



As we head towards Christmas we take this opportunity to wish all of our members a very merry Christmas and a prosperous new year.

Conditions out on the farm are generally very good and if covid stays away from freezing works and milk factories product prices look excellent. It is just a pity if farm issues weren't a little brighter!!

Have a great Christmas under the 'Traffic Light System'!! Don't run too many red or orange lights. Get ready for the roundabout system that our great leaders will no doubt develop for the new year when they work out how much more carbon friendly, inclusive and confusing they are. Although I'm sure Hone and a few of his iwi mates would be happy to take on traffic control as well.

## **BVD & THE SALEYARDS**

Stock sold through the saleyards are generally untested for BVD and unvaccinated.

BVD is often a hidden disease, in the persistently infected (PI) animals can look healthy but are still carriers of the disease. Nearly all PI cattle will die before they reach 2.5 years of age. PI cattle grow poorly compared to normal cattle before finally dying of the disease.

The two biggest risks that come with buying BVD PI cattle at the saleyards (or anywhere else) are:

1. Losing those cattle through the disease.
2. Having them spread the virus to breeding cows leading to abortions, dead calves, and PI calves which eventually die after infecting other animals.

A case brought to our notice recently was a line of heifers brought at a sale and then tested for BVD. Only 4 out of 18 tested were NOT infected. All the others were PI meaning they were a dead loss, and a risk to any unvaccinated breeding stock they were mixed with.

Doing a PCR blood test will find PI animals but ideally buy cattle which are already tested.



## **THE SWEET SPOT FOR OVASTIM / ANDROVAX**

These products for increasing ewe fertility have been around for many years now. When used correctly they have certainly proven their ability to improve fertility and potential lamb drops.

Now is the time to be thinking about the use of these vaccines. Unvaccinated ewes need two shots of vaccine, 4 weeks apart, and the second shot must be given exactly 4 weeks prior to mating.

Our experience indicates that fertility vaccines give the best economic response in flocks that normally scan below 160%. These types of flocks can expect to see a 20-25% lift in scanning and most of this will be due to twins. In more fertile flocks a 20-25% lift will still occur but a significant part of the lift can involve triplets (not what you necessarily want!!).

So consider the use of these vaccinations to lift performance when:

- You normally scan under 160%.
- You do have a good lamb survival and feel you can feed ewes well in spring and would consider the use of nitrogen if necessary to feed well.
- You have a farm where dry, late summers and autumns are impacting negatively on feed levels, ewe body weights and your ability to flush ewes.

## **GOOD PASTURE GROWTH = LOW SELENIUMS!!**

In recent weeks we have identified several cases of significant selenium deficiency in young cattle. On most occasions the animals were examined because of poor growth rates and not 'looking right'.

Selenium deficiency is often seen in late spring and early summer when grass is rapidly growing. Plants do not need selenium and it is taken up by default. As a result when grass grows rapidly concentrations in herbage tend to be diluted. This is a problem given that soil selenium levels in our patch are generally low to start with so uptake by plants is limited.

As discussed in previous newsletters, selenium deficiency can be easily prevented in cattle with the planned use of long acting selenium injection (1 shot lasts for 12 months!!). Don't compromise the performance of your cattle, test for selenium levels in cattle and treat as required.

Selenium deficiency can also be a problem in **sheep**. The widespread use of drenches containing selenium generally prevents any problems in lambs however ewes that are not drenched can develop selenium deficiency. This can compromise their fertility. With many farmers now trying to avoid drenching adult sheep pre-tupping and pre-lambing the affects this policy might have on selenium levels in ewes is something to consider. Checking selenium levels with a blood test in the next couple of months is a good option.

## SLUG BAIT TASTES GREAT!

We've had a few dogs in recently who have eaten slug bait and luckily they have all been successfully been treated. However, we did have a dog die last year of this. We have also had reports of sheep and cattle eating the bait, unfortunately treatment isn't an option for these species so it is a wait and see scenario.

With a lot of cropping going on at present, properties may have large volumes of the bait around and it's very palatable so lock it up tight!

Signs may include drooling, vomiting, panting, and anxiety which can progress to include depression, a wobbly gait, muscle tremors and seizures. Early treatment is essential to prevent death. So if you suspect slug bait poisoning contact us immediately.



## CULL NOW!!!

At this time of the year those repeat offender mastitis cows tend to make an appearance either clinically or on herd test results. If these cows have staph aureus mastitis the results from further treatment are likely to be disappointing and the cows will be a serious source of infection to other cows in the herd. These animals should be culled if at all possible.

So for repeat offender cows we suggest you take milk samples for culture before any further treatment is given. If you culture staph aureus cull the cow. For other types of infections discuss treatment options with us.

## MASTITIS IN SHEEP

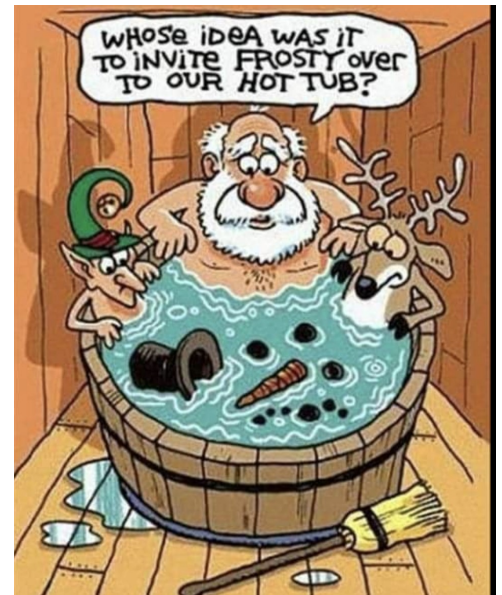
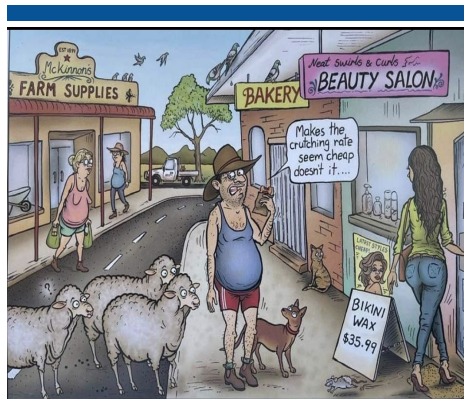
With weaning in full swing, avoiding outbreaks of mastitis at weaning is something sheep farmers should consider. Over the years I have encountered some very serious mastitis outbreaks with more than 5% of ewes affected.

All these outbreaks were associated with ewes being hung around muddy / dirty holding paddocks or yards in the week after weaning while dagging, shearing, dipping, etc were carried out.

If at all possible, especially given the wet conditions we are currently experiencing, get ewes weaned and back to clean paddocks with restricted feed as quickly as possible. Try to avoid yarding ewes for 10 days post weaning especially in wet conditions. Ewes that have milked well and 'bagged up' after weaning are particularly susceptible to picking up infections from leaking teats that have not sealed off post weaning.

Uddering ewes is a very important management practice. This doesn't mean running them down the race and viewing udders from behind. Although this practice is useful for identifying bad udders especially in older ewes it will miss milder problems and also the cases of mastitis that develop after weaning. The gold standard practice is to 'grope' every ewe from 10 days after weaning feeling carefully for lumps and teat lesions.

**WARNING:** A ewe milking on one side may not have a bad udder if she has reared twins. Within days of birth twin lambs will run to and always feed from the same side of the udder. If one lamb then disappears due to death, mismothering or being weaned / killed the remaining lamb will often not feed from the second side and that side of the udder will dry off.



## SOUND BULLS REQUIRED!!

With AI programmes coming to an end bulls will be going out with dairy herds to tail up. Every year we come across poor in-calf rates associated with bull failures and lack of bull power.

How many bulls you will need will be influenced by how well AI has gone. If you suspect there have been problems more bulls than normal may be required. At least 1 bull for every 30 empty cows is suggested but the way bulls go lame around here I would suggest 1 to 25 is better!!

Continually monitor bull health. At any signs of lameness, sheath problems, or other ill health they should be condemned to the scrap heap for the season and replaced with healthy bulls.

Ensure all bulls are BVD free and vaccinated.

Time on lanes and concrete destroys bulls so try to keep them off the yard and lanes as much as possible.

## AFTER HOURS VET

**Emergencies - 06 322 8058**

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

Monday to Friday

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