



Issue MAY 2016

**STAFF NEWS**

We are very sad to be saying goodbye to Jen C at the end of this month. Jen has made the tough decision to return to the UK to continue her veterinary career, with plans to work in mixed practice in Northern Ireland. We shall all miss her greatly, but would like to wish her the very best for the future.

We are very pleased to welcome Brianna Excell to Otautau Vets. Brianna is our new store manager who joined the reception team in March, so I am sure many of you will have already met or spoken with her. Brianna is local to the area, which should be a big advantage when booking farm calls!

Jenny Paterson is currently on maternity leave and we would like to wish her, Bruce, Laura and Steph all the best for the arrival of their newest family member later this month.

**SHOP TALK**

**Best Practice Accreditation**

We are very pleased to announce that we recently passed our two-yearly NZVA BESTPRACTICE audit. BESTPRACTICE is New Zealand's only quality accreditation programme that ensures a high standard of service and professionalism for veterinary clinics and hospitals in New Zealand. We

**SHOP TALK *Continued***

all work extremely hard to maintain the high standard of service we provide and our reaccreditation is great reward for the hard work.

**Dry Off Drench**

Dry-off isn't just about Dry Cow Therapy, but preparing your cows for winter and the lactation ahead of them. We have a wide range of vet-only drenches at very competitive prices, so if you are thinking about drenching all or part of your herd pre-winter, come in and have a chat with us about your options and we can help you find the best product for your cows.

**Sack beds**

Make sure you check out our hessian sack dog beds next time you are in the clinic. They are great value and provide cushioning and warmth for your dog; perfect for your working dogs leading into winter.

**Congratulations**

Many thanks to those of you who visited our stand at the Field Days in February and entered the Mastitis and Dog Nutrition competitions.

The lucky winners of the Hill's Canine Active 22.6kg bags were Caitlin Costello, Jo Hall, Justine Broughton, John Minty, Rene Erkes and Sherie Paterson.

Congratulations must also go to Greg Wisely and Scott Fleck who tackled the mastitis buzz game and each won an iPad.

**STAFF PROFILE**



**Brianna Excell – Store Manager/Receptionist**

Brianna joined the OVL reception team in 2016, from an extensive background in customer services. As Store Manager, Brianna is kept busy helping clients, booking calls, managing stock (the non-animal type) and organising vets; not an easy role!

Originally from Nightcaps, Brianna moved to Invercargill to study Business Administration and Computing at SIT, but has since returned to a small lifestyle block here in Western Southland.

When the sheep aren't keeping her busy on the farm, Brianna enjoys catching up with friends and family and may even be spotted on the Netball court in the local social league.

**OVL SNAPSHOT**

*We are very pleased to introduce the members of our most recent OVL Puppy Class. We would like to congratulate Cady, Chopper, Dasher and Ellie on their graduation and thank Andrew for being such an excellent teacher.*

*Please email your photos to:  
jen@otautauvets.co.nz*



OVL Puppy Class graduates ▶

## CATTLE SECTION

### Dry-Off

Drying-off isn't just about the end of the current lactation, but ensuring that your milking cows are in the best possible condition for winter, calving and the season ahead of them.

Important things to consider prior to dry-off,

1. Herd Information; all of your herd information should be considered prior to decision making at the end of the season. Scanning and herd test results may impact things like dry-off and culling decisions.
2. Cow condition; optimal BCS is essential for reproductive success next year. Body condition scoring (BCS) your herd will help you to make drying-off decisions in order to meet the BCS target of 5 at calving (5.5 for 2 & 3 year olds).
3. Expected Calving Date; calving dates should be used in conjunction with individual BCS information to determine dry-off dates for your cows. Thinner early calvers should be dried off earlier than your well-conditioned late calvers, so you may need to stagger dry-off over the next few weeks.

4. Winter Grazing; if your cows are grazing off farm for winter, make sure your grazer knows your dry-off plans. Discuss arrival dates for mobs, why the mobs are split the way they are, the current feed situation at grazing and reach agreement on expectations for the coming winter. Remember that things don't always go to plan. Conditions and feed supplies can change at home and on grazing blocks, so have a contingency plan and communicate intentions early.
5. Staff; get your staff on board with dry-off too. Explain to them what you are trying to achieve over the next few months and why.

If you would like some help with body condition scoring and dry-off decisions for your herd, please call the clinic & speak to one of our vets. We are available to analyse your herd data to help you make the best treatment and culling decisions for your cows. We can also provide staff training in Dry Cow Therapy & Internal Teat Sealant insertion to ensure that the best results are achieved for your herd.

### Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis is the most important zoonotic disease in New Zealand and is a significant health and safety concern on our farms. Whilst the number of human cases has decreased significantly with the increased use of Leptospirosis vaccines on farms, around 100 cases are still reported each year; similar numbers of dry stock and dairy farmers are affected.

A recent study through Massey University has raised questions about the effectiveness of vaccination, with around 13% of cows that were assumed to be properly vaccinated found to be shedding the bacterium on dairy herds in Manawatu, Waikato and Southland. These findings prompted discussions around the vaccination programmes on the affected farms, in particular the age of calves when first vaccinated.

A 2012 report by Massey University ("Best Practice of vaccination against Leptospirosis") indicated that the commercial vaccines available for the vaccination of livestock in New Zealand were likely to be effective against the relevant *Leptospira* species, provided they are administered correctly. Routine vaccination is effective at preventing infection and shedding, in turn reducing exposure of both animals and farm workers to the bacterium. As employers, it is your responsibility under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 to take all practicable steps to ensure the safety of employees whilst at work, which includes effective vaccination of your stock.

A country-wide dairy farm survey is currently underway in the hope that further information will confirm best practice vaccination strategies to reduce the risk of leptospirosis in both livestock and farm workers.

#### NZVA Vaccination Recommendations

- **1st vaccination (sensitiser);** at disbudding (10-14 weeks after start of calving, October)
- **2nd vaccination;** 4-6 weeks after the sensitiser and before transfer to runoff or replacement rearing farm (14-18 weeks after start of calving, November)
- **1st annual booster;** 5-7 months after 2nd vaccination when 10 months old (May), or as soon as convenient thereafter, to align with adult stock
- **Annual whole herd booster;** milking herd, in-calf heifers (R2's) and all dry stock in May
- **Biosecurity measures;** assume that all bought-in stock are unvaccinated. Vaccinate all young replacement stock before they leave the property for rearing. Vaccinate all purchased stock (cows, breeding bulls) at least 6 weeks before entering the property. Where this is not possible or was not done, keep new stock on a separate run-off that will not be grazed by the resident stock for at least 12 weeks (quarantine). For further measures to protect exposure of humans, refer to the guidelines of NZVA Leptosure at leptosure.co.nz

Please speak to one of our veterinary team if you would like to discuss a Lepto vaccination program for your stock or any aspects of Health and Safety to ensure the protection of you and your staff.

## DEER SECTION

### Trace Element Deficiencies

Trace elements are required by the body for various metabolic processes. Whilst some elements are stored by the body, the majority depend on constant ingestion from food sources in order to prevent deficiency. If trace element levels in the soil are low, they will also be low in the pastures and forages on which the deer feed. Trace element absorption by the deer will also be affected by the balance of elements in the soil and the different feeds, so deficiencies may occur as feed sources change. In Deer, copper is the main trace element where deficiency may be an issue, but deficiencies in iodine, selenium and cobalt may also occur.

#### **Copper**

Ill thrift and rough coats are characteristic of copper deficiency in Deer, with young, growing animals being more susceptible. Copper levels are naturally at their lowest in autumn, so checking levels at this time will give the best indication of the copper status of your animals; if levels are marginal, it is worth re-testing during winter to ensure that levels have not dropped further. Liver copper levels give the best indication of copper stores within the body and can be tested on the live animal or animals sent for slaughter (Optigrow). Blood sampling is another option for testing copper levels, but this only gives an indication of the day-to-day circulating levels as opposed to reserves of copper in the body.

#### **Cobalt**

Cobalt deficiency leads to ill thrift and wasting, and whilst predominantly seen in the North Island, it has previously been diagnosed in Southland. Cobalt levels may also be assessed by liver biopsy or Optigrow. Whilst cobalt deficiency has been documented in deer, no responses to vitamin B12 supplementation have been demonstrated despite widespread use of supplementation on farms.

#### **Selenium**

Selenium deficiency is predominantly seen in fawns, resulting in lower growth rates and white muscle disease. Selenium levels are best assessed by blood sampling, but liver sampling through Optigrow is another option. If liver results are marginal, on-farm blood sampling may be necessary.

#### **Iodine**

Hinds grazing low iodine feeds such as clover and brassicas in winter/spring are at greatest risk of iodine deficiency, resulting in fawns born with goitre. Diagnosis of iodine deficiency can be difficult and is usually based on clinical signs at calving.

There are many options for trace element supplementation of your stock and discussion with a vet is recommended prior to implementing a supplementation programme. We can help develop an animal health plan for your deer to help prevent deficiencies through appropriate supplementation. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact the clinic and speak with one of our vets.



## SHEEP SECTION

### Helicobacter Abortion in Ewes

Abortion outbreaks can have significant effects on both the short and long term productivity of sheep farms. With preventative vaccinations, we are able to prevent serious outbreaks of some infectious causes of abortion, but this still leaves stock susceptible to abortion epidemics against which we cannot vaccinate.

*Helicobacter rappini* is a bacterium responsible for a high incidence of abortions each year, although these are generally limited to a small number of farms. The first outbreak in New Zealand was recorded in 1991 in mid-Canterbury with 300 abortions over 50 days in a mob of 2950 ewes. Further outbreaks have since been identified in across Otago and Southland. This infectious cause of abortion has been shown to cause significant losses, with 9-20% of ewes aborting on individual farms and across all age groups.

Apparently healthy ewes will often abort close to full term or lambs may be born weak and quickly die, although this is a less common presentation. The appearance of the aborted lambs, which can present in twin pregnancies as one rotten and

one fresh looking fetus, can resemble Toxoplasmosis or Campylobacter so submission of aborted fetuses for diagnosis is always recommended. Fortunately, there appears to be no long term effects for the affected ewes following abortion.

The epidemiology of the infection is still uncertain, but it is thought that an abortion storm may follow a primary event with subsequent spread of the infectious agent through the mob. This 'primary event' is still unknown, but it has been suggested that it may be an

environmental event such as adverse weather conditions, under-nutrition or mouldy feed.

Knowledge we do have about *Helicobacter rappini* infection in sheep;

1. It is thought that a degree of natural immunity builds up within a sheep flock following an outbreak, but this does not completely prevent re-infection within a flock,
2. The infection responds to antibiotics, but previous attempts at whole-flock treatment in the face of an abortion storm only resulted in a temporary slowing of the abortion rate, making treatment uneconomic,
3. There is currently no vaccination available to prevent infection.



Further investigation into these abortion outbreaks will hopefully provide more information about the possible epidemiological factors involved, allowing for management strategies for at-risk farms.

If you would like any more information or you are experiencing abortion problems in your flock, please contact the clinic and speak with one of our vets.

## REMINDERS

### Cattle

- Late pregnancy test at least 6 weeks after the bull has come out
- Pre-winter mineral check for cows
- Pre-winter drench for calves & Clostridial/Lepto vaccination
- Lepto vaccinate whole herd at drying off
- Check cows 7-10 days after dry-off
- Manage brassica feeding carefully with sufficient supplementary feed and allow at least two weeks transition from crop to grass feeding
- Consider Pink Eye vaccination if high challenge
- Book in Restricted Veterinary Medicines (Prescription) consultation for 2016/17 season
- Book in Heifer Internal Teat Sealant visit
- Investigate any abortions
- Milking Machine Test
- Consider Lice Pour-on (e.g. Tempor)
- Rotavec@Corona/Scourguard®4 vaccinate cows pre-calving
- Start Magnesium supplementation with Mag Chloride pre-calving

### Sheep

- Drench hoggets prior to going on to Winter crop
- Delay putting pregnant ewes onto winter crop for six weeks after the joining date
- Consider Louse pour-on for Off-Shears
- Book in Restricted Veterinary Medicines (Prescription) consultation for 2016/17 season
- Investigate any abortions
- Flexidine/Pre-lamb Iodine or LSD drench

### Deer

- Last Lungworm drench for fawns
- Mineral check Copper/Selenium to assess winter reserves
- Organise TB test before spring rush
- Book in Restricted Veterinary Medicines (Prescription) consultation for 2016/17 season

THIS NEWSLETTER IS AVAILABLE ON SUBSCRIPTION FROM OTAUTAU VETS LTD. NO PART MAY BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT THEIR PERMISSION. THE INFORMATION IT CONTAINS IS PROVIDED IN GOOD FAITH, BUT READERS ARE ADVISED TO CHECK THE RELIABILITY OF ANY INFORMATION BY CONTACTING OTAUTAU VETS BEFORE ACTING ON IT.

Best Wishes from the vets: Louise F Ingram BVMS (Hons) MACVSc, Jen E Gordon MA VetMB, Teressa A Skevington BVSc, Ashleigh S Braithwaite DVM, Julia E Nuttall BVSc, Ruby A Davidson BVetMed, Jennifer Campbell BVMS, Jenny Paterson BVSc, Sam M Hutchinson BVMS BSc, Andrew C McQuade MVB, Louise C Fieten BVMS and Emma J Parkinson BVMS.



Otautau Vets Ltd  
71 Main Street, PO Box 77  
Otautau, Southland, New Zealand  
Phone: 03 225 8134  
Fax: 03 225 8170  
info@otautauvets.co.nz  
www.otautauvets.co.nz

