



# HUNTERVILLE VETERINARY CLUB

## NEWSLETTER—JUNE 2013



### *The Challenges When It Rains*

While it is nice to have the drought behind us, on many properties the challenges of low feed covers heading into Winter and light stock, still remain. If you are in this situation, don't hope against hope that the growth in the next 6—8 weeks will get you through the Winter.

Feed budgets that I have seen, even where stock numbers are significantly reduced still indicate that feed levels are going to be very marginal and further de-stocking or supplementary feeding may be required. Anyone in this situation should develop and review their plans as scanning percentages and grass growth over the next few weeks become known.



*If we can assist with feed budgets or management advice, please give the Clinic a call.*

### Low Copper Levels

Liver tests for copper in beef herds have shown some **very low levels** highlighting the need for supplementation as we head into winter. This is even more important than normal given the lack of cow tucker on many farms.

If you are uncertain as to whether treatment is likely to be required, contact the Clinic to discuss your situation.

Dairy farmers should note that liver tests in some dairy herds have shown very high copper levels and supplementation is not required or could even be dangerous.

As we have explained in previous newsletters, copper levels can vary greatly depending on the levels of Palm Kernel, grain etc, that has been fed. Ensure you know your cows status before treatment.

### Since The Rain We Have Seen ...

- Many cases of high nitrate levels in new grasses and crops.
- Massive worm burdens in lambs four weeks after their last drench (although many low burdens have also been seen).
- Shit develop on ewes that is not always from worms (see elsewhere in this newsletter).

### Copper Poisoning

Four deaths in weaner cattle occurred after they were weaned, treated with copper injection, and trucked to another farm.

There are a number points worth making here.

1. Unless you are sure of weaner cattle's copper status, injectable treatments can be risky. Copper capsules are generally a safer, better option for young cattle.
2. If using copper injections DO NOT stress stock after treatment (as in trucking, prolonged yarding or droving).
3. Ensure you do not double dose cattle and check your guns are giving an accurate dose. Overdosing will cause deaths.

### Veterinary Medication!!!

We recently spent \$2500 on a young Black Angus Bull. We put him out with the herd, but he just ate grass and wouldn't even look at a cow. I was beginning to suspect he had ED (erectile dysfunction), if that's possible with a bull.

Anyhow, I had the Vet come have a look at him. He said the bull was very healthy, but possibly a little young, so he gave me some pills to feed him each day.

The bull started to service the cows within two days. All of my cows! He even broke through the fence and bred all my neighbour's cows! He's been breeding just about everything in sight. He's like a machine!

I don't know what was in the pills the Vet gave him, but they kinda taste like peppermint...



### Worms In Ewes



We have carried out faecal egg counts for many flocks of ewes. Some owners believed the ewes had begun to scour but still looked okay (virtually all these ewes have had low faecal egg counts, indicating low worm burdens).

However in some cases worm burdens, especially in 2.2ths or ewes that are light, have revealed worm burdens that need dealing with now. If you have doubts about the worm status of your ewe flocks, faecal egg counts are a valuable tool to assist with making decisions around drenching now and the likely need for pre-lamb treatments.

A recent article in the Cape Times reported that a woman, one Jean Jansen has sued a local Hospital, saying that after her husband was treated there recently he had lost all interest in sex.

A hospital spokesman replied, "Mr. Jansen was actually admitted into our ophthalmology department for laser cataract surgery. All we did was correct his eyesight..."

\*\*\*Congratulations\*\*\*

To Dave and Rebecca on the arrival of Sam, a rather heavy birth-weight brother for Max. (Dave's birth-weight EBVS are heading the wrong way!!!)

## Check Drench Guns Before Use

I know you all do this!! (A Tui slogan comes to mind!!)

I recently carried out post mortem examinations on lambs that had 'suddenly died' despite being drenched 3 weeks previously. The results of the autopsy showed massive worm burdens. In this case the farmer had his drench gun with him. On checking the gun the following problems were noted.

1. *The gun wasn't set to deliver the dose the farmer thought he was giving. (Many disposable guns have a white o ring at the front of the plunger that can not be seen when the barrel is full of drench. If you set the gun to coloured part of the plunger, you can see the volume delivered will be less than you think.)*
2. *The valve in the nozzle of the gun was leaking meaning some of each dose was dribbling on the ground and not down the lambs throat.*

In this case under-dosing due to failure to calibrate the drench gun had undoubtedly led to the worm burden and lambs death. If you need a 'free' syringe to allow you to calibrate your guns June will be '**Free Syringe Month**' so just ask for one!!

### From The Mouths Of Babes...

Two little boys are going to the hospital the next day for operations. Theirs will be first on the schedule. The older boy leans over and asks,  
"What are you having done?"  
The second boy says,  
"I'm getting my tonsils out, and I'm afraid."  
The first boy says,  
"You've got nothing to worry about. I had that done when I was four. They put you to sleep, and when you wake up, they give you lots of Jell-O and ice cream. It's a breeze."  
The second boy then asks,  
"What are you going in for?"  
The first boy says, "Circumcision."  
"Whoa!" the smaller boy replies.  
"Good luck, buddy. I had that done when I was born. Couldn't walk for a year."

### Poor Beef And Dairy Weaners?

Our blood testing and milk sampling programmes have confirmed that BVD is present in many herds.

One of the outcomes of BVD infections is the 'persistently infected calf'. These calves fail to grow and eventually die but while they run around they infect other weaners causing scouring and increased susceptibility to worms and other diseases resulting in reduced weight gains.

These PI weaners can be identified through a simple blood test.

If you have unexplained 'runty weaners', blood testing to establish whether BVD is involved is an excellent idea and allows positive animals to be identified and culled early.

## Why Risk Salmonella??

In recent weeks we have seen cases of salmonella in both sheep and dairy cows. In all instances these deaths have occurred in unvaccinated herds and flocks.

This disease is extremely well controlled by very simple vaccination programmes. As we have commented in past newsletters, preventative vaccination programmes would seem to make very good economic sense for ALL dairy herds and sheep flocks.

*For example:*

- *a 400 cow dairy herd can be protected for an annual cost of around \$320 per year.*
- *A ewe flock with 800 replacements going into it each year can be protected for around \$625 per year.*

With regard to dairy farmers, it would appear that the salmonella threat posed to cows has been significantly increased with the increase in grain and maize feeding which attracts wild life that are known to be carriers of salmonella (sparrows, ducks, etc).

*Why take the risk?? Contact the Clinic to discuss vaccination programmes.*

## Winter and Lice Treatments—ACT NOW

With the effects of the drought, many farmers are looking at their shearing policies and some are considering not to Winter or second shear. If this is the case don't forget your lice treatments.

Long wool makes effective treatment much more difficult so the sooner the treatment is carried out, the better control is likely to be, the less product you will have to use, and so the cost will be lower.

Once wool length gets past 5 months, the number of options available are very limited and expensive.

*Think about your lice management now and contact the Clinic to discuss appropriate, cost effective options.*

**After Hours Vet**

**Emergencies:**

**Shop Hours:**

**Email:**

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