

LEPTO IN SHEEP

While leptospirosis is more often thought of as a disease of cattle and pigs, certain leptospirosis strains can also cause disease in other species including humans, deer, sheep and dogs.

We recently investigated what appeared to be an abnormally high dry rate in hoggets and ewes that had been scanned in lamb on a property. (The farm had a history of this happening from time to time.)

Sheep were vaccinated for both toxoplasmosis and campylobacter so these diseases were an unlikely cause of the losses.

The property has a high population of deer on it. Deer are known to carry leptospirosis and we know that leptospirosis infections can cause abortions in sheep. So it was decided to blood test some dry ewes and hoggets for leptospirosis.

The results showed very high leptospirosis antibody levels and in animals indicating recent exposure to leptospirosis.

Sheep can be vaccinated for leptospirosis using cattle vaccines so sheep will be vaccinated on the property this season and monitored to see if reproductive performance can be improved.

PS. As well as reproductive losses, leptospirosis infections can also cause sudden deaths especially in lambs. This seems to occur more frequently in wet years like this one!! The leptospirosis bacteria survives best in a damp environment after being shed in the urine of infected animals and is more likely to infect sheep.

Another disease to consider this season! If you have any questions / suspicions around leptospirosis please give the clinic a call as we are keen to investigate how widespread the problem might be.

WELCOME TO 2021!!

We start the new year in great shape on the vast majority of farms. Feed covers are excellent (almost too good in some cases). Stock are enjoying the sunshine (lamb weight gains on many properties were disappointing in late November and December). There appears to be enough rain in the forecasts to have a little bit of confidence in what we might face!!

For all the above there doesn't appear to be a great deal of confidence out there; which tends to suit the Works just fine!! Here's hoping the world returns to some sort of normality over 2021!!

And for all those folks out there who believe a few cows and sheep in New Zealand are going to destroy the planet, perhaps they could have a serious go at reducing ruminant numbers by increasing their meat consumption!!

Happy New Year

TAIHAPE COURIERS

Lately we have had a great deal of trouble getting parcels to Taihape on the same day. Fastways are the only courier who do this and they have proved to be too unreliable to use. We are going to go back to using Courier Post who pick up after 4pm and deliver the following morning. This means it will not be a suitable option for chilled goods. Please ensure you are organised with this in mind going forward.

PARVO VIRUS - COVID FOR DOGS

Unfortunately in recent weeks Parvo Virus has reared its ugly head in our area. Thirty five years ago NZ was awash with Parvo Virus and dogs were treated at the clinic every week, with many deaths occurring. Fortunately extremely effective vaccines were developed and widely used which put an end to the epidemic. (Let's hope the Covid vaccines prove to be as effective! The current claims look pretty good but I'm not sure I would be lining up for Russia's Sputnik Vaccine!!)

Parvo Virus is an extremely robust virus and can last in the environment for years. As a result we still rely on widespread vaccination to control the disease.

While you may not have had Parvo on your property, if unvaccinated, your dogs are at risk if they go off farm. This is a concern we have at the clinic when parvo dogs are brought in. We try to contain them in isolation but we can not guarantee there is no parvo risk to other dogs.

Puppies and unvaccinated dogs are most at risk of developing parvo so we would urge you to ensure:

1. Pregnant bitches are vaccinated 14 days pre whelp.
2. Puppies receive vaccinations from 6 weeks of age.
3. Young dogs get a booster at 1 year of age.
4. Any unvaccinated dogs get vaccinated.
5. Vaccinated dogs receive booster vaccinations at no more than 3 year intervals (in some situations annual or biannual vaccinations is still the best).



LAME COWS

While the wet weather through November was great for grass growth, it was not so good for 'healthy hooves' on cows!! Many clients report a real spike in the number of lame cows they have. Principally as a result of wet tracks and stones being dragged into the yards. White line damage appears to be the most common cause of damage although cases of sole bruising and footrot are also present.

It is essential that lame cows are treated as early as possible. Delays in treatment will cause significantly more damage to be done to the foot and if the pedal joint becomes involved, damage can be permanent.

Giving a 'shot of antibiotics' is not the answer to treatment. It is slow and time consuming and no one likes the job but feet need to be picked up and trimmed and drained properly and blocks applied to the unaffected claw if required. If you have inexperienced staff or are uncertain if you are making a decent job we are happy to walk through some cases with you.

Ensure staff walk cows quietly on tracks and that cows are not too tight in the yards (heads down!). Both of these factors will increase cow lameness if they occur. Also remember lame cows lose weight very rapidly. Consider milking them once a day and ensure they have access to good quality feed that does not require a lot of walking to access.

EARLY PREGNANCY TESTING

We believe early preg testing has a lot to offer some dairy and beef farmers. For dairy farmers it is time to consider early preg testing now as it needs to be carried out in January. For beef farmers, 40 days after the bull comes out is ideal. The benefits of early pregnancy testing are:

- Accurate calving dates for cows, meaning cows can be managed on feed according to their calving dates next Spring.
- For dairy clients, the effectiveness of non cycling cow programmes can be assessed.
- More information for making cullings and drying off decisions.,
- Allows more accurate assessment as to how AI and mating has gone which may not change much this year but can be used to improve mating performance next year.
- For beef farmers, the information gained can also give pointers to bull problems and the specific bulls involved if good records of bulls placement have been kept.

FACIAL ECZEMA??

One or two clients have started to make inquiries around facial eczema risks this season. As of now we have not carried out any spore counting. This will start in late January.

The only comments we can make are:

- Rank pastures that rot and die off and tend to be a great environment for spore formation if things are wet and warm.
- Good levels of moisture over summer have been predicted??
- Heat is the other key ingredient if you believe in global warming, this must be going to occur!!
- Follow our spore counting results which will be on our facebook page from the end of January.

THE NEW NURSE

A doctor is going round the ward with a newly graduated nurse and they come to the first bed where the chap is laying half dead.

"Did you give this man two tablets every eight hours?" asks the doctor. "Oh, no," replies the nurse, "I gave him eight tablets every two hours!"

At the next bed the next patient also appears half dead. "Nurse, did you give this man one tablet every twelve hours?" the doctor asked.

"Oops, I gave him twelve tablets every one hour," replies the nurse.

Unfortunately at the next bed the patient is well and truly dead, not an ounce of life left.

"Nurse," asks the doctor, "did you prick his boil?"

TIS THE SEASON (FOR GRASS SEEDS)!

We have had quite a few dogs present to the clinic with grass seeds embedded in their feet already. These can be tricky to find once they have gone under the skin. The best way to prevent a surgery to remove them is to avoid areas with barley grass and to check your dog over from head to toe every day to find any trying to penetrate the skin.

Dogs that are especially susceptible tend to be of the long coated variety i.e. bearded and spaniels. The most common place to find grass seeds is between the toes so clipping the hair from feet can help to spot seeds before they cause an issue.

Signs of a stuck grass seed include a weeping lump between toes or on another part of your dog. We have found them in eyes, penetrating gums, in ears and also in anal glands.

Sudden onset shaking of your dogs head and also sudden onset of coughing after running in a field with grass seed can also be signs of an issue.

If you suspect your dog has an issue, please bring them into the clinic asap before the seed migrates further in!



AFTER HOURS VET

Emergencies - 06 322 8058

Shop Hours - 8am to 5pm

Monday to Friday

Email - huntervillevetclub@xtra.co.nz