

treatable with antibiotics is akin to them promoting animal welfare abuse!! With prompt and vigorous antibiotic treatment it is possible to save the life &/or improve the lot of lambs with swollen joints & various internal abscesses/ infections & Watery Mouth as well for that matter.

Clutha Vets AGM

This year Clutha Vets AGM will be held at the Balclutha Clinic upstairs in our new seminar room on Tuesday 15th Nov at 8pm. Prior to the meeting we will be able to show anyone who is interested round the completed clinic building so feel free to take advantage of this opportunity to see the result of 18 months of hard work (and discomfort and inconvenience). As quite a lot of the renovations are “out the back” in staff only areas this will be one of probably relatively few opportunities for a public tour so to speak.

Again this year the board have opted not to post out copies of the annual report. There will be a limited numbers of hard copies available to anyone who would like one. Please contact the clinic or email smcnutt@cluthavets.co.nz to request a copy. Copies will

also be available on our website.

Field Day - More Profitable Sheep

On Thursday Nov 3rd at Garth & Chris Shaw's Wharetoa Genetics are hosting a field day titled “More Profitable Sheep” where speakers will present results from an independent analysis by AbacusBio Ltd & will highlight how to increase EBIT by up to 35%. The day starts at 1.30pm but a light lunch will be served from 12.30pm.

Retail Ramblings

From Pihi and the team this time we have firstly an apology for the sheer number of stock outages we have been experiencing in recent times. None of us can recall a time when there has been so many products on back order or for whatever reason otherwise unobtainable.

Having got that matter out of the way the specials, promos etc from the team this month are as follows:

- With selected Zoetis products ranging from drench (eg Dectomax, Startect) to vaccine (eg Ultravac), to scratch (Scabigard) & various mastitis products you

go in the draw to win a \$5000 travel voucher – exclusive to Clutha Vets.

- **Dectomax Starter Packs:** With these get 200ml of free injection and a Stoney Creek shirt and you also go in the \$5000 travel draw.
- **Take a Mate Fishing to Stewart Island:** The draw for places on this via the purchase of Merial Ancare products starts this month.
- **Merial Ancare Sheep Drenches:** Purchase your favourite MA drench and get a great cooler lunch box and thermos free.
- **Merial Ancare Cattle Drenches:** Get a fantastic heavy duty Waeco 55lt Icebox with the purchase of selected MA products
- **Eclipse E Inj:** Buy 3 x 500ml and get 1 x 500ml free and a Sunbeam slow cooker.
- There are also Sunbeam slow cookers on selected Eprinex, Eclipse and Genesis and Matrix C purchases.
- **Boss Pour-on:** Great deals and bonus products.
- **NeXepirin Microject:** Buy 1 x 500ml and get a \$75 prezzy card.
- **Phenax Scabbymouth Vaccine:** Free chiller bag on orders of ≥2500 doses. Limited stock so be in quick.

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CLUTHA VETS
SHEEP & BEEF FARMER
NEWSLETTER



CLUTHA
V.E.T.S.

October 2016



Clinic News

I was talking to a local farmer the other day and he was of the opinion that this has to be one of the best lambing seasons he has struck in 25 years of farming. Certainly the weather has played its part. Apart from one short sharp cold blast around the end of the first week of September the weather has been relatively mild and conducive to good lamb survival. Sometimes though mild weather can bring its own problems. When the weather is mild and there is not much rain we often see more problems resulting from navel infections in the first 2 - 3 days of age but not showing up until lambs are 1 - 6 weeks old. My theory explaining this is that a little bit of rain is needed occasionally to wash dust (and accompanying bugs) off the grass so when the weather is warm and dry the grass is actually a bit dirtier bacteriologically speaking. More on this later.

In the last newsletter I mentioned that by the time of this newsletter I hoped I could say the building redevelopment at Balclutha is well and truly completed. I have to report that, well no, its not quite completed however it is getting very close. As I write this (28th Sept) most areas are pretty much finished. It is just the reception and retail area that needs a bit of finishing work done and the vinyl to be laid then the new shelving can go up. I'm pretty confident that apart from maybe a bit of external site works & landscaping, by the next newsletter the project will be well completed. At this stage the idea is to have an open day and official opening early next year round the end of January / early February. We have approached a “well known New Zealander” to perform the official opening but haven't yet had definite confirmation so I can't really say any more at this stage.

We have had a few issues with our new phone system. There have been a few programming glitches which may have lead to some clients getting less than satisfactory service & things like unacceptably long delays before phones are answered & calls being dropped or otherwise cut off. With the former problem (long delays before answering) you may have heard the phone ring what seems like 20 - 30 times but here it has only rung say 3 times. Anyway we are making progress in getting these problems resolved.

Recent Animal Health Issues

1. **Abortions** - the usual smattering of abortion outbreaks occurred. We had cases due to S. Brandenburg, though not many, Listeriosis due to crook baleage & Campy, the latter in unvaccinated flocks. Incidentally Listeriosis can also result in

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crook ewes so the moral of the story here is that you can't always assume Brandenburg is the culprit when ewes are crook after aborting - you need to get laboratory confirmation. We had no cases of Toxoplasma or Helicobacter diagnosed.

2. Copper Poisoning in Deer - We had two cases in two days during the winter after many years of none. In both cases the farmers concerned had done nothing obviously wrong and had done the same thing for quite a number of years. I mention this really as a warning that you do need to be careful when using copper injection in cattle and deer. Following administration of copper by injection you do get quite a spike in blood levels & if levels were already more than adequate this can be enough to tip some over. So never be too blasé about administering copper injections.

3. Milk Fever - This season we did seem to see/hear of more cases of metabolic disease, mainly milk fever in ewes. Invariably this was either following a sudden change in diet or grazing grass that had had urea applied to it previously and with the milder weather there had been a good response in terms of grass growth. To put this in farmer language, the resultant grass lacked "guts". While it is a bit late now I will reiterate the treatment protocol for milk fever in ewes. Use a product that contains Calcium borogluconate plus some Magnesium and Dextrose (either Glucalpos or Calprophos). Give 120 -150mls under the skin over the ribs in at least 2 sites & rub in well. If you have the diagnosis correct ewes should be responding in 2 hours & up by 4 hours post treatment. Unfortunately a goodly percentage of these will subsequently have dead lambs. I think that having some magnesium in with the calcium does reduce the incidence of dead lambs. Because any ewe down with milk fever hasn't been eating for a few hours there is probably an element of secondary sleepy sickness - the dextrose in the product should help with this or you could, if they can swallow, give them a dose of Ketol (or similar) as well.

Reminders

1. Tailing - In recent years there has been the odd horror story of lamb injuries and deaths following tailing. Investigation has revealed that in virtually all cases the fault has been from the occasional 'rogue' staff member employed by some tailing contractors whose work practices are sloppy, if not downright negligent. You need to try and keep a bit of oversight of what goes on at tailing as this sort of thing can cost you a lot of money.

A reminder re the reasons for not cutting tails too short:

- Really short tails mean lambs are more prone to ascending spinal canal infections & abscessation which usually results in hind leg paralysis.
- There is definite evidence of an increase in the

incidence of rectal prolapse in very short tailed lambs.

- It also means they are likely to have dirtier hind ends through not being able to lift their tail stump out of the way properly when having a poo due to muscle/tendon damage at the base of the stump.
- There is less tissue to cut through and therefore less pain if tails are taken off slightly longer.

The ideal length is one where the tail stump covers the vulva in ewe lambs (and the equivalent length in ram lambs), which roughly corresponds to the bottom of the V where pink skin meets wool or where the two folds that come down either side of the tail from the back end merge into the tail. Apparently where these caudal folds merge on to the tail is more consistent than where pink skin meets wool so use that as your guide when tailing.

It is entirely possible that if taking off tails really short continues, then some turkey in Wellington will draft some possibly rather ridiculous regulations, so a bit of voluntary co-operation at this stage to simply slightly lengthen the tail stump could go a long way to ensuring common sense wins the day.

2. Smartshot B12 - I thought you might be interested in the technology behind this increasingly popular long acting form of B12 supplementation. Basically the conventional Vit. B12 molecule is encapsulated in different sized "globs" of another chemical, a glycolide co-polymer. The gradual dissolving of this encapsulating polymer, with the smaller "globs" dissolving first and the bigger ones later results in a steady prolonged release of Vitamin B12. Rather clever technology although it makes the manufacturing process a bit tricky apparently.

As I mentioned an increasing number of you are using Smartshot – if you haven't used it and you find yourself giving repeated conventional B12 injections then you should maybe consider this option - read on. There are two Smartshot B12 products – plain and selenised. These cost 64 & 75 cents respectively for a ½ ml dose which will last 3 - 4 months. A 1 ml dose will last at least 180 days, sometimes up to 240 but does increase the cost as those lambs which go to the works earlier have "unused" Smartshot sitting in them. One way round this is to give all lambs a ½ ml dose at tailing and then repeat the dose 3 - 4 months later in the ewe lamb replacements and any later works lambs. This avoids wasting money on lambs that are going to be off to the works by round the end of January. There is also the option of an in-between dose - a ¾ ml dose at tailing for example. Contact the clinic for more information.

3. Scabby Mouth Vaccination - You shouldn't need reminding, after the Scabine batch failures of 2014, to make sure you check for takes 8 -10 days post vaccination. There are often lambs that have poked

through a fence and you have an opportunity to check these when you're putting them back. You can check up to 3 weeks post tailing but no later as scabs may have dropped off. Less than 2 weeks is best. Below are a couple of photos of good takes taken on day 8.



Scabine is permanently off the market. We will have 2 products in stock - Scabigard and Phenax. Scabigard has a choice of 2 different types of precise dosage applicators and is manufactured in a technically superior way. Phenax is in an 'imprecise' type of applicator similar to Scabines.

Due to the returns (or more correctly lack of returns) policy with Phenax, come early November we will not be holding any stock of Phenax. If you require any after the first week of Nov please pre-order it so that it will be here when you require it. Each year the demand for scabby mouth vaccine stops, basically overnight with no prior warning. Furthermore every year the timing of this stop varies and we invariably end up caught with stock that will expire and has to be discarded. Last year we had to discard around \$7500 worth of Phenax.

Scabigard, because of its superior manufacturing technology has a longer date life meaning invariably it can still be used the following season so carry over product is not a dead loss. Hence Scabigard should always be in stock.

4. Lamb Drenching at Tailing - Unless for say weather reasons tailing is quite delayed, meaning lambs are 6 - 8 weeks old then administering a worm drench to them at tailing is a waste of time & money. Any worm burden they have then is so small that it will not make any significant difference to the timing & need for a pre-weaning drench.

Navel Infection (Navel Ill) in lambs

There are basically 2 forms of navel ill in lambs (& calves):

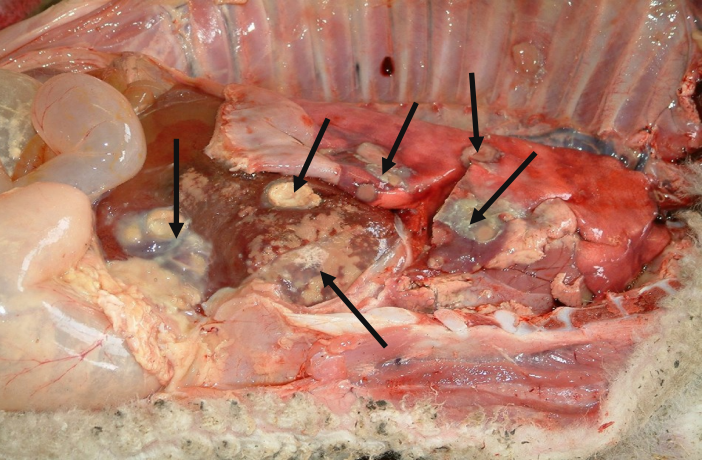
1. That caused by a Clostridial bacteria that results in a fawn jellyish like clot around a dark purplish discoloured abdominal wall under the skin round the navel. That is prevented by the correct Ultravac vaccination programme in the ewes and is not really the subject of this article.

2. That caused by a range of pus forming bacteria that got in the navel in the first 1 - 3-days of age before it has dried up. They enter the blood stream and where they end up is a lottery. Swollen joints are quite common as are lung and liver abscesses and these can

show up from about 1 through to 6 weeks of age. As alluded to in the intro to this newsletter, this season has been a bit worse for this form of navel ill.

a) Swollen joints/ infective arthritis: To be successfully treated this requires prompt antibiotic use. Ideally they need a good course but rarely this is feasible. Use a hefty dose of Ovipen (3 - 5mls) - ideally this should be repeated at 48hr intervals. If you don't have much success with Ovipen contact the clinic and we can arrange an alternative antibiotic.

b) Liver/lung abscesses: This is an under-recognised / under rated condition & is, on the majority of farms, the commonest cause of lamb deaths between 1 - 6 weeks of age. (See photo below showing multiple abscessation of the liver & lungs in a 1 month old lamb.) You'll find lambs dead in the paddock sometimes with a slightly swollen abdomen. Careful observation earlier would have revealed a sluggish off-colour lamb. These lambs if treated promptly enough can be saved by the administration of antibiotics, again a good hefty 3 - 5ml dose of Ovipen & "ideally" repeated at 48 hour intervals.



Prevention of this arthritis and liver/lung abscess form of navel ill involves things like identifying problem areas in certain paddocks, often bare dead patches under old pine or macrocarpa trees and remedying this by removal, trimming or outrigger fencing etc. Spraying navels with iodine is quite effective but with few people these days putting identification marks on multiples it is unfortunately, not really that practical any longer. However any new-born lambs you handle and especially those that go into the relatively grubby mothering up pens or lamb warmer environments should have their navels sprayed as they are at a high risk of a navel infection.

I know a number of freezing works have policies that basically actively discourage using antibiotics in lambs. I really disagree with these ill conceived schemes and would urge you to make the point to the relevant company personnel that encouraging what is effectively turning a blind eye to suffering lambs with a condition