

BROKEN LEGS IN LAMBS

We have had reports from several properties of high numbers of lambs breaking their legs while being handled. While rough handling and over zealous dogs can cause broken legs, these fractures appear to have been spontaneous and have not been associated with significant pressure being applied to the lambs.

Low copper levels are normally the first thing implicated in weak bones in young stock. Copper is a very important element for the proper calcification of bones as they develop. Liver samples were collected from lambs with fractures. While the copper levels were generally marginal, they have not been as low as we have seen in previous cases. Also when legs fracture in lambs due to low copper, cases of swayback are also noted and this has not been the situation this year.

At this point we are unsure of the reason for these fractures and investigations are continuing. We would be interested to hear from any other clients who feel broken legs have been more common than normal. We would also encourage sheep farmers to consider carrying out [liver trace element tests](#) on lambs. We have had rather unusual seasons and certainly some major issues with selenium deficiency last year. Checking selenium, copper and colbalt levels in your lambs could be a good move.

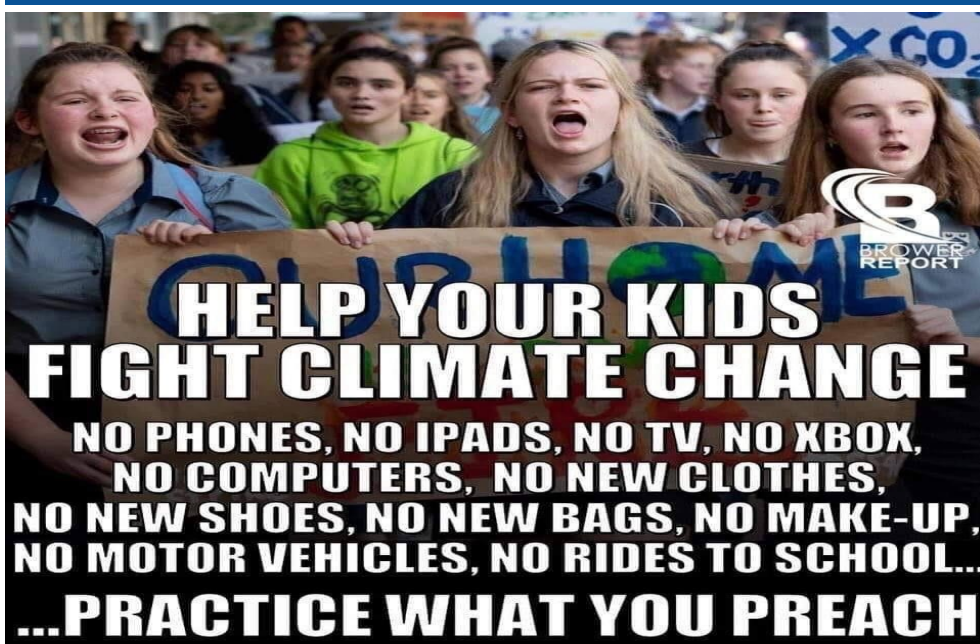


HAPPY NEW YEAR AND WELCOME TO 2024!!!

Welcome to 2024!!! We hope you had an enjoyable Christmas and New Year, and are now ready to face the challenges ahead of us!! There are a few of them!!

I managed to have a few days at Taupo and certainly observed the worry people have when it comes to global warming and doing their part to save mankind. Line upon line up of cars heading somewhere, many with boats in tow. There were a few Teslas in amongst them! (Probably their owners fly overseas for their boating experiences!) Shopping malls packed for Boxing Day sales to satisfy materialistic urges.

It still seems to me everyone wants to save the planet as long as it is someone else that does the heavy lifting, and to this point in NZ, the good old cocky has been chosen to do the work. It will be interesting to see what our new set of Great Leaders have to say about this!



RAMS

It is less than 3 months to mating for many rams. The development of good quality semen takes at least 6 weeks so your ram flock needs to be in good health now.

- ◇ Book in your rams for their annual palpations and health check. (We still find outbreaks of Brucellosis each year!)
- ◇ Selenium is very important for good ram fertility so don't forget to supplement your rams.
- ◇ Clostridial and salmonella boosters should be given.
- ◇ Get teasers made if you need new ones.
- ◇ Consider drenching poorer rams, especially terminal sires.
- ◇ Check feet, cull poor footed rams or correctively trim their feet.

ITCHY EARS??

Dogs with itchy ears or shaking their head are common visitors to the clinic especially at this time of the year. There are multiple reasons why this can happen.

*Bacterial ear infection *Yeast ear infection *Mites

*Grass seeds *Allergies

Barley grass season has started and we have already seen dogs with grass seeds lodged in the ear, often perforating the ear drum. Dogs with grass seeds usually have a sudden onset of head shaking and scratching at an ear, commonly after running through a paddock.

Infections, whether yeast or bacterial, usually present with a smelly discharge, plus / minus itching and a head tilt.

Mites will be making a comeback at this time of year and dogs can present with signs of an infection, but it can be complicated by mites.

Diagnosis is performed by looking down your dogs ear canal and often taking a swab and looking under the microscope to see what bugs may or may not be in your dogs ears.

Treatment depends on the cause, but it is good to get sore/itchy ears checked as chronic infections can be hard to clear up and grass seeds don't make their way out by themselves!

SELENIUM

We have made mention of selenium in various other parts of this newsletter.

But in case you missed it, **CHECK SELENIUM LEVELS IN YOUR STOCK!!**

Last year low selenium levels were a real issue in all classes of sheep and cattle. This was probably associated with the extremely wet, growthy summer and autumn we experienced, and in some cases, the use of the new drenches, Zolvix and Startect, that can not have selenium added to them.

Selenium levels can be checked at minimal cost by blood testing or liver tests. Often this can be carried out when we are on farm for other tasks such as ram checking, pregnancy testing, or vet certs.



FACIAL ECZEMA MONITORING

Although it has probably been too dry for significant spore development through December, it is certainly warm enough!! Any spell of warm, moist weather in January will kick spore formation into life.

We will begin spore counting from known hotspots over the next couple of weeks. Results will be posted on our website and Facebook page. Or ring the clinic for more information.

Good H & S—retired farmer putting road cone to good use!



THE POWER OF GOOD GENETICS!



Hope the new bull is good!!!

KEEPING REPLACEMENT CALVES ON TRACK

Replacement dairy heifers will now be weaned and need to be growing well to hit autumn target live-weights. January is a good month to ensure your weaners are on track.

- ◇ Weigh weaners to identify lighter / struggling animals that require preferential feeding.
- ◇ Ensure selenium and copper requirements are met. There were real problems in this area last year.
- ◇ Drench calves on time with the most appropriate drench (there are a lot of choices out there, please talk to us if you need advice).
- ◇ Ensure lepto and clostridial vaccination programmes are completed.

VACCINE ORDERS

Toxo—Campy—Salmonella

You will have received your order forms for various sheep vaccines last month. To ensure we have vaccine available when you want it, if you have not done so already, please fill this order form in and get it back to us. Toxovax orders are especially important as this vaccine is made to order and you only have 10 days to use it. It can be very difficult to secure last minute orders when demand is high.

If you have lost your order form, ring the clinic and place an order over the phone!!

AFTER HOURS VET

Emergencies - 06 322 8058

Shop Hours - 8am to 5pm

Monday to Friday

Email - huntervillevetclub@xtra.co.nz