



HUNTERVILLE VETERINARY CLUB

NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER 2015



El Nino??

The pundits / experts seem to be convinced El Nino is on its way!! How will it affect this part of the country is up for debate!! At this stage farmers need to keep up with the play and plan ahead and constantly revise their plans as conditions change. In past droughts, those who made good decisions early generally came out the best. (The Feilding yards overflowing with lambs on a dry hot day in summer is not a nice place for sellers to be!)

The key to planning is understanding stock requirements and feed availability including expected yields of summer crops. Lamb numbers and weights, and ewe condition, are very important factors in making decisions around weaning. Sample weighing lambs and condition scoring ewes in November / December will assist in making good decisions at weaning.

In recent years drinking water has been an issue on some properties. Hopefully dams and water schemes are in good order. It can also be useful to organise grazing plans that ensure stock end up in areas of the farm with good water as things dry out.

Early Weaning

If things do get dry or feed levels are already tight, early weaning may be a good option for some. For those lucky enough to have some good quality feed available (chicory, plantain, clover) research shows that lambs weaned at 70 days of age will perform quite adequately if weaned. Once weaned, options for the ewes become possible:

- *Culling*
- *Targeted feeding of low condition score ewes*
- *Tightening up of good conditioned ewes*

Multiples are probably most suited to early weaning as milk makes up significantly less of their diet than single lambs, and they are likely to suffer less of a check.

I have certainly seen a number of ewe flocks where feed challenges from late pregnancy and early lactation have resulted in very light ewes that are not producing a great deal of milk. Ewes in this situation would be prime candidates for early weaning.

PS. Recent rain and low feed covers up to now means that feed quality in the hills seems to be very good, weaned lambs should do well.



Rearing Quality Replacement Dairy Heifers

Internationally this area has received quite a lot of attention in recent years. It is now recognised that growth and development right from birth can have a significant impact on the lifetime performance potential of dairy heifers. What's more, getting things wrong early on can not be corrected by good management later.

Good calf rearing is known to positively affect:

- *Rumen development, function and capacity.*
- *Skeletal development and bone strength.*
- *Mammary development.*

Unlike bull calves, there is now work to suggest that heifer calves can benefit from having milk in their diet right through to at least 10 weeks of age. Late born calves can benefit and catch up if fed milk for even longer.

It is now suggested in some circles that dairy heifers should not be weaned off milk before the following target weights are met.

Jerseys—90kg

Crossbreeds / Ayrshires—100kgs

Friesians—110-120kgs (type dependant)

Food for thought!!



Hill Country Cropping Group?

Some club members have suggested we run a group focussed on hill country pasture development and cropping, and the productivity outcomes and costs associated with it. If you have an interest in being involved please contact the clinic. If there is enough interest we will look at holding an initial field day in late November, early December.



Palm Kernel For Dry Stock

Several farmers fed palm kernel to young cattle over the winter and have commented on how well they have come through. At present prices PK could be a great option on properties wanting to get cattle through a dry spell in summer rather than unload onto a depressed market. (Weaner bulls do particularly well on it as an addition to their diet.)

PK can be easily stored in a fert bin or in a shed on a few warehouse tarpaulins. Troughs for feeding do not need to be flash—old concrete water troughs, 200L drums cut in half or or 6" x 2" timber nailed up into troughs all work well.

Cattle grazed on summer crops can also be held on crops for longer and do well if PK makes up 1kg to 3kgs of their diet.

MOLASSES

There was a papa mole, a momma mole, and a baby mole. They lived in a hole out in the country near a farmhouse. Papa mole poked his head out of the hole and said, "Mmmm, I smell sausage!" Momma mole poked her head outside the hole and said, "Mmmm, I smell pancakes!" Baby mole tried to stick his head outside but couldn't because of the two bigger moles. Baby mole said, "The only thing I smell is molasses."

Bull Testing

November is the time to ensure bulls are fit and sound for mating. Call the clinic to book in for testing or to discuss the necessity for testing your bulls this year.

If you do not test your bulls (which is fine if you watch them closely over mating), take time to check them out now and ensure they are in good order, sound and moving well. If you are at all worried get them checked out. Remember also that:

1. *Most bulls are now purchased BVD clear and vaccinated. They need their annual BVD booster before mating.*
2. *Selenium is very important for semen production. Treating bulls with selenium is a good practice in this area if selenium does not go on with the fert.*
3. *Bulls also require copper if your property is deficient.*
4. *Mixing bulls up just prior to mating is a bad idea, having bulls organised into their mating groups well before mating is a very good idea.*
5. *It takes 6 weeks to make good quality, mature semen. A bull in poor condition or health now, has very little or no time to come right, and their fertility should be questioned. Semen testing such bulls can be good insurance if you really need to use them.*



Vet Nurse

Jackie Tapp, our vet nurse, is leaving us early December to go to Canada. We would like to wish Jackie all the best on her travels and her exciting new adventure.

We are pleased to welcome Laura Bell to the team. Introduce yourselves and say hello next time you come in.

Husbands are husbands

A man was sitting reading his papers when his wife hit him round the head with a frying pan.

'What was that for?' the man asked.

The wife replied, 'That was for the piece of paper with the name Jenny on it that I found in your trousers pocket'.

The man said, 'When I was at the races last week Jenny was the name of the horse I bet on. 'The wife apologised and went on with the housework.

Three days later the man is watching TV when the wife comes in and bashes him with an even bigger frying pan, knocking him unconscious. Upon re-gaining consciousness the man asked her why she had hit him again.

The wife replied, 'Your horse phoned.'

Flea Problems

Last summer a number of clients experienced problems with severe flea infestations on dogs and cats. Things got particularly bad as summer progressed and flea populations built up.

Attacking fleas early this year would be a good idea. Spray kennels and surrounding areas, wash bedding etc, and consider starting some form of quality flea control if you have not done so already.

Seresto 8 month flea collars may be a good option. At \$65 each they may seem expensive but any other good treatment over this period will cost a similar amount or more, and you have to remember to treat when necessary.

Clients had excellent results with these collars last year. For teams of dogs talk to us about discounts for large orders.



After Hours Vet



Emergencies: Phone 06 322 8058

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