



November - December
2013

News and Views for Farmers

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Dear Client,

Welcome to the final newsletter for 2013. This will be the last newsletter from me for a while as I start a new chapter in my life with impending motherhood. Thank you to everybody for your support over the last 6 years and all your fantastic well wishes as I expand through the overall sizes! I will be back, but on a part time basis.

As we head towards Christmas at an alarming rate we have noticed that Marlborough is starting to dry off in areas. However there is still plenty of pasture cover around for most and with the rain last night; soil moisture in western Marlborough has been topped up. This should help with lamb weaning weights. Cattle are looking good so hopefully survival and pregnancy rates in 2014 will be high. This should result in a good pregnancy rate in 2014. From us all at the Vet Centre Marlborough we wish you a fantastic Christmas and a happy and safe New Year.

Footrot Seminar & Client Christmas Function- Wednesday, 20th November 2013

Sheep and foot issues especially footrot can be a stressful and expensive disease to combat. To help you understand the disease processes involved in foot conditions and management/eradication of footrot please join the Vet Centre large animal team for a foot afternoon on Wednesday the 20th of November, starting at 3pm. We will hold the afternoon at Tempello Station on Brancott Road, courtesy of David and Jo Grigg. We appreciate their generosity in opening up their woolshed.

We have invited Chris Mulvaney, an expert on sheep and footrot, who has recently released the second edition of 'A Guide to the Management of Footrot in Sheep'.

Following on from this afternoon we will have a BBQ and refreshments in appreciation of your support for The Vet Centre in 2013.

Please RSVP by the 18th of November to:

Ph: 5779822
Fax: 5779833
Email: tony@vetmarlborough.co.nz

New Vet Starting February 2014

We have confirmed a replacement large animal veterinarian due to Mary's impending motherhood. Her name is Urthe Engle, an experienced mixed practitioner who has been working in the Bay of Plenty. Urthe is due to start early February 2014.

Pete will be continuing with consultancy and also help Trish until Urthe arrives. This will enable us to continue with the best Large Animal Vet service in Marlborough with a very experienced and knowledgeable team.

Message From PA:

You can tell that the 'girls' have had a major influence on this newsletter and the new format. I'm sure it is an improvement.

Enjoy the read.



www.vetmarlborough.co.nz

enquire@vetmarlborough.co.nz

Re-emerging tick borne disease causing anaemia and death in cattle in the North Island – *Theileria*

Theileria orientalis is a parasite that is transmitted by ticks when they feed on the animal's blood.

Cattle are at risk of infection when they are moved to areas where infected ticks are present. Likewise, if an infected animal is transported, it can spread infection to ticks in the new location, in turn spreading disease to uninfected animals. In areas where the disease is known to occur there may be outbreaks in resident cattle in times when there are sudden increases in tick numbers.

The disease is not spread by direct animal-to-animal contact in the absence of ticks. There are no human health or food safety risks associated with *Theileria*.

Currently the disease has only been diagnosed in the North Island with a couple of cases in Rangiora from cattle shipped from the North Island.

For further information go to the Ministry of Primary Industries

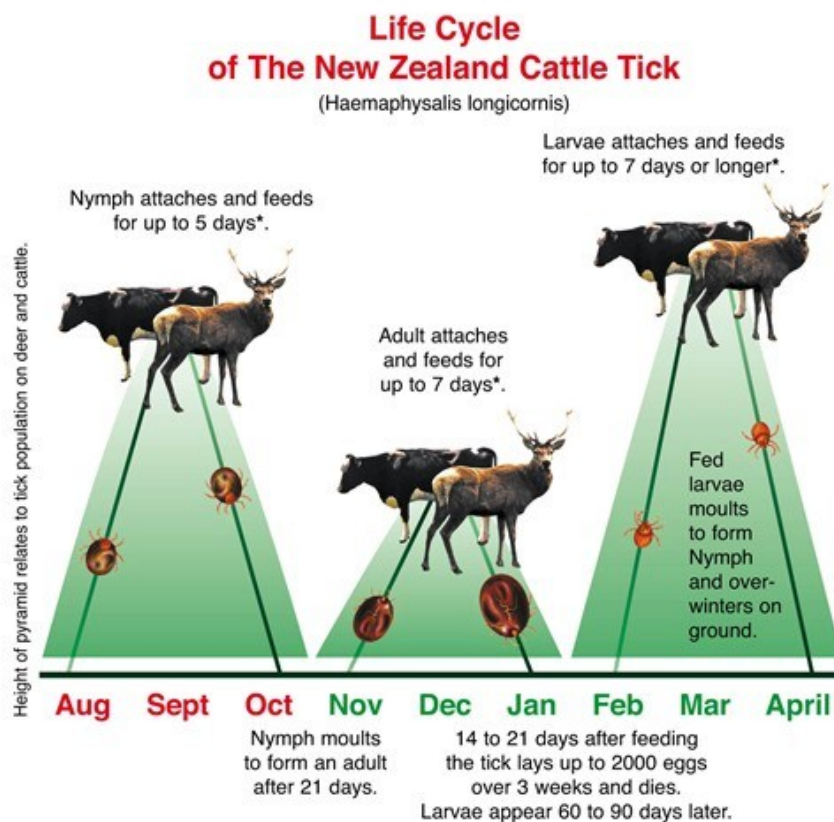
Website: www.mpi.govt.nz or give us a ring at the clinic.

(Mary)

Ticks – What are they and are they in Marlborough?

Ticks are blood sucking external parasites. Recently there was a report of a couple of pig dogs coming home covered in ticks (nymph stage). This was in the Pelorus Sounds. Ticks like warmer weather so although not traditionally a problem in Marlborough, some seasons there can be a lot of ticks especially in the sounds and usually associated with deer.

They are not host specific and can affect a range of mammals including; cattle, deer, sheep, horses, dogs and cats. There are many different species in the world, in New Zealand there is only one; *H. longicornis*. It is called a three host tick, with each part of its life cycle; larvae, nymph and adult feeding off separate hosts, not necessarily of the same species.



Nymph

Adult



The larvae and nymph stages of the life cycle position themselves at the tips of long grass or vegetation and attach to the skin of grazing animals or hosts walking through the paddocks.

Ticks are obvious on clinical observation. Ticks are commonly found on the head, ears, udder and lower body extremities.

(Diagram & photos are from Bayer Animal Health Website)

Ticks feed by puncturing the skin of a host with their mouthparts. These puncture sites and the damage that may result can reduce the quality and value of velvet antler during growth in the spring.

Nymph (larval) ticks can be a major problem on newborn fawns, and young grazing lambs prior to weaning causing anaemia with deaths from blood loss in severe

cases.

For treatment of livestock there is Bayticol; a pour-on product for cattle and deer. For dogs and cats; Frontline Plus. There are other topical options available such as Permethrin for horses and dogs. Some of these products can be used off licence in other species, please ring the clinic for further details.

For livestock coming and going there is the potential for ticks to be transferred from one property to another. So if purchasing/grazing stock from a tick prone area (especially upper north island and east coast of the north island) it would be recommended to treat the animals with a quarantine tick treatment (Bayticol).

Mary

Reminder about BVD vaccination

Have the mixed aged cows and the bulls had their booster BVD vaccination pre-mating?

Have the heifers had two shots pre-mating?

Any queries re vaccination or the disease; please ring the clinic.

Rigs, Bulls and Other Fence Jumpers

I started to think I'd get a reputation when I had to put rings on bull calves for a small block farmer then go and castrate a yearling "steer" that had one teste up and one down. Only a few days before we'd had inquiries to PD heifers where a bull had jumped the fence. Nature will have her way.

If you find a rig at calf marking don't just put the ring on one ball or leave it and hope for the best. The retained testicle will *probably* be infertile due to being tucked up in the warm – but it will still make testosterone so he'll be bully. It may look like all cost getting a rig castrated by the vet, but compared to the cost of destroyed fences and the risk to dogs and people, I'd call it an investment! Recovery is faster if the surgery is done at a younger age using sedation and local

anaesthetic. I have seen calves die of Tetanus after castration by cutting, so I like them to have been vaccinated and to get a good dose of Penicillin and pain relief.

It's a good time to remember that bulls and cycling cows have an affinity. The best we can do is try to keep them apart except for the actual mating period. If this fails then you may be fortunate enough to catch an errant bull in the mob, or you might just have the shock of out of season calvings.

Treatment of mismated cattle depends on the stage of pregnancy. Prostaglandin injections can be given from 7 days after mismating up to 5 months of pregnancy, although termination success decreases after 100 days of pregnancy. If you are very close to your planned bull in date, options are; to not treat and have a few early calves, or to blanket treat the whole mob. However this can be

expensive and not without physical cost to the mismated cattle. If there is enough time the herd can be scanned 6 weeks after the bull got in and only the pregnant ones need to be treated. We always repeat scan to ensure treatment has been successful. A second injection can be used if necessary.

From 150 -200 days pregnancy there is no termination method. From 200-270 days of pregnancy the results to Prostaglandin injection are variable and after 270 days you can abort cattle but there are risks involved. Late pregnancy termination results in a greater chance of retained placenta and a longer time until the cow starts cycling again compared to a normal birth. There is also more chance of a difficult calving, even small calves may present the wrong way and get stuck. All aborted cows should be supervised and assisted as necessary.

Trish

Toxoplasma & Campylobacter

You can't control many aspects of farming, like the weather and the lamb schedule, but you can certainly avoid the devastating effects of abortion storms and losses.

By taking control of your flock's performance and vaccinating for two of the most common causes of sheep abortion, Toxoplasma and Campylobacter, you reduce the risk of these diseases impacting on your lamb numbers.

Toxoplasma and Campylobacter cause disease throughout the country. Nationwide blood testing shows that these diseases are present on 100% and 88% of farms in New Zealand respectively.

Every breeding flock can be affected by ongoing, insidious losses and abortion storms. Ewe hoggets and two toothers are most at risk, but any ewe that contracts

Toxoplasmosis for the first time while she is pregnant is likely to lose her lamb's.



Improving Flock Performance By Avoiding Abortion Losses

(article kindly supplied by MSD)

Toxoplasmosis can cost you in three ways:

- The loss of lambs by abortion; either by low-level unseen losses, or large-scale abortion storms.
- The birth of weak lambs, which fail to thrive, or die.
- The culling of fertile ewes, which because of undetected early abortion are presumed barren.

Toxovax® is a single dose vaccine that provides breeding ewes with lifetime protection against the effects of Toxoplasmosis. **Vaccination with Toxovax increases lambing percentage by an average of 3% and decreases the incidence of dry ewes by an average of 14%.**

As Toxovax is a live vaccine with a short shelf-life, it must be made to order. To ensure availability for your needs, it is imperative you order your requirements at least eight weeks in advance of putting the ram in. This will allow you to give Toxovax to 1st time breeding ewes at least four weeks before mating. Toxovax can also be given any time prior to this.

Campylobacter is the other major cause of sheep abortion. In fact, when the cause of an abortion is identified, Campylobacter is likely to be found as frequently as Toxoplasma, which makes sense given it is present on most farms. It is therefore likely to be present on your farm even though it may not have been diagnosed or you have not seen abortions. It can be responsible for large scale abortions, with losses of 20-30% common, but losses of 70% have been reported. There is also strong evidence to suggest that infection with Campylobacter also plays a role in reduced lamb survival. Numerous studies have shown an association between vaccination and increased lambing percentage - even when no abortions have been seen, **vaccination has been observed to increase lambing percentage by an average of 9%.**

Most Campylobacter abortions in sheep are caused by the species *Campylobacter fetus fetus*. Testing indicates that around half of all ewes are exposed to *C. fetus fetus* during their lifetime. A second species, *C. jejuni* can also cause abortion and can be significant, but is more sporadic.

A sensitiser and booster vaccination of Campyvax4®, 4-8 weeks apart into all replacement and 1st time breeding ewes is recommended. Vaccination timing can fit normal farming practice but best practice is to try and get both doses done prior to mating. We advise farmers to give the booster at least a few weeks prior to mating.

Campyvax4 provides your ewes protection against all *C. fetus fetus* strains and is the only vaccine that includes *C. jejuni*. Vaccination will protect against both Campylobacter abortion storms and unseen losses between scanning and tailing.

To make things easier for you, Campyvax4 can be ordered from the Vet Centre at the same time as you order your Toxovax.

Vaccination is one of the best ways that you can improve lamb numbers and the overall performance of your flock – so it makes good practical sense to ensure you are protecting your flock against both of the major causes of sheep abortion.

Please contact us to discuss your vaccination plan for your farm. For more information on sheep performance vaccines, visit www.sheepvax.co.nz. This is a great website with great educational videos and links.

Clostridial Protection for Lambs

It doesn't matter if you are motivated by the dollar value or by sentimental value; no one wants unnecessary deaths in lambs. Tetanus and Pulpy Kidney are preventable and definitely happen in unprotected lambs. This year, with no Lamb Vaccine available, protecting lambs over tailing is a little bit more tricky.

There are some main points to remember:

If ewes were vaccinated pre-lamb they will pass on protection to their lambs in the colostrum.

This protection is pre-formed antibody so it goes into the lamb's

blood stream ready to fight the bacteria. We call this passive immunity. The lamb doesn't have to use its own immune system to get it.

Over time the level of antibody will drop. How long it lasts depends on how much was in the colostrum and how much colostrum the lamb got. Colostrum's passive protection tends to be enough to cover lambs for the trauma of tailing/castration. Both cause the oxygen deficient wounds that clostridia need.

For the lamb to develop lasting immunity it must contact the bacteria (usually fatal) or be vaccinated TWICE with the doses 4 weeks apart. This will cover them for

around one year. The immunity is active ie. The lamb creates its own memory of the bacteria that will allow it to make antibodies as soon as it meets it.

If lambs are born to ewes that were not pre-lamb vaccinated or if they got insufficient colostrum (eg pet lambs, mismothered lambs, really late lambs) they won't be protected until they have the active immunity of having had their two shots.

Ultravac 5 in 1 Vaccine is generally used to vaccinate lambs; however, Covexin 10 should be considered for replacements or if the risk will be higher as it covers 5 more types of sudden death caused by Clostridial bacteria.

Trish

Reminder about Toxovax & Campyvax

Don't forget to order you vaccine in plenty of time so not to be disappointed.

Any queries re vaccination or the disease; please ring the clinic.

Pre-Mating: Opening The Gate On Improved Flock Performance For The Next Season

(article kindly supplied by MSD)

The pre-mating period is one of the most critical times on your farm. It determines the performance of your flock for the coming season. If something goes wrong here, it is virtually impossible to correct it for another year as there is nothing that can be done to increase scanning percentages once mating has finished.

A pre-mating plan needs to be in place at least 8-10 weeks before mating is due to start. This can't be left until the last minute. There are numerous factors which influence flock performance at this critical time.

They include:

1. **Rams:** A pre-mating 'WOF' should be done at least eight weeks prior to ensure they are fit and ready to do their job. Check to see they have no lameness and are not suffering from any other conditions that may impair their ability to mate. We will be ringing you when we are in your area to book your rams in for a breeding soundness exam.
2. **Ewes** - monitor their weight, condition score and nutrition from weaning onwards. This will dictate when a ewe will begin to cycle and also how well she ovulates. Ewes with low body weight and condition scores can have a delayed onset of breeding activity and reduced ovulation rates reducing overall fertility.
3. **Trace elements** - deficiencies can impact on ewe and ram fertility, so it is important to ensure levels are adequate prior to mating. Selenium and iodine are the most important. If you are unsure whether you need to supplement trace elements and in what form, give us a ring at the clinic to discuss.

Congratulations to Eric & Sally Smith

Winners of the Trip for 2 to Sydney!
Thank you for supporting
The Vet Centre & Merial Ancare.

Winners of the Take A Mate Fishing Charter Trip

Congratulations to this
years winners:
Richard Laugeson, Paul
Newton, Kit Sandal,
Richmond Brook Station,
Stephen Rudd, Hall
Family Farms, Bluff
Station, Leefield Station,
Gulchlands & Jock
Clouston.

Thank you for supporting
The Vet Centre & Merial
Ancare

Clinic Hours Christmas & New Year

November
Sat 23rd 9-12pm

December
Tues 24th 8-5pm
Wed 25th CLOSED
Thur 26th 9-12pm
Fri 27th 8-6pm
Tue 31st 8-5pm

January
Wed 1st CLOSED
Thur 2nd 9-12pm
Fri 3rd 8-6pm

For Emergencies:
Phone: 577 9822

BusinessDNA Survey

A big thank you to those clients who participated in our recent client attitude survey. The responses gave us some valuable insight.

The dominant themes were:

1. Respondents view veterinary services as a necessary evil and consequently are overtly cost focussed. There is a need to demonstrate our value beyond this narrow perspective.
2. There is considerable appreciation of what vets can do for a farming business particularly in a time of crisis and a great deal of respect afforded to our vets and staff. However the cost bias of respondents is such that they resist engaging a vet unless it is absolutely necessary!

3. Respondents value advice and easy access to it very highly. There is clearly strong goodwill toward The Vet Centre and a readiness to recommend our service to others. A strong personal connection with their veterinary service is valued and we are doing a good job in terms of quality of service, product and communication. The major issue for us to deal with is the belief that veterinary services are a cost incurred by the farm rather than an integral partner in the successful management of the farm.

How can we change this perception?!

Things To Do This Month

1. Spend some time watching the bulls when first put out, especially if we have not Serving Capacity tested them. Things to watch for are; mounting but not obviously serving, or several frustrated cows hanging around an inactive bull.
2. Watch for parasitism in pre-weaned lambs. A pre-weaning drench may help their growth rates.
3. Calves -at marking time consider a Covexin 10 sensitiser (booster 4 weeks later)
 - Calves (Beef or Dairy) - Lepto vaccination with Leptavoid or 7 in 1(includes 5 in 1) or Leptavoid and Covexin 10.
4. Cows and Bulls - Have they had their pre-mating selenium - injection or pour on or oral.
 - Have they had their Bovilis BVD booster pre-mating?
5. Lambs at weaning;
 - Consider:
 - Fly treatment
 - Injecting with Vit B12 (Prolaject or Prolavax)
 - Drench – Tape included?
 - Monitor requirement for further drenches with a FEC
 - Vaccinate replacements with Ultravac 5 in 1 sensitiser, or Covexin 10.
6. Ewes at weaning;
 - Consider:
 - Condition Scoring all ewes and preferentially feeding low CS ones.
 - Androvax, especially for lower fertility flocks. Time to work out vaccinating dates.
7. Get rams checked. At the same time get 10 wet/dry ewes blood tested for Campylobacter and Toxoplasmosis if you don't vaccinate.
8. If new teasers required now is the time to get rams vasectomised.
9. Velveters – book in your supervisory visit if not already done.
10. Dairy Cows – How is mating going?
 - Continue to monitor for mastitis, drying of teats with wind and lameness.