



## SHOP TALK

### Cyrex Liquid

Cyrex liquid is a jetting and CR shower dip for sheep, containing a lethal combination of actives that provides up to 12 weeks fly protection. Combined with fast and effective maggot and lice kill, Cyrex also offers improved wound healing and evacuation of maggots from wounds. The product has a meat WHP of 7 days and an excellent safety profile for both operator and animal.

### Leader-Pro Applicator

The Leader-Pro tagger is a no-fuss design to give the user maximum adaptation to tagging requirements. The no-pin spring tension at release means trouble free applicator withdrawal and in turn, almost completely avoids torn ears. A handle closing restrictor is also provided, facilitating the application of female tags of greater thickness e.g. EID tags. For more information, please enquire at the clinic or go to: [www.leaderproducts.co.nz](http://www.leaderproducts.co.nz)

### BEARIN™ Prolapse Harness

The BEARIN™ Prolapse Harness by Rurtec is a simple and effective bearing or uterine prolapse retention aid featuring:

- Quick and easy fitting
- Cross-over tubing design for improved comfort and effectiveness

- High quality components proven to last in NZ farming conditions.

The harness can be used alone or together with the BEARIN prolapse retainer. Correctly fitted, it will not hinder bowel movement or lambing, but will exert pressure on key points to reduce straining and pain.

## STAFF NEWS

Louise Fieten (Red Louise) returned to our Veterinary team at the end of March after a break to raise her young family. Louise is working three days a week and we are all enjoying her company back in the office.

We would like to welcome our new vet Emma Parkinson who joined OVL at the end of April. Emma studied at Glasgow University and has been working in mixed practice in the UK since her graduation in 2012. Emma is a fan of outdoor pursuits including skiing, rock/ice climbing, mountaineering and horse-riding, so we are sure she will find plenty to do here in Southland.

Some of you may have seen Andrew hobbling around on crutches over the past couple of months. We are pleased to say that he is on the mend after his rugby injury and will hopefully be back to full duties next month.

## STAFF PROFILE

### Sam Hutchinson – Veterinary Surgeon.

Sam is a Glasgow graduate and spent seven years in mixed practice in the North of Scotland before joining OVL earlier this year.

On the farm animal side, Sam has a particular interest in Sheep & Beef health and production, but is also keen on small animal internal medicine and surgery.

Outside of work, Sam enjoys tramping, rock climbing and racquet sports, and is also a keen musician playing both the piano and jazz saxophone.

Since arriving in Otautau, he has also been dragged into the surfing scene by Jen C, Teresa & Andrew, so he certainly won't run out of things to do in his spare time!



▲ Sam Hutchinson

## OVL SNAPSHOT

*Unfortunately, I have had no entries for the OVL Snapshot section for this newsletter, so you have a photo of the wetsuit-clad OVL crew in the 2015 Blackmount Raft Race.....and I am pleased to say that I can count at least three OVL hats! I am hoping that this will give you all some inspiration and I am expecting to be inundated with photos of you in your OVL hats in sunny tropical locations for the August edition. Please email your photos to: [jen@otautauvets.co.nz](mailto:jen@otautauvets.co.nz)*

The OVL crew on their raft ►



## CATTLE SECTION

### Infectious Abortion in Beef Breeding Herds

A recent study undertaken by Massey University has shown that at least 15% of all abortions can be attributed to three infectious diseases, all of which are widespread in New Zealand beef herds. Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD), Neosporosis and Leptospirosis are all preventable contagious diseases and if controlled, should result in improved herd fertility and significant financial gain for the NZ beef industry.

The study indicated that in a typical beef breeding herd, the average abortion rate was 3%; most farms experienced 1-5% losses, however around 25% of farms had much higher rates (up to 22%). Of these, 8% were the result of Leptospirosis infection, 4% resulted from infection with BVD and Neosporosis was responsible for the remaining 3%. The cost of abortion for NZ beef breeding herds is around \$19 million per year, and around \$3 million per year could be saved by controlling BVD, Leptospirosis and Neosporosis.

**BVD** is a viral disease of cattle, with studies indicating that around 80% of New Zealand beef herds are infected. BVD primarily affects

reproduction, but the clinical picture is variable depending on the time of infection. Infection at mating can result in conception failure or early embryonic loss, often only presenting itself at the time of pregnancy testing/calving, with greater numbers of late or empty cows. Infection during pregnancy can result in abortions, stillbirths and deformed calves, or the creation of carrier "Persistently Infected" calves which then remain in the herd as an infection source to others. BVD can also affect herd production through loss of body condition, reduced milk yields and greater susceptibility to other diseases.

**Leptospirosis** is a bacterial infection affecting all mammals, with *Leptospira hardjo* and *Leptospira pomona* being the primary causes of the disease in cattle. Infection is widespread across NZ, with *L.hardjo* present on around 86% of farms and *L.pomona* on 67%. The disease is primarily transmitted through infected urine and has a range of clinical signs including reduced fertility, abortions, stillbirths and death.

**Neosporosis** is a parasitic disease which is transmitted to cattle via dog faeces. Infection

with *Neospora caninum* during pregnancy can result in abortion and those animals may go on to abort in subsequent pregnancies. If abortion doesn't occur, the infection can be transmitted transplacentally from the infected cow to the developing calf, an event that may occur in multiple pregnancies of the same cow. Any infected heifer calves retained and added to the breeding herd may then pass the infection on to their own offspring.

BVD and Leptospirosis can be effectively controlled through test-and-cull procedures, vaccination and strict biosecurity measures; some of the study farms had vaccinated their cattle against Leptospirosis, resulting in reduced levels of the disease and resulting abortions. Unfortunately, there is no effective vaccine against Neosporosis and control relies on dog control and test-and-cull procedures, which also include the offspring of any cows testing positive for Neosporosis.

If you would like to discuss the control of these diseases on your farm, or would like to investigate a potential reproductive problem within your herd, please contact the clinic and speak with one of our vets.

### Options for Johne's Disease Control by Sam Hutchinson



*Another thin scouring cow? Cull her and forget about it until the next one? Or would you like to be more proactive about Johne's disease control in your herd?*

Johne's disease is caused by a bacterium similar to TB called MAP. It is resistant to most antibiotics, which makes it impossible to treat in ruminants. It also has a thick tough outer shell and can survive in slurry, on pasture, and in water for many months.

Johne's disease is found worldwide and has become widespread among New Zealand dairy herds since it was first diagnosed in 1912. While the incidence of clinical disease in many herds is quite low, the subclinical phase results in unseen production losses such as reduced yields, poorer fertility and greater susceptibility to other diseases.

The MAP bacterium is spread through dung and mostly infects new animals by ingestion of contaminated pasture, colostrum/milk, feed and water. Occasionally, in heavily infected cows, it can infect a fetus before birth. It affects the gut, gradually causing thickening and damage which eventually leads to the point where nutrients cannot be absorbed and protein from the body leaks into the faeces. It is usually several years after infection before this occurs and animals will shed the bacterium in their faeces for months or years before they finally start showing the usual symptoms, which include:

- progressive weight loss
- bubbly scours
- reduced milk yield
- swelling under the jaw (bottlejaw).

It has been shown that once MAP has been on a farm for several years,

for every clinical case of Johne's there are about 10-15 other animals who are silently incubating the disease and spreading the bacteria in their faeces. The thin scouring cows just represent the tip of the iceberg!

#### **Breaking the Infection Cycle**

The risk of infection is greatest in calves during the first few days of life, but remains high for the first 6 months and can still be a risk up to 18 months of age. After 18 months animals are generally resistant to new infections, but if exposed to a very high level of infection they can still acquire the disease. Control measures are therefore focused around preventing new infections while identifying and culling high shedding cows.

Making use of LIC testing of milk samples at the time of herd testing will help in the identification of those high shedding cows before they start showing symptoms. This will reduce the infection of young stock through slurry and avoid the unexpected forced culling of many of these cows in the following season as about one third of high positive cows will go on to develop clinical Johne's Disease after their next calving. However, because of the very long incubation period, cows do not show up on a test until late in the disease process, therefore using a "test & cull" approach alone will never be successful and focusing on preventing new infections in young stock is just as important.

We can request milk testing, provide interpretation and help you in identifying the most effective ways to limit young stock exposure to MAP in order to produce a tailor made plan to suit your farms specific requirements.

We plan on hosting an evening seminar this winter which we will advertise nearer the time. In the meantime if you are interested in taking Johne's disease control further, then come and talk to Teresa or Sam at the clinic.

## SHEEP SECTION

### Expanding Role of Vets on Sheep & Beef Farms

2013 saw the launch of the Zoetis Veterinary Advisor Series (ZVAS), which is a unique training programme aimed to equip sheep and beef vets with the whole-farm perspective required for consultancy work. The programme entails four intensive two-day workshops covering farm business, genetics, animal production and consulting skills.

New Zealand is a world leader in farm productivity, but there is considerable potential for increases in sheep and beef production. The 2011 Red Meat Sector Strategy document describes its aims to lift the export value to NZ\$14 billion by 2025, partly by supporting innovation from behind the farm gate; genetics has been



identified as having huge potential to boost this productivity.

As the industry seeks greater productivity gains for a sustainable future, Veterinary advisors have the potential to lift New Zealand sheep and beef farm performance significantly. With regular monitoring and

the use of current technology, there is the potential to narrow the gap between NZ's best farmers and those whose production is average. All sectors of the sheep and beef industry are welcoming the opportunity to expand on their often long-standing vet-farmer relationship with advice that helps lift farm productivity and provides more value for all involved.

We have two ZVAS consultants at the clinic, with Teresa having completed the Advisor Series last year and Jenny currently undertaking the 2015 course. If you would like more information with regard to the advisory services we can provide or would like help with a particular problem, please contact Teresa or Jenny.

## DOG & CAT SECTION

### Obesity Problems in our Pets

There is growing awareness and concern over the major problem of obesity in our pets. A number of studies in different countries have indicated that the proportion of pets that are overweight or obese is worryingly high at 22-44%.

Obesity in pets is a multifactorial problem, with risk factors including breed, sex, disease and level of exercise. Some breeds of dog and cat have a much higher chance of becoming overweight or obese, with Labrador and Golden Retrievers being high on that list. Neutering is also a risk factor for obesity, but with careful feeding it is possible to keep your neutered pet at their ideal weight.

Like ourselves, being an overweight pet increases the risk of health problems such as joint disease, skin disease, urinary & reproductive disease, diabetes, heart and lung disease and cancer. These conditions will reduce their quality of life and also reduce their lifespan. By following a successful weight loss programme, onset of such diseases will occur later in life and the signs of the disease have been shown to be less severe. In dogs, a clear correlation has been shown between weight reduction and an increase in vitality, with the same dogs also showing fewer signs of being in pain. It is also important to realise that obesity may

be the result of an underlying disease, so it is important to get your pets checked out prior to a weight loss programme to ensure that there isn't a medical reason for their weight gain.



#### **Weight Loss Programmes**

Weight control programmes can be managed with the help of increased exercise and the use of low-calorie bulk diets that help your pet to feel full, without the extra calories.

A lack of exercise not only predisposes to higher levels of obesity, but also worsens any weight-related health problems.

- Plan a balanced feeding regime with regular weighing and adjustments to feed allowance.
- Use regular Body Condition Score checks to ensure that your pet is a healthy size.
- Body Condition Scoring is the most practical way to assess how 'well-conditioned' your pet is. It involves the subjective assessment of specific areas of the body to categorise the condition of each pet, ranging from emaciated to severely obese.
- Regular exercise.
- Discuss alternative diets with your Vet; low calorie diets that promote weight loss are available for your pets following consultation with a Vet.
- Remember, noticeable weight loss can take months and it is important to remain motivated.

If you would like some help to manage the weight of your pet, please contact Robyn and she can arrange a weight management consultation for you.

## GENERAL

### Are your Animals Fit for Transport?

To transport livestock within New Zealand, owners and people in charge of animals must meet the requirements of the *Animal Welfare Act 1999* as well as those in the *Transport within New Zealand Code of Welfare 2011*.

Animals are fit for transport if there are no signs of injury, sickness or poor health i.e. –

- free from any signs of disease (normal faeces, normal nasal discharge, no slobbering)
- any injuries, wounds or other skin lesions must be healed and free from any discharges
- bearing weight evenly on all legs
- no over length antlers or horns, unless such animals can be transported separately
- no sign of pink eye, eye discharges and any cancer eye lesions confined to the eye

- animals are bright, alert and moving normally
- animals are in good body condition
- animals are not likely to give birth during the journey or be affected by metabolic conditions associated with late pregnancy.

If you are in any doubt as to whether an animal is fit for slaughter, we can assess each individual case and issue certificates for transport where indicated.

Animals that are not fit for transport must be treated on farm by farm staff or a veterinarian, or slaughtered humanely on farm.

For more information, please call and speak with one of our vets, or go to: [mph.govt.nz/biosecurity-animal-welfare](http://mph.govt.nz/biosecurity-animal-welfare)

### Congratulations

We would like to pass on our congratulations to **Jo Sanford** who won the Dairy Community Leadership Award at the recent Dairy Women's Network Conference in Invercargill. The award recognises a dairying woman who is making a significant contribution in her local rural community, through leadership and support, and Jo is a well-deserved winner.

We would also like to congratulate **Graeme & Jan Appleby**, who were the winners of the Donaghys Farm Stewardship Award at the 2015 Southland Ballance Farm Environment Awards. The Donaghys Farm Stewardship Award recognises farmers who have created special places on the farm by protecting or enhancing areas such as wetlands, landscape features or historic places. Farmers must also demonstrate management systems that improve productivity and sustainability.

Congratulations must also go to **Graeme and Raewyn Black** who were the winners of the Coopworth section of the Merial Ancare West Otago and Southland Ewe Hogget competition. We wish them all the best for the National competition.

## 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 2015/16 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 2015/16 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 2015/16 season.

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Best Wishes from the vets: S Giles Gill BVM&S, Louise F Ingram BVMS (Hons) MACVSc, Jen E Gordon MA VetMB, Rosemary R Gill BVM&S, 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.



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