

LOOKING FORWARD

Well we have passed the shortest day and probably arrived in better shape than we were looking at a couple of months ago!! Covid 'seems' to be under control although if we ran our farms as the authorities run quarantine facilities would probably be going broke!

Feed levels have generally improved on farm (pasture growth measurements indicated the grass grew in June at more than twice the expected rate!!). Feed levels are still tight and supplementary feed is limited and expensive. If soil temperatures remain above average for July here's hoping things continue to improve. If they don't, farmers may well need to make more decisions around stocking rates, nitrogen usage, etc. Decisions that are now easier to make with a little more demand out there for stock and improved prices.

MULTIMIN TO IMPROVE CALF HEALTH

Last year some dairy farmers tried treating calves with **multimin injection** as a way of improving the health status and immunity of calves. (This followed the release of trial data from the South Island that was published showing significant improvements in calf health following treatment).

In general the feedback we received was positive so it is something to consider for incorporating in this year's calf rearing programmes. Calves should be treated on the first day of life (**1ml injection / 37 cents**) as they are picked up and again at weaning (**2ml injection / 74 cents**).

MAGNESIUM FOR COWS

The requirement for good magnesium blood levels in dairy and beef cows is well understood by the majority of farmers. Unfortunately magnesium problems on farm can vary greatly from year to year depending on many factors including:

- Calving dates and cow age
- Grass maturity, length and roughage available
- Fertiliser and urea program
- Supplementary feeding carried out

This spring is shaping up as one in which grass staggers / low magnesiums may be a real threat to both dairy and beef cows. While feed conditions are improving on many farms things are going to be tight. This means saved, mature feed and roughage is going to be limited for cows around and after calving.

This predicament is likely to result in low blood magnesiums. (Recent blood tests on dried off dairy cows have already highlighted low magnesium levels.)

Farmers need to have a plan in place to deal with this problem. For dairy farmers this normally means supplementing cows with magnesium oxide or chloride through the dry period and blood testing cows to ensure magnesium levels are adequate.

For beef farmers the solution is not as clear cut. Early calving cows, August September tend to be at greater risk than late calving cows. If magnesium is likely to be a threat on your property consider some of the following strategies:

- Blood test cows 3 weeks pre-calving to assess magnesium status.
- Plan how 'saved' feed is to be allocated, older cows are at greatest risk from staggers so benefit most from saved feed.
- Consider magnesium supplementation options eg magnesium on hay / silage, magnesium boluses, and magnesium salt licks.
- Contact the clinic to formulate a plan!!

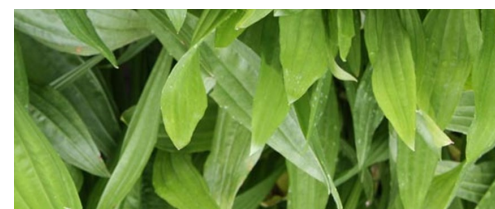
SCANNING RESULTS

As I finish this newsletter, scanning is well underway and results are pretty much what we would expect. Scanning percentages are generally down 10-15% across the board. (Not surprising given the summer and autumn we experienced.) Scanners also report that ewes are lighter than normal. However as we all know the number of lambs on board can end up having very little influence on what survives and when and what weight they go out the gate. To achieve good results it is essential ewes lamb in good condition and are well fed in the first 6 to 8 weeks after lambing. Achieving this result should be every sheep farmer's goal from now. Be proactive and make management decisions that allow you to achieve these goals. (This does not mean getting to docking / weaning and blaming everything on the weather!!)

PLANTAIN AND METABOLIC PROBLEMS

While heavily in lamb ewes can develop metabolic problems (milk fever and sleepy), for a number of reasons **plantain** has proved to be a very problematic feed on some farms. The problem is not with the pregnant ewes grazing plantain but rather the milk fever that can occur if you try to take them off plantain before lambing!!

If you are grazing plantain pre-lambing, plan to leave the ewes on it until after lambing. Alternatively and in my opinion, the more preferable option is to shed ewes onto plantain after lambing.



RAT/POSSUM BAIT TOXICITY IN DOGS

Winter is here and many of you will be laying rat bait, however dogs seem to be able to get into a lot of the bait stations people use or bait is not securely stored. Make sure dogs can't get access to these stations or poison.

It usually takes 3-7 days for dogs to start showing signs of rat bait toxicity – these are related to the dogs' inability to clot blood (the poison knocks out a part of the clotting cascade).

Signs you may see would be bleeding (from the nose or mouth), a cut or wound that won't stop bleeding, sudden swelling of a joint, sudden onset of a cough and possibly noisy breathing. If the bleeding is contained within the dog you may only see pale gums, lethargy or wobbliness.

Treatment is by way of administering vitamin K and if the dog has lost a lot of blood, a blood transfusion may be required.

If you see or think your dog may have eaten rat bait please phone the clinic immediately. We can make them vomit most of the poison up if it was ingested within the last couple of hours, or administer antidote treatment if it is too late to induce vomiting.



YOU KNOW YOU ARE GETTING OLD...

The adult version of "head, shoulders, knees and toes" is "wallet, glasses, keys and phone."

REMINDER...

We sell plastic netting to improve traction on catwalks etc around yards. With winter here upgrading your facilities will help to keep you, your staff, and ours safe!



DRENCHING OPTIONS FOR EWES

Our advice in this area has not altered, there is no blanket recommendation that fits every farm. For example if you have good ewe genetics and well fed ewes, the answer may well be to do nothing except drench a handful of tail end ewes.

If your ewes are in poorer body condition than you would like, feed is limited and ewes have elevated faecal egg counts, the use of capsules may well be your best option.

The advice we would give you approaching lambing is:

1. Faecal egg count your ewe flock to assess worm burdens.
2. Condition score ewes so you have an accurate assessment of ewe condition and its range.
3. Consider what resistance issues exist on your property.
4. Feed budget to assess how well ewes are likely to be fed.
5. Use the outcomes of past seasons treatment programmes to assist your decision making.

We are also happy to assist with decision making.

BATCH NUMBERS

Please note—while we endeavour to record all of your product batch numbers from shop sales some times they may be missed.

With regard to Drench Capsules, as was the case last year, we will not be recording batch numbers—please ensure you note these yourself.

VIT A, D & E TREATMENT FOR MULTIPLE CARRYING EWES

The use of this product is now quite widespread among our clients. Results in terms of ewe and lamb survival when older, multiple bearing ewes (especially triplet, but not 2.2 ths) are treated has generally been very positive.

Treatment can be carried out 2 weeks prior to lambing in conjunction with pre-lamb clostridial vaccination. Triplet bearing ewes are most likely to benefit from treatment. Old twin bearing ewes are also candidates for treatment.

As we reported last year a South Island study also demonstrated a reduction in bearings where ewes were treated on a property with a history of high rates of bearings. So consider treatment if bearings are an ongoing problem for you.



A young pirate, proud of the scars on his arms and his back, seldom wore a shirt. After a particularly hot and brutal summer, the pirate noticed several moles on his back that were certainly not there before. He remembered the dire warnings of his mother, who cautioned him that without a shirt he was certain to get skin cancer. So he hurried to a doctor the next time his ship was in port. The doctor carefully inspected the moles and told the pirate not to worry. "They're benign," he said. Unconvinced the pirate said, "Look again ye lubber! I'm sure there be at least ten."

AFTER HOURS VET

Emergencies - 06 322 8058

Shop Hours - 8am to 5pm

Monday to Friday

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