

First Drenches For Hand Reared Calves

We often get asked what is the best drench for bucket reared calves. You do have to be careful which drench you choose as some drenches have rather narrow safety margins in young calves.

Our recommendation is to use Turbo Initial. This combination drench has good safety margins and also treats coccidiosis which can be a problem in hand reared calves.



Post-Op Care

A lawyer who had just undergone surgery emerges from anaesthesia, notices the room is dark and asks the nurse why?

"There is a big fire across the street and we didn't want you to wake up and think the operation was a failure", she said.

Here Comes El Nino???

In my travels around the district there seems to be only 2 big negatives on farmers minds as we head into Spring. The first being that more people believe in the fantasy land of the left than the muddled views of the right, meaning we see a change of government and the chaos that would ensue all over again for agriculture.

The other topic on peoples minds is the likelihood of drought from El Nino. At this point conditions on farms in our neck of the woods could hardly be better. Sheep, beef and dairy farmers are all having a great run. Those dry conditions under foot with the odd shower means the grass is growing, dairy herds are pumping and lamb survival is excellent.

At the end of the day you can only really farm what is in front of you. Farmers who have a plan and make timely decisions if things do dry out generally come out on top. Going into the coming months with a little flexibility in your system is a good option. If you are a sheep farmer and dock very good percentages, make sure your feed demands stay in line with pasture growth or lighten things off. It will also be important to get summer crops in as early as possible to ensure they are up and running if it starts to turn dry.

Then again we are a very small, skinny country in a very big ocean and forecasters get it wrong just about as often as they get it right. I think I would be more worried about what happens on a Saturday in October than what the weather gods deliver!

Fly Control At Docking

As most clients get organised for docking it is worth considering fly control options this year. Although there are no new chemicals, the value of the lambs you are treating has increased somewhat! With this in mind, what has been cost effective in the past may not be the best option this year.

The vast majority of lambs are currently treated with a fly protection at docking that contains cyromazine (Cyroshield Spray-On, etc). When these products are applied correctly we expect to get 6 weeks fly protection. Cyromazine spray-ons don't move in the wool so only protect the area that gets sprayed. All this means protection often runs out before weaning and lambs need to be retreated prior to weaning or alternatively you take a punt that the fly wont be bad and lambs can be re-dipped at weaning.

A small but growing number of our clients now routinely treat their lambs at docking with Klik (dicyclanil). This product has advantages over cyromazine based spray-ons. Firstly it has the ability to move in the wool meaning greater areas of protection after application. More importantly it delivers up to 16 weeks of fly protection, generally giving protection beyond weaning and up to lamb shearing.

With current lamb values, chasing or losing fly struck lambs before and after weaning isn't very profitable. If you have been caught out in the past or struggle to achieve good fly control through to lamb shearing, the use of Klik this docking may be a great option.

Cyroshield 13 cents per lamb for 6 weeks

Klik Xtra 50 cents per lamb for 12-16 weeks

Per thousand lambs, \$130 versus \$500. Not a lot of lambs to lose to flystrike at \$150 each!

Goitre In Lambs

In a previous newsletter we suggested that a dry Autumn and Winter this year could result in iodine deficiency occurring in ewes flocks.

Iodine deficiency causes the birth of weak lambs, often with unusual wool development and in severe cases lambs may be born with large masses behind the jaw. These masses are enlarged thyroid glands and are known as goitres. The 2 pictures accompanying this article show lambs born on a Hunterville farm with goitre and wool abnormalities as a result of iodine deficiency.

Surviving lambs with goitre can be treated with an iodine supplement. Where iodine deficiency or goitre are suspected consideration could be given to drenching lambs with iodine at docking.



Are Your Ewes Wormy?

As part of a sound worm management programme we would encourage all farmers with ewe flocks to assess the worm burdens their ewe flocks are under prior to docking. This can be done by getting faecal samples (10-12) from MA ewes and 2.2ths.

The information derived from these faecal egg counts can be used to make decisions around drenching at docking. If done each year they also build a picture around the worm resistance / resilience of your ewe genetics and the effects that feed and ewe management has on worm burdens.

If you have used drench capsules or long acting injection at all it is really important that you use faecal egg counts around docking to determine how well these treatments are working on your property.

How Many Doses Do You Get??

Each year we get complaints about getting too few doses out of Phenax Scabby Mouth applicators or sometimes the other extreme which is clients trying to return lots of Phenax because it went further than calculated!

Unfortunately scratching with Phenax isn't an exact science. How long you hold the bottle up for determines the size of droplet you end up scratching with! So different operators tend to use varying volumes of vaccine.

The best advice is to ensure your scratcher has a good technique. This means breaking the skin and depositing the vaccine into the broken area. Purchase enough Phenax to start things off at docking and top up once you know how far your applicators are going.

Alternatively you could try using Scabiguard. This product has a metering system that means each drop should be the same size and doses per vial are more consistent. It is a little more expensive than Phenax.

Repeat Offenders

Our dairy clients seem to be having a pretty good run when it comes to mastitis this Spring. It is a good time to reassess mastitis management in your herd especially if cell counts are starting to creep up or 'repeat offenders' are showing up.

We would encourage you to use milk cultures before treating repeat offenders. It is important you know what bacteria you are dealing with. Cases of staph mastitis are a serious issue and those cows pose a real risk to the rest of the herd. Further treatment as opposed to culling needs to be monitored closely to assess cure rates.

Here Comes Halter

It is amazing to watch the pace at which collars are appearing on stock around the country. This technology certainly has the ability to enhance the systems on farm that ensure high productivity.

However I hope Halter has a long term deal with Star Link, owned by the second craziest man in the world, Elon Musk (after Donald Trump).

If you owned a business that controlled 2 million cows and were the only entity that could deliver the service, how much would you increase your charge by each year? And let's hope no one upsets the Chinese or Russians who might decide to jam the whole system (which I am sure they could do) letting a whole lot of cows run free!!!

AFTER HOURS VET

Emergencies - 06 322 8058

Shop Hours - 8am to 5pm

Monday to Friday

Email - huntervillevetclub@xtra.co.nz