materials; 20% fat is ideal - this level of fat provides the right energy source for dog muscles in hard work; 30% high-quality protein promotes lean muscle mass and aids in growth and repair of muscles. One study showed that there was an 8 fold decrease in soft tissue injury (ligament, tendon and muscle) in working dogs fed a 30% protein diet, compared with a 20% protein diet.

This table highlights some of the commercially available dog foods that are used on farm:

DIET	FAT AND PROTEIN CONTENT	DAILY REQ FOR 20KG DOG IN WORK
Tux Adult Original	6% Fat 16% Protein	>15 biscuits or 520g to meet energy demands.
Tux Energy <i>(Designed for active dogs)</i>	18% Fat 20% Protein	9-13 biscuits or 350-450g
Pedigree Working Dog	15% Fat 24% Protein	350 – 450g per day
Mighty Mix Frozen concentrate	36% Fat 17% Protein	1.5 cups per day
Eukanuba Sport	20% Fat 30% Protein	300g of kibble per day
Royal Canin Energy 4800	30% Fat 32% Protein	300g of kibble per day



Pregnant Bitches should always be fed the best quality feed available due to higher demands during pregnancy and lactation. Eclampsia (milk fever) and birthing difficulties are far more common in underweight dogs than those in good condition and for a bitch to properly be able to feed a litter of pups she often needs fat stores to call upon to make enough milk for them to grow well. Often we advise to feed lactating bitches puppy feed as it has a higher calcium and energy content.

Heat Stress

Through summer when the dogs are hard at work mustering, heat stress can be a huge issue and even lead to death by causing stroke or organ failure. On hot days try and avoid working dogs through the middle of the day unless you have to and give them plenty of chance to jump in troughs or creeks to cool down and get a drink. If you are leaving dogs chained to fences after working, try and put them somewhere with shade and allow them to have a drink beforehand. It's not rocket science but can avoid you cooking a dog on a big day.



EWE VACCINATION PRE TUP

It is time to get onto any preventative vaccination against abortion. The two main culprits that can be vaccinated against are *Campylobacter* and *Toxoplasmosis*.

Campyobacter

Campylobacteriosis (previously known as *Vibriosis*) usually causes abortion during the last 6 weeks of pregnancy, so is more likely the cause of wet/dry ewes rather than barren ewes. This usually occurs in maiden ewes but can be seen in other age groups. The ewes are not sick and usually only found due to blood staining at the time of abortion or coming up dry at docking.

Vaccination using *CampyVax* offers great protection and in most cases only your maiden ewes require it.

Two injections one month apart must be given before there is any long lasting protection and on farms where there is a high challenge of campy present annual boosters of all breeding ewes are required.

Toxoplasma

Toxoplasmosis is caused by a parasite which is spread by cats and when ingested by ewes causes foetal death. This can either show as increase drys or wet/drys depending on stage of pregnancy the animals are infected in. Ewes are usually healthy and show no overt signs of illness. *Toxoplasmosis* most commonly affects maiden ewes so often affects hogget or 2tooth performance.

Along with eliminating all populations of wild cats from your property, vaccination offers the best protection against toxo. It is only a one time vaccination which offers near to lifetime protection. The catch is it must be done AT LEAST 4 weeks prior to the start of mating as it can actually lead to abortion or foetal absorption if given to a pregnant ewe or too close to the start of mating.



Contact the clinic as soon as possible if you require either of these vaccines before this coming mating and haven't organised it with John or Daniel yet!

Perfect Recipe for Fly Season

With hot, humid conditions and rain in the forecast it could be a bumper season for fly strike this year.

Due to high rates of resistance and toxicity concerns with many tried and true fly products in the past few years there has been a changing of the guard to safer combination products for the treatment and prevention of flystrike.

Due to the multitude of factors that come in to play when deciding which treatment to use (time off shears, presence of active strike, weather, etc) we recommend speaking to Daniel prior to purchasing any fly products to make sure you are using the right one!

For those of you who want to do your own research into flystrike and treatment options, Beef+Lamb NZ have a great resource called [Managing flystrike and lice guide for farmers factsheet](#).



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