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Fishing competition reminder

Save the date!

The Totally Vets annual fishing competition will be held on **Saturday 16th April 2016**. This year we also welcome participants from the Tararua district. Come and enjoy a day on the water, great camaraderie and no doubt many a story of "the ones that got away".

Tide times for the day are:

0533 = 2.2m
1201 = 1.2m
1756 = 2.2m

Boat launching is from the **Wanganui Manawatu Sea Fishing Club**, 1 Wharf Street, Whanganui. Presentation of prizes and, of course, a great BBQ feast will round off the day.

Entry forms and the competition rules are available from all of our clinics so grab yours today.



Heading into a new year

Sandy Wilson

Firstly, thank you to those who attended our end of year BBQs at our clinics and in Pongaroa.

We thoroughly enjoyed the company, food and drink! We also enjoyed seeing the success of the Christmas spirit within our Dannevirke Clinic, who were awarded second place by the Dannevirke Chamber of Commerce for a fantastic business Christmas light display. Well done team.

In reflection, 2015 was certainly a very different year compared to the previous few, with a lot of caution and uncertainty. With heads down bums up in spring, some kind weather, and some good forward planning, most were fortunate enough to get through with not too many problems. January has seen good rain to keep grass growing, however this has kept us busy with lame cows - everybody's favourite job.

Pregnancy testing is in full swing with quite a few herds having done their first scan. Conception rates to AI are looking positive. Once all your data is loaded onto MINDA make sure you take some time to have a look at your fertility focus report as this provides a useful summary and some good KPIs. Please feel free to discuss your results with any of our dairy vets.

For our sheep & beef farmers - ram palpations, drench testing and vaccinating are at the forefront through these hot months. More information on vaccination of breeding sheep is covered by Barny in the article on page two of this newsletter. If you have registered an interest in a faecal egg count reduction test please make sure you drop a faecal sample into the clinic in the next seven days. It is really important we try and get these done prior to March as after this time there is limited Ostertagia on many farms. Knowing the status of this worm is really important as it is the main worm around in the spring and affects our pre-lamb drench recommendations.



Looking ahead

Potential animal health issues, tasks to consider and reminders for February include:

Dairy

- If not done already get your **pregnancy scanning** booked in today - the longer you wait to do it, the less information you gain.
- **Crop feeding** - minimise all potential associated risks to animal health - **see article P3**.
- **Clinical mastitis** - monitor cows and be aware of rising **bulk milk somatic cell count** (BMSCC) particularly if feed is tightening and milk volume is decreasing.
- **Lameness** - may become an issue as ground hardens so monitor cows daily.
- **Pink eye** - monitor for early signs of discharge from, or white spots on, eye(s) particularly if hot dry dusty weather.
- **Facial eczema** - farm location and weather depending, preventative zinc treatment should have been started. Consider spore counting.

Sheep reproductive vaccines

Barny Askin

You may already have a fully comprehensive vaccination policy in place for your sheep flock - If you do then great. If you don't you may well be missing out on significant opportunities for increasing profit from your flock.

The two most common diseases causing sheep abortion are Campylobacter and Toxoplasma. Vaccines are available for both of these and the use of these can result in significant increases in reproductive performance.

TOXOPLASMOSIS

- The most common infectious cause of reproductive loss in New Zealand (NZ) sheep. Infectious source is ingestion of Toxoplasma oocysts in contaminated grass or feed. Faeces from infected cats are the source of this contamination.

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- Causes early, mid- and late-term abortions so, as well as obvious late term abortions, can be identified as foetal losses at scanning.
- Particularly a problem in hoggets and two-tooths as they are less likely to have developed their own immunity to field strains of the disease.
- Just one vaccination is required, prior to first mating (at least one month prior to rams OR teasers joining), for life-long protection.
- National surveys have shown around a 3% improvement in docking percentage in vaccinated flocks. **This level of improvement occurred regardless of whether abortions had being diagnosed on the farm or not.**
- Toxovax® is a live vaccine with a very short 'use time' once mixed. This is why it needs to be ordered specifically to meet your requirements.

CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS

- Typically associated with abortion storms at lambing but also a known cause of reduced lamb viability at birth as well as losses throughout pregnancy.
- NZ studies have shown up to 9% improvement in docking percentage by introducing vaccination in previously un-vaccinated flocks. This lift occurred regardless of whether or not there had been a history of abortions on the farm.
- Exposure to Campylobacter can be identified on 100% of our properties.
- In most cases a sensitiser and booster

vaccination four to eight weeks apart in maidens, and preferably before mating, should be adequate to prevent Campylobacter induced losses. For best effect a booster vaccination in their second year (either as a two- or four-tooth) is also recommended.

Please remember that there are many other causes of sheep abortion and/or low scanning/docking, so don't assume all problems are due to Toxoplasma or Campylobacter, however these are the two we can do something about.

Other vaccines worth consideration at this time of year are **Androvax®** or **Ovastim®**.

- These are fertility enhancing vaccines and can lift scanning percentages significantly.
- Expect a response of 0-40%.
- Can be used to target specific low performing groups such as two-tooths.
- NOT for use in hoggets.
- Timings of vaccinations are absolutely critical or can have a negative effect.
- Extra lamb crop requires planning for.
- Recommend talking to your vet/advisor before using.

If you would like any further information, or to order any of the above vaccinations, then please don't hesitate to give us a call.

- **Autumn calving dry-off management** - monitor cow condition, BMSCC and feed quality/quantity. Dry off according to calving dates and administer dry cow therapy where appropriate.

Sheep and Beef

- **Barbers pole** - continue to monitor for signs of disease - pale gums, depressed, exercise intolerant, increased breathing - and drench appropriately.
- **Facial eczema** - as per under dairy.

- **Mating preparations** - ensure all ram palpations/testing has been completed and reproductive vaccines are ordered - **see article P2.**
- **Farm dog management** - ensure worming and vaccinations are up-to-date.

Deer

- **De-velvetting** - ensure facilities are maintained as season comes to an end.
- **Leptospirosis** - early in the month is a good time to vaccinate hinds whilst later in February or March, depending on birth

date, fawns can also be given their first leptoshot, along with Yersiniavax® for Yersiniosis.

Equine

- **Weanling management** - consider need for branding, identification/registration and vaccinating, and ensure excellent nutrition over this potentially stressful period.
- **Ryegrass staggers** - during the current period of risk monitor closely for altered behaviour and neurological signs.

Summer crop feeding

Karen Woodley

Summer crops can be an excellent feed option particularly in a dry summer. Plantain, chicory and green-feed maize are commonly used, however turnips are often the most popular choice of brassica crop.

The three key reasons for growing summer crops on the dairy platform are:

1. as a supplement for cows during the months when pasture growth is restricted
2. as part of the pasture renewal programme and/or
3. to manage nutrient overload in effluent paddocks

However crop feeding can be associated with animal health issues.

Nitrate toxicity is most often seen in cows on rapidly growing crop (especially after a period of drought); with cloudy weather; sudden changes in diet; immature plants, regrowth or nitrogen fertilised grasses. Nitrate in the plant is converted to nitrite in the rumen and absorbed into the blood stream where it interferes with the blood's ability to carry oxygen. Clinical signs occur soon after introduction to crop and include sudden death, drooling, lethargy, difficulty breathing and staggering. Crop/grass can be

tested for nitrate levels, with results generally within 24 hours, so is a wise and relatively cheap insurance policy if there is any cause for concern.

Frothy bloat occurs when cattle graze succulent, rapidly growing pastures or crop that are high in protein, water and starch, but low in fibre. See article on page four for more on this issue.

Oesophageal blockages by turnips are very common especially when the bulbs are small. An affected cow may stand with her neck outstretched, can't swallow properly, may be bloated and have a visible swelling in the neck. This is a serious situation that needs urgent veterinary attention.

Rumen acidosis may occur if cows are introduced to crop too quickly and are eating a lot of bulb. Prevention is by slow gradual introduction and also giving some form of roughage.

To minimise risk when feeding crops:

- Introduce new feed gradually, over a period of 10 days at minimum. As per Dairy New Zealand recommendations - Initially offer a maximum of two kilograms (kg) of dry matter (DM) per cow per day (depending on feed type, this is approximately two to three square metres per cow) for the first five days and gradually increase up to five kg DM per cow per day over the next five days.
- Don't put cows straight onto crop when hungry.



- Feed the crop when it is mature - there is less chance of nitrate toxicity and this maximises the yield of the crop.
- Break feed on long narrow breaks to reduce wastage and to allow all cows to have a fair share.
- Turnips should be no more than one third of the cows' ration.
- Cows can lose weight when eating turnips due to the high protein lifting milk production. This can be countered by feeding grass or maize silage at two to three kg DM per cow per day..

If you have questions and/or would like support on use of crops as an alternate feed source then don't hesitate to give your vet a call.

Bloat in dairy cows

Joanna Purdie

Frothy (or pasture) bloat can be a rapidly life-threatening condition of cows and can cause devastating losses.

It generally affects more than one animal and is associated with feeding readily digestible feedstuffs with higher soluble proteins and carbohydrates and lower fibre. Examples are rapidly growing ryegrass, clover and lucerne. These feedstuffs lead to lower saliva production and more rapid gas production in the rumen.

The process of fermentation in the rumen naturally produces large quantities of gas, which is normally released by eructation (belching). With frothy bloat, the accumulation of froth in the rumen prevents gas from being released. The rumen becomes distended and the cow becomes



massively bloated on her left side. Signs generally begin to appear within an hour of being moved onto bloat-producing feed.

An affected cow will initially be restless and uncomfortable, may lie down and get up a lot, bellow and kick at its belly. Symptoms progress as the distended rumen impacts on lung space causing the affected cow to stand with her neck extended and tongue out, drooling and open-mouth breathing.

An uncomfortable cow should be quietly walked to the shed and drenched orally with bloat drench. A cow in respiratory distress may need to be stabbed to release the gas before she suffocates. A vet can then be called to treat and close the wound.

There is another form of bloat known as **gaseous bloat**, but this typically only affects one cow and is secondary to another disease process which inhibits her ability to eructate. Your veterinarian can distinguish between the types of bloat by passing a stomach tube. Gaseous bloat is easily released via the tube, although the underlying cause may be more difficult to treat.

Your veterinarian can discuss the options for prevention of frothy bloat and teach you the best method and appropriate location to stab a cow if, in case of emergency, it may be required to save her life.

BAYER

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