

# CLUTHA VETS SHEEP NEWSLETTER



June 2015



## Clinic News

Well a little taste of winter lately. I guess many of you will have your stock in winter grazing mode by now. A recent report in the ODT suggested a colder than usual winter with maybe 7 - 8 "snow events" and a colder spring. A colder winter is probably no great drama as the last few have been milder than normal, but hopefully the prediction about the spring turns out to be rather inaccurate!

The clinic redevelopment at Balclutha is proceeding mostly (but not always!) uneventfully - there have been some rather noisy days with concrete cutting etc. going on but hopefully this hasn't impacted too much on you, our clients.

Staff wise, on the vet front it's all pretty stable. Our original vet tech Ainslie Kalb, has decided to retire after approx. 10 years here, so we wish her all the best.

After a number of years of seeing our familiar green sheep newsletter we are updating the format to a new look for all our newsletters - no change, however, to the usual useful information that we always include.



## Recent Animal Health Problems

**1. *Salmonella Hindmarsh in Ewes*** - While cases of this do appear to have slowed up, there is still the odd new case occurring so keep your eyes peeled for sudden deaths in ewes with some (not all) showing evidence of a khaki coloured scour. More details on this condition can be found in the Feb 2015 newsletter.

**2. *Internal Parasitism in Lambs*** - A few farmers have still been getting caught by surprise over the last couple of months losing lambs to internal parasites, or suddenly realising much of the mob is rapidly losing condition and/or getting a bit dirty. Remember you can be losing lambs to worms when they have a zero FEC when there is a very high larval challenge. The 'eye-ometer' is more useful than a FEC on these occasions.

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# Reminders

**1. Salmonella Brandenburg Vaccination** - The incidence of *Salmonella brandenburg* waxes and wanes on what looks like, when perusing the records, about a five year cycle. After a bit of a low the previous two years there was a slight rise in the number of farms affected last year so, if history is anything to go by, we might be in for a bit more of an increase this year.

While not as effective against Brandenburg as virtually all other vaccines you are used to Salvexin+B has been proven to reduce the incidence by around two thirds. Two-tooths are more at risk so a reasonable compromise if you don't want to vaccinate everything is to vaccinate these, especially if you had an outbreak in the mixed age ewes last year.

The basic vaccination programme is two doses to unvaccinated stock 4 - 8 weeks apart. The second dose is best given around late June - early July with the first dose the appropriate time interval ahead of that. In previously vaccinated ewes give the sole booster shot late June/early July. As hoggets very rarely get the disease it's probably not worth vaccinating them.

**2. 5 in 1 Vaccination of Hoggets** - By now the ewe hoggets should have received their 2 doses of 5 in 1 (or 6 in 1) four to six weeks apart, prior to going onto winter crop. They will then be protected against black leg etc as well as being correctly setup for their lifetime vaccination programme. Remember to be fully effective a sensitiser and a booster dose is necessary - none of the old 1 dose only shortcut please!

**3. Clostridial Vaccination of Calves** - Although less common than in sheep, cattle can still die from Clostridial diseases – pulpy kidney, blackleg etc. The odd sudden death in cattle through the winter period is not uncommon and these can look a bit like a bloat death. Most of these can be prevented by 5 in 1 vaccination. Because of the relative economics with cattle as opposed to sheep I would recommend routinely using Ultravac 6 in 1 which covers sudden deaths due to *Clostridium sordellii*. Those of you who are using Covexin 10 should continue to use this as it covers yet another strain causing sudden death in cattle and it would be silly to change if it is doing the job. I am just suggesting, for an extra 20c/head, those who routinely use Ultravac 5 in 1 should shift to the extra protection offered by Ultravac 6 in 1. See the Oct 2009 newsletter for more detail on Ultravac 6 in 1.

**4. Abortion Submissions** - Abortions will have no doubt started before the next newsletter (unfortunately), so following are some hints on actions you can take to ensure the lab gets samples in the best condition and hence increase your chances of getting the cause diagnosed:

- **Don't** send samples in off the first 1 or 2 cases – they could just be one-offs. If it is going to turn out to be a problem there'll be more to choose from!

- Send in **fresh** aborted foetuses – preferably two from two different abortions (**not** a set of twins).
- Black mummified foetuses are **no** use at all.
- If possible include some placenta (afterbirth).
- Make sure they **haven't** been scavenged – seagulls can sneakily remove gut contents through the navel, and stomach contents are an important sample for diagnosis as far as the lab is concerned.
- Put foetuses in something **leak proof** – e.g. *at least* 3 supermarket bags. We don't appreciate *S. brandenburg* organisms being dripped on the floor as you walk through the clinic building.
- Preferably bring them in by **1pm** each day and they will be almost a day quicker getting to the lab than if you are after 2pm.
- **No samples after 1.30pm on a Friday.** Samples after this have to wait until Monday afternoon which reduces the chance (but not the cost) of getting a diagnosis.



**5. Bopriva (Agreeabull) Vaccination** - This is the very effective anti-testosterone vaccine for bulls that stops them fighting, turns them into pussycats etc. See the April 2013 newsletter for all the details about this. Back copies of all the newsletters are available on our website – [www.cluthavets.co.nz](http://www.cluthavets.co.nz).

## Scanning Hinds

Pregnancy testing deer allows you to know what your pregnancy rate is and identify and cull empty hinds prior to winter which reduces feed demands. Late calving hinds and those which are aborting can also be identified allowing you to make better culling decisions. Some farmers shy away from pregnancy testing hinds as it can mean an extra muster and yarding.

An option to reduce the number of times that the deer are yarded is to combine the job with TB testing. The hinds can be pregnancy tested on either the TB injection or read day, depending on your set-up or how you want the job done. We have TB testing trained and accredited vets who are able to TB test deer as well as pregnancy test deer via ultrasound. We are able to provide two operators to ensure that the job can be done as per your requirements. If this is something that you could be interested in then give us a call at the clinic.

## Conifers and Pregnant Cattle

Shelter belts planted with the conifer species macrocarpa and radiata pine are pretty common in NZ. These trees contain a toxin (isocupressic acid or ICA) within their foliage and bark, whether green or brown as do Leyland Cypress and Ponderosa Pine. This toxin can cause abortions in cattle only (no other species) by reducing blood flow to the uterus resulting in oxygen deprivation to the foetus and resultant abortion. As pregnancy advances, the risk of abortion from ICA increases.

The good news is that Radiata pine (and also Douglas Fir and Western Red Cedars) contain extremely low levels of this toxin and are extremely unlikely to present an abortion risk in cattle. Nevertheless, it would be prudent to ensure cattle are not grazing in pine plantations in late pregnancy. Access to a few overhanging radiata pine branches should not be an issue. However, access by cattle to macrocarpa, Leyland cypress and ponderosa pine at **any** stage of pregnancy should be avoided.

## Scabine Vaccination

As all users of Scabine will be only too well aware, last season there were some instances where the vaccine did not provide the expected protection against Scabby Mouth disease in lambs. As of the date of writing this newsletter the reason for this remains a mystery. MSD have not been able to get to the bottom of this, unlike in 2006 when there were also efficacy issues with Scabine and the cause of these was pretty quickly found.

Anyway, please note - Scabine will **NOT** be available for sale this coming spring. MSD have withdrawn it from sale for at least the 2015 season, while they go through a review and upgrade the manufacturing process. As a result you will have a choice of Scabigard or Phenax. The latter has a similar applicator to Scabine and is made in the same factory, although we are assured it is different seed stock and a different manufacturing process.

## Lungworm in Calves

Over the past couple of years we have seen a slight rise in clinical disease due to lungworm in calves, mostly dairy calves, including those being grazed by dairy grazers. Initial signs might be of sporadic coughing with no reduction in growth rates but this can very rapidly progress to weight loss, difficulty in breathing and death in 24 - 48 hours of first signs. Severely affected calves will stretch their neck out to breathe and cough with their tongue poking out. Lungworm infection may or may not be associated with gastro-intestinal worm infection.

Lungworm are killed by most drenches but the 'mectins' are very effective in providing some extended period of protection so incorporating a "mectin" containing

drench. e.g. Eclipse E Inj, Boss Inj or Matrix Oral into their drenching programme prior to the winter would be a good preventative measure.

If you have clinical cases you need to give us a call as treatment with antibiotics, anti-inflammatories etc may be needed and deaths can still occur despite treatment. In fact calves can appear sicker in the 24 hours after drenching due to the effects of lots of dead lungworm in the airways.

## Flexidine Trial

A number of you will be aware that through 2014 I was involved in a trial using Flexidine in a number of different dose regimes. This was, in part, a response to rumours (and that is all they can be described as) circulating, mainly from Southland I think, that Flexidine wasn't lasting long enough when given pre-tup to cover the lambing period.

The trial details are as follows. On 2 farms, one in South Otago and one in the Wairarapa, we took 100 two-tooth ewes and assigned them to 1 of 5 treatment groups of 20 as follows:

1. The standard 1.5ml dose given 1 month pre-tup.
2. An increased dose of 2.5ml given 1 month pre-tup.
3. A half dose of 0.75ml given 1 month pre-tup followed by another 0.75ml at scanning.
4. A half dose of 0.75ml given at scanning only.
5. A control group that received no Flexidine.

The two-tooths were run as per normal with the other two-tooths on the farm and were blood tested roughly monthly for 9 months. The findings can be summarised thus:

1. The control group levels were in the marginal range for the entire length of the trial in South Otago and nearly all the trial in the Wairarapa.
2. The differences between the treatments and the control were highly significant.
3. Within a fortnight of administration blood levels were elevated so it is quite likely that Flexidine can be given up to 14 days pre-tup. The proviso here is that normal iodine levels are not required earlier than this for normal physiological processes.
4. The standard 1.5ml dose elevated serum iodine levels until through lambing.
5. There is no advantage in giving a 2.5ml dose - it lasted more or less the same time as the 1.5ml dose.
6. A 0.75ml dose given pre-tup would not last long enough to prevent iodine deficiency through lambing.
7. A 0.75ml dose given at scanning should be sufficient to protect lambs from the effects of goitre and poor lamb survival. This is the bigger benefit of Flexidine supplementation so on farms where conception rates as measured by scanning rates are adequate there is possibly an opportunity to shift the dose of Flexidine to scanning (about 2 months pre-lamb). However this would mean you would be forgoing the on average 3 - 4% improvement in conception rates that occurs following iodine supplementation pre-tup.

## Your Vets

### Balclutha Clinic

John Smart	BVSc
Jason Darwen	BVSc
Rob Mills	BVSc
Hamish Moore	BVSc
Catherine Copland	BVM&S
Peter Heslip	BVSc, MACVSc
Annie Jackson	BVSc
Steven Butler	BVSc
Elsbeth Dunne	BVSc, BAgSc
Isobel Topham	BVSc
Bevan Topham	BVSc
Ruth Andrews	BVSc
Bridget McCauley	BVSc
Marek Misiewicz	BVSc

### Milton Clinic

Peter Kalb	BVSc
Jillian Clark	BVSc
Sid Taylor	BVSc, MACVSc
Barbara Christensen	BVSc, MACVSc
Keara Brennan	BVSc, MRCVS

## Kennel cough

This is a highly contagious cause of coughing in dogs and it has been doing the rounds in South Otago and I think other areas of NZ as well. Dogs develop a dry harsh cough which may be followed by retching or gagging. This can persist for 10 - 20 days. On occasions however, serious complications can develop - pneumonia etc. and dogs can die or have permanent after effects.

There are vaccines available to prevent this disease and we would recommend these - they are not in the usual 4-in-1 DHPPI vaccination dogs get to prevent distemper, parvo etc. Because of a run on the kennel cough vaccines there have been stock outages but we now have supplies in stock. Vaccination is effective in preventing disease in 2 - 3 days and lasts a year.

## Unwanted/Expired Ag Chemical Collection

Agrecovery will shortly be holding collections for unwanted and/or expired Ag chemicals in Otago. To dispose of these chemicals you need to book by Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June. This can be done by Booking online at [www.agrecovery.co.nz](http://www.agrecovery.co.nz). Request a postal booking form on 0800-247-326

**DON'T** ring us - it is really nothing to do with us. We are just an AgRecovery depot for empty plastic containers. Cost will depend on type and quantity of chemical and location, and will be advised beforehand - some subsidies are available.

## Retail

- **Merial Ancare Sheep Drench Products** - Receive a Canterbury brand rugby jersey on selected products while stocks last.
- **Merial Ancare Cattle Drench** - Receive a tough as guts Swanndri fleece jacket with qualifying products-oral, injection and pour-on.
- **Eprinex Pour-on 5lt** - Buy 3 x 5lt and get the 4<sup>th</sup> one free.
- **Eweguard** - Apparently supplies of all the flavours (plain, Se, B12) are going to be quite limited so maybe get your orders in early.
- **Startect, Cydectin and Dectomax Drenches** - All purchases go in the draw for \$4000 worth of Avanti or Scott bikes from Powerzone Suzuki, Balclutha. Exclusive to Clutha Vets.
- **Kaiwaka Sealtex Wet Weather Clothing for Kids** - Over trousers, bib overtrousers, and parkas, sizes 2 - 16 yrs. Great value.
- **Cydectin Pour-on for Cattle** - Receive 10% extra free in the 2lt and 5lt packs. Also a 17lt pack for the price of 15lt. Nil meat withhold.
- **LSD** - Still the best product of its type on the market despite numerous copycat attempts.
- **Dectomax Pour-on 15lt Herd Packs** - Receive an extra 2.5lt free plus a Stoney Creek Recreational Jacket.
- **Dectomax Injection** - Purchase 2 starter packs (4 x 500ml) and receive an extra 400ml free, plus the Stoney Creek Recreational Jacket.
- **Bionic Capsules** - Orders being taken now.

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