



HUNTERVILLE VETERINARY CLUB

NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY 2016



Rain at the end of December was a great way to close out 2015. We wish members all the very best for 2016—let's hope the climate, markets (including Dairy market) and US\$ play the game!!!

This newsletter has a strong focus on leptospirosis—a disease that affects all species of animals including HUMANS. We would encourage you to read this information.

Leptospirosis is an infectious bacterial disease caused by leptospire. These multiply in the kidneys of animals and are shed in the urine. They can also infect reproductive tissue. It can cause severe illness and death for your animals and it is a **SIGNIFICANT human health risk.**

Leptospirosis in Sheep

Investigations of sudden deaths in lambs have revealed leptospirosis as being the cause. This is a disease we do not generally see a lot of but this spike in cases is almost certainly related to wet conditions. It can cause sudden deaths in lambs.

Surface water especially stagnant puddles, bulls holes, etc creates a very favorable environment in which the leptospire bacteria can happily survive. Stock become infected from drinking from these water sources. Once infected an animal sheds the bacteria in its urine further infecting water and spreading infections. Freshly weaned lambs seem particularly susceptible to picking up infections.

Lepto outbreaks in sheep normally present as:

- ◆ Sudden death of lambs.
- ◆ Lambs become weak and slow to move.
- ◆ On post mortem examination the classic findings are:
 - * A jaundiced (yellow) carcass.
 - * Red blood tinged urine.
 - * Damaged and inflamed kidneys.
 - * Anaemic thin blood.



Treatment Involves:

- ◆ Getting lambs onto clean dry paddocks and spreading them out as much as possible.
- ◆ Treating sick lambs with antibiotics.
- ◆ Filling in or draining possible infected water sources.
- ◆ Vaccination of lambs in severe outbreaks.

It is also very important to note that any animal with leptospirosis poses a real **risk to humans handling them.** The bacteria is in the urine which if it comes in contact with mucus membranes (eyes, nose, mouth) or cuts and wounds and even intact skin can infect humans. Good hygiene is essential and don't smoke while handling at risk stock.

<http://www.leptosure.co.nz/what-leptospirosis?>

Leptospirosis in Deer

Following on from the cases of lepto in sheep, studies by Massey University have confirmed that leptospirosis is a production limiting disease in deer. The most important finding was that infected herds have significantly reduced weaner growth rates when compared to vaccinated or clear herds.

For this reason alone lepto vaccination of deer herds has a lot of merit. It should also be noted that infected deer pose a threat to cattle, sheep and **humans.**

Massey's study also revealed that leptospirosis in deer is widespread. We have certainly detected it in local herds.

After Hours Vet

Emergencies: Phone 06 322 8058

Shop Hours: 8am to 5pm,
Monday to Friday

Email: huntervillevetclub@xtra.co.nz

Website: www.huntervillevetclub.co.nz



AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST

Dairy Farmers

...are reminded that calf vaccination programmes should now be completed.



Ram Run

January is a good month to get rams checked and get teasers made in plenty of time. We will be carrying out ram runs so book in now.

PS. If you use a lot of terminal sire rams and have foot problems with them the use of the footrot vaccine FOOTVAX can be very helpful. Not only does this vaccine protect against footrot it will also help treat infected rams. Remember untreated rams are an excellent source of infection for other rams.

Teaser Timing

The use of teasers especially in hogget's and early lambing ewes is an excellent management practice.

It has been shown to help with:

- * Concentrating lambing.
- * Improving ewe fertility and lambing percentages.
- * More hoggets cycle earlier and conceive earlier.

NOTE: The teaser Rams should be cut **at least 6 weeks** before they are required.



Early and Late Calvers

Dairy Farmers who want their cows identified that have held to AI or early bull dates, should have their herds booked in for pregnancy testing over the next few weeks. Many of you have organised dates with us already.

If you haven't, please contact the Clinic as soon as possible.

Welfare Issues

There is little doubt that animal welfare issues fuelled by the media, TV programmes, etc are becoming an area of concern that should worry every farmer or animal owner. What was once considered acceptable to a population with a very strong rural background may often not be deemed acceptable today, especially when observed by urban dwellers.

The change in society's perspective has been brought home to me this Spring by the number of cases I have heard about where clients have received visits from the SPCA or MAF as a result of complaints from members of the public. The Bobby calves issue presented on TV have led to the development of a sector of the public who are very concerned with looking over the road fence, assuming the worst and phoning the authorities. Even though there was no basis to the cases I have heard about, it was still a difficult issue for the farmer to deal with.

It is essential for the image of our livestock industries that all farmers have their house in order and especially so where observations can be made by the general public. Foot abscesses in cows, broken legs, even fly struck sheep and the like are all welfare issues. Farmers need to take appropriate action in all such cases.

Appropriate action in welfare terms will require one of the following:

1. *Appropriate treatment.*

2. *Calling a veterinarian.*

3. *Destroying the animal.*

For farmers with employees, protocols should be set to handle welfare situations. Leaving a distressed cow over the weekend because the boss is away to approve destroying it will not be acceptable to a welfare officer.

Dairy Farmers

Milk Smart seminar- Taranaki 8th of March 2016.

The free Milksmart events are focused on providing farmers with practical solutions to save time and money and reduce stress.

For more info visit <http://www.dairynz.co.nz/milking/milksmart/>

Lepto Dog Death

A client recently lost his black lab to lepto. Unfortunately he was away on holiday at the time his dog became ill and by the time he was notified, renal collapse had set in and the dog could not be saved.

Testing revealed the dog was infected with a strain of leptospirosis spread by rats and possums called Copenhageni. Clients who feel their dogs may be at high risk from lepto due to:

- ◆ a lot of rodents around
 - ◆ deaths of other livestock from leptospirosis
- could consider vaccinating their dogs for lepto. The cost is approximately \$15.00 per dog and annual boosters are required.

Wise Old Age

The rain was pouring down. And there standing in front of a big puddle outside the pub, was an old Irishman, drenched, holding a stick, with a piece of string dangling in the water. A passer-by stopped and asked, "What are you doing?" "Fishing" replied the old man.

Feeling sorry for the old man, the gent says, "Come in out of the rain and have a drink with me."

In the warmth of the pub, as they sip their whiskies, the gentleman cannot resist asking, "So how many have you caught today?"

"You're the eighth" says the old man.

Yep, that'll get them each time!!!

Congratulations to:

* Garth Brown
* Garry Hayes

* Kevin Inskeep
* John Platts

...for their success in our latest order form draw.
A voucher is on its way to you four.