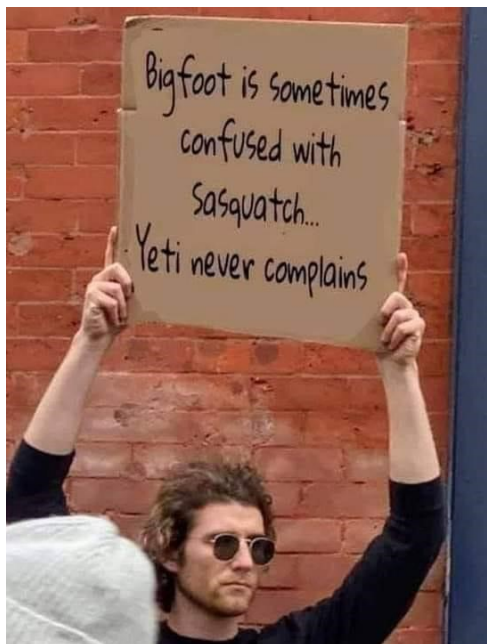


## BEEF COW COMMENTS

We are coming to the end of our beef cow pregnancy testing. In general it has been one of the better seasons in terms of results and cow condition for several years. We have had results as low as 2% dry cows and the average has been around 6-8%. It just goes to show what is achievable with a beef cow if they get a good start before calving, a good spring and we go into summer with plenty of feed! (a rather surprising outcome given the predicament many farmers were in this time last year!!)

One or two hiccups occurred with selenium deficiency (see last months newsletter), bull breakdowns (make sure you consider testing your bulls before mating) and BVD (see elsewhere in this newsletter).

The other bright spot is there appears to be plenty of 'cow tucker' on the hills to feed cows and get cleaned up before spring.



## ONE YEAR ON

Well it is over a year now since Covid closed the country down and people began to queue at Supermarkets for food and toilet paper! Suddenly farmers were seen in a different light as supermarket shelves ran empty and the tourist dollars disappeared. "We were in the team of five million"!!

That seems a long time ago now. Somehow Agriculture appears to have been red carded and moved to the side lines; zero carbon, fresh water legislation, live shipment bans, labour shortages and Treaty of Waitangi obligations are the issues and challenges that face farmers now .

The good news is stock are generally in great order, feed levels are good in our patch and prices of milk and meat are looking pretty positive. Farming may remain viable but maybe not quite so much fun!!!

## WELFARE REMINDER

In recent weeks 2 clients have had full MPI farm welfare visits to their properties after sending lines of ewes to the works that included ewes that should not have been sent. A single ewe that had footrot and an overgrown hoof and would not weight bear on the grating in one case, and in the other case a ewe that had a growth on its ear and a second ewe that had a burst udder that had not fully healed over.

Both farmers received \$500 instant fines for each animal sent and then had to go through the stress of the MPI visit (which they passed with flying colours!!)

It would appear that things are tightening up in this area. Take time to examine lines of stock you are sending to the works or sale for animals that should not be going. This includes things such as:

- Arthritis, footrot or infections that prevent an animal from bearing weight properly on a leg.
- Burst abscesses, udders
- Skin wounds / dog bites / raw dermatitis
- Growths and lesions that might get bumped and bleed
- Ingrown or damaged horns

If you are unsure whether an abnormality or condition is a problem then give the clinic a call for advice. We can certify sheep like cattle.

## BUYING COWS? CONSIDER BVD.

Due to poor pregnancy results or selling heifers to China some dairy farmers are buying cows in this autumn. A reminder to consider the BVD status of these animals especially if your herd is clear of BVD.

Introduction of a cow or heifer carrying BVD (termed a PI or persistently infected animal) can have catastrophic results. These include:

- Abortions
- Birth of weak and brain damaged calves
- PI calves
- Lowered conception rates next season due to embryonic loss

Unless you can get some sort of veterinary guarantee as to the BVD status of the animals you purchase the only really safe course of action is to **isolate the line** and have them **blood tested for BVD** (around \$12.00 per animal) or you could request this be done before purchase. **WARNING:** Being vaccinated for BVD does not mean the animals are BVD free.

**BEEF COW FARMERS PLEASE NOTE** – the above also applies to you if purchasing in-calf cows or heifers. We see plenty of cases of abortions and poor reproductive performance in beef herds related to the introduction of BVD.

## KEEPING THE GREENS HAPPY

Why would a government insult the country that is its biggest trading partner and could turn this trade off in an instant by questioning the welfare standards it works by? Probably because banning live shipments only affects a farmer base who are unlikely to ever vote for them but can certainly be used to gain the green vote at the next election.

But our great leaders have given the farming community \$900,000 for drought relief, less than the average value of an Auckland home!! If we had any sense we would tell the government to stick the \$900,000, Joe Jaffa will see it as another 'hand out to farmers' and the government will claim again to be listening to agricultural concerns. In the big picture, in reality what will \$900,000 actually achieve?

Whether farmers should be receiving government assistance when their business are challenged is a discussion for another day.

## MAINTENANCE!

We are well in to the pregnancy testing season and we have noticed a few sets of cattle yards that could do with some TLC! ie; making cat walks less slippery, tidying up hazards that are lying around and dealing to wasps nests in the vicinity of the yards.



## LICE REMINDER

If you haven't already it is time to be thinking about autumn/winter lice treatment for sheep. Remember all lice treatments are most effect on **short wool lengths and off shears is best!** As wool length increases some cheaper treatment options are no longer suitable and the options that do remain tend to be more expensive and involve increasing dose rates.

Call the Clinic if you would like to discuss lice treatment options.

## AUTUMN WARNINGS

A reminder to think about **nitrate levels** in new grasses and crops if you are about to graze them. Very good growth rates lately should have reduced the risk as plants metabolise nitrates when growing rapidly. However we would still advise you to take care. If you have any concerns take a sample of the forage before grazing and get it tested for nitrates. We can generally do this within a couple of hours of receiving the sample.

**Salmonella outbreaks** tend to be more common in autumn when ewes are fat and feed levels are good. In recent days we have had a significant outbreak in an unvaccinated flock. Watch out for sudden death in healthy ewes and check things out immediately if they occur.

## BE NICE TO YOUR RAMS!

The boys will be coming to the end of their pretty demanding job. Rams are not cheap and how you treat your ram flock now will influence how many new Rams you need to buy next year! Ensure they get well fed and terminal sire Rams in particular will often benefit from getting a drench. Don't forget lice treatments if necessary and cull Rams that may have developed significant faults such as footrot.

## WHELPING PROBLEMS

In recent months we have needed to do several after hours caesareans on bitches having trouble whelping.

These surgeries end up being significantly more expensive and challenging as staff have to be called back in to the surgery and there is less back up support available. In some cases the after hours surgery could have been avoided if the clinic had been contacted earlier in the day during normal work hours.

If you have concerns about how whelping is going, we suggest you contact the clinic for advice earlier rather than waiting to see what happens.

While on the topic of whelping remember that bitches require good **calcium levels** in the diet in late pregnancy and early lactation. If blood calcium drops too low bitches are at risk of developing **eclampsia**, a very serious condition that can result in death of the bitch or impaired labour. The risk of eclampsia increases as bitches get older and litter sizes increase.

Pregnant bitches should receive calcium supplementation and one of the easiest ways to do this is to feed bitches a high quality dog food for the pregnant and lactating bitches.

**Lambs to the left of me. Mutton to the right. Here I am. Stuck in the middle with ewe.** 🐑🐑😬



**Emergencies - 06 322 8058**

**Shop Hours - 8am to 5pm**

Monday to Friday

**Email - [huntermvillevetclub@xtra.co.nz](mailto:huntermvillevetclub@xtra.co.nz)**