



HUNTERVILLE VETERINARY CLUB

NEWSLETTER—APRIL 2013



Time To Check Mineral Status

Many dairy farmers are culling cows earlier this year. Don't forget to think about organising liver tests at the works to check on trace element levels. Remember, documentation from us needs to go with truck so please be organised!

Many of you have fed a lot more supplements than normal and this can have significant consequences in terms of your trace element status especially in relation to copper and selenium. We have already seen much higher copper levels in cows than we were expecting. Any copper treatment in these cows could have caused toxicity issues (while we know palm kernel can elevate copper levels it had not been fed as a supplement in this herd).

If your cull cows are not a good representation of your herd, talk to us about getting liver biopsies done.



Eczema Threat?!

While some of you have received good rainfall, the threat of eczema would appear to be relatively low. Why???

- *In past years where late eczema challenges have occurred there has always been a period in January or February where spore counts have started to rise. This has not happened this year.*
- *Evening / night temperatures have been cool since the rain.*
- *Rainfall has occurred in dumps as opposed to several damp days which are more likely to get counts rising.*

We will continue to carry out grass cuttings at high risk sites so contact the Clinic at any time for an update.

Staff Changes-Dianna Leaving

Dianna Off To Banking—After 11 years of employment at the Hunterville Vet Club Dianna has taken on a position with the Rabo Bank team in Feilding. We take this opportunity to wish Dianna all the very best in her future endeavours and thank her for her great service to the Club.

We would like to welcome Robyn Illston to the Vet Club team. Robyn has been employed to replace Dianna. While we are doing everything possible to ensure a smooth transition, errors may occur. Please contact us if anything unusual appears on your account or you have any other concerns. Thank you.

Also, we would like to take this opportunity to welcome Michelle Holloway who is now working for us as a vet nurse on Fridays and filling in on reception and working as a vet tech from time to time.

Cow Pregnancy Testing

This is now well under way. The results to date have been relatively good and cow condition is okay. The good results are probably a reflection of the excellent season we had last year and the fact that most farms had plenty of 'cow tucker' for winter. Plan now to manage your cows.

- *Preferentially feed lighter cows or cull them.*
- *Identify late calving cows at pregnancy testing that can be held back a little in Spring.*
- *Start planning your cow feeding strategy for Spring now. Consider Nitrogen or your supplementary feed options.*

As Bob Thompson highlighted at the recent BRIG field-day, good conditioned beef cows at this time of the year can handle a fair degree of pressure over the Winter and still perform well next season **provided they are well fed in the critical two months from calving.**



Apologies

In last months newsletter we published some of the results from the Hunterville Rugby Clubs Fat Lamb Competition.

We would like to apologise for listing the 2nd place getter in the Best Maternal Lamb section as Andrew and Jo Duncan when in fact it should be Andrew and Jo Lambert. Well done to Andrew and Jo.

After Hours Vet

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Interdigital Dermatitis in Dairy Cows



This disease causing lameness in dairy cows has hit the headlines recently as the numbers of cases have risen significantly in areas such as Taranaki.

The disease is a major problem in many overseas dairy herds but until now has not been a significant issue in New Zealand. However a problem does appear to be emerging.



To date we have not identified this disease on any of our dairy farms however if you do detect unusual cases of interdigital lameness we are interested in following these cases up, so give us a call.

Checking for Liver Fluke

We have had several inquiries about the best way to check for liver fluke in sheep flocks. There are three possible options which may be used individually or together to build a 'fluke picture'.

1. Fluke egg counts from faecal samples.
2. Blood tests for fluke antibodies.
3. Post mortem examinations of tail end ewes.

Grain Feeding

We recently held a field-day at short notice on grain feeding of sheep (young cattle were also discussed). Some excellent work is being done on refining methods that may be practical on many farms with a minimal expenditure on plant.

These grain feeding techniques are claimed to be giving good weight gains in lambs of at least 200gm / day. Weight gains of this magnitude would appear to make grain feeding quite profitable when the increasing value of store lambs that we are seeing and the lamb contract schedules for May and June are taken into account.

If you are interested in grain feeding sheep or cattle, contact the Clinic for advice and the contact details of people who can offer assistance.



'Hard Udder' In Ewes At Lambing

This is a problem that most sheep farmers have come across and as vets we are often asked why it happens. Recent work carried out by Massey University has demonstrated that this problem is caused by a chronic bacterial infection in the udder (which dairy farmers call chronic mastitis). Their work also shows that the condition never resolves.

One of the consistent indications of this problem is the 'stick like' feel of the teat when it is rolled between the thumb and forefinger. If you notice this when uddering ewes, these ewes should be culled. This highlights the fact that teats should be checked when uddering ewes.



Just A Reminder...

To those of you on our Worm Programme, you need to be dosing your dogs with Droncit at a rate of 1 / 20kg. While the packaging does say 1 / 10kgs, this rate was for use when Hydatids were a problem.

I have spoken to the company about amending their packaging but am not confident this will happen!!!

Autumn Nitrogen

If you don't belong to the 'anti nitrogen religious sect', the use of nitrogen is a tool that many of you should be looking at using over April and May if we get some more rain and the grass continues to grow.

On every property where I have looked at the cost / benefits of nitrogen application the use of nitrogen appears to be a 'no brainer' when the following factors are taken into account.

- Current feed covers on farm.
- Current stock condition.
- Likely rises in schedules and store prices (now supported by some of the contracts that are out).
- Requirements to mate hoggets.