



## Issue AUGUST 2015

### STAFF NEWS

We are very sad to announce that Giles and Rosie will be retiring at the end of the year. They have played a significant role in the practice and many vets, both past and present, have them to thank for their training and support. We would all like to thank them for their hard work and dedication to the practice over the past 24 years and we are sure they will make the most of their well-deserved retirement.

Here are a few words from Giles & Rosie.....

*We arrived in Otautau with our baby son in October 1991, having emigrated to NZ from the UK in 1989. The practice is now vastly different to what it was then, partly due to the changing Western Southland farming scene and also due to major changes within the NZ veterinary profession. Giles became the third of three male vets supported by one nursing receptionist, one part-time accounts lady, and a considerably smaller building. Rosie started part-time small animal work in 1993 and was unusual in being a female vet and also in working only part-time.*

*We have very much enjoyed living and working in this beautiful area with friendly local people and access to a wide range of amenities. Our family has grown while we have lived here; our two daughters were both born in Western Southland and all three of our kids have gone to the local primary school, then local high schools before spreading their wings a bit further. We have made the decision to retire while we are young enough and hopefully fit enough to do some other things with our lives.*

Giles & Rosie Gill

### STAFF PROFILE

#### Andrew McQuade MVB – Veterinary Surgeon.

Andrew graduated from University College Dublin in 2014 and joined OVL in early 2015. Andrew grew up in the city of Belfast, but having completed his veterinary studies was keen to pursue a career in rural mixed practice. Being an avid rugby player, surfer and photographer, New Zealand was the obvious choice and Southland has more than enough to keep him occupied. However, after breaking his ankle playing rugby after only a few weeks in the country, Andrew has since decided to stick to non-contact sports. Andrew enjoys the variety of work here at OVL and has also become the in-house computer guru for the more technologically challenged of us at the clinic!



▲ Andrew McQuade

### SHOP TALK

#### Merial Ancare Drench Promotion

Congratulations go to *Dion White*, who was the winner of the recent Merial Ancare drench

### SHOP TALK *Continued*

promotion. Dion is now the owner of a Stihl chainsaw, so there'll be no excuse for a lack of firewood this winter!

#### Rumentrace Magnesium Capsules

Rumentrace Magnesium Capsules can be a useful source of Magnesium supplementation for cattle in situations where dusting the pasture or hay with magnesium oxide is difficult or impractical, water reticulation infrastructure does not allow water trough treatment and access to free water means cows will not drink water from treated troughs.

Rumentrace Magnesium Capsules release magnesium at a constant rate over a 9 – 12 week period and must be administered a few days ahead of when they are required. The capsules provide around 2 grams of available magnesium per day; the daily available magnesium requirement for a springer dairy cow is 2.3g. These figures do not take into account the antagonistic interference in the rumen by minerals such as potassium and so Magnesium Capsules should be considered a supplement to augment dietary magnesium intake and 'insurance' to minimise the seasonal risk of metabolic disease.

#### BEARIN™ Prolapse Harness

Another quick mention for the BEARIN™ Prolapse Harness by Rurtec, which 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.

### OVL SNAPSHOT

*I'm still waiting on photo entries for the Snapshot section, so instead you have a photo of the OVL staff members who managed to get to work in the snowfall.*

Please email your photos to:

[jen@otautauvets.co.nz](mailto:jen@otautauvets.co.nz)



The OVL crew on the snow day ▶

## CATTLE SECTION

### Calf Disbudding & Pain Relief

Calf disbudding is an essential farm practice. However, as the process involves burning skin and underlying horn tissue, it is painful and causes inflammation. In NZ, disbudding is commonly performed without pain-relief despite clear evidence that it is a painful procedure; previous studies of unsedated calves disbudded without pain-relief showed increased pain responses such as tail flicking, ear twitching, increased lying time and increased levels of stress hormones.

A recent NZ study has looked at the effect of pain relief at the time of disbudding on weight gain of dairy calves. The aim was to look at the effect on daily weight gain of the addition of a long-acting anti-inflammatory (Meloxicam) at the time of disbudding. A comparison was made between calves disbudded on farm with no local anaesthetic and those disbudded by a vet with sedation and local anaesthetic.

The results indicated that disbudding without the use of pain relief has a significant negative impact on subsequent growth rates in 3-6 week old calves, which can be reduced by the use of local anaesthetic, sedation and anti-inflammatories. This is beneficial to the calves in reducing the signs of pain associated with the procedure and also beneficial for farm productivity.

Results indicated that those calves disbudded on farm without

Veterinary input showed a significant increase in growth rate (+0.09kg/day) for the first 15 days following the procedure if they received a long-acting anti-inflammatory injection at the time of disbudding. This weight gain advantage with the use of meloxicam was not observed with veterinary disbudding, where calf growth rates were already greater than those observed when disbudding was performed by farm staff. Data from the study also indicated that the combination of sedation and local anaesthetic used by veterinarians had the greatest impact on growth rates, with faster growth 0-30 days post-disbudding compared to those disbudded by farm staff using no pain relief.



The study demonstrates that pain relief used as part of the disbudding procedure has significant benefits for both the individual calves and farm productivity and should be

used routinely. The combination of local anaesthetic, sedation and anti-inflammatory remains the best method of reducing the behavioural and physiological consequences of the pain associated with disbudding.

If you would like more information about the use of sedation, local anaesthetic and/or anti-inflammatories for calf disbudding or information about the disbudding services we can provide, please contact the clinic and speak with one of our vets.

### Mastitis Cure Rates

***Do you see cases of mastitis that don't appear to respond to treatment? Do you assume that the antibiotic isn't working and try an alternative treatment?***

A recent presentation at the Zoetis Dairy Summit highlighted the impact of poor hygiene practices on cows being treated for mastitis. Lack of hygiene when inserting Lactating Cow Intramammary treatments can introduce new bacterial infections resulting in apparent treatment failure or worsening of the original infection. This can lead to superinfection and potentially worse clinical implications than if no treatment had been used.

An Australian study looking at the treatment of high somatic cell count cows during lactation illustrated the importance of hygiene and sterility at the time of treatment. In a group of 428 high somatic cell count cows, 214 were treated with intramammary antibiotics and the remaining 214 were left untreated. 13% of the treatment group developed clinical mastitis within a week of treatment compared to just 2% of the untreated group. The results indicated that treatment resulted in an additional 10% clinical mastitis cases, most likely resulting from new infections introduced at the time of treatment.

Poor insertion technique is one of the most common causes of infection; one study illustrated that partial insertion of the intramammary syringe tip into the teat canal resulted in 81% cure rates in infected cows, compared with only 56% when the syringes were inserted fully.

A simple 'best practice' protocol for the treatment of mastitis with intramammary lactating cow products is as follows:

1. Mark the affected cow
2. Clean the teat end until the teat wipes wipe clear
3. Infuse product with a partially inserted nozzle until the plunger is fully depressed
4. Massage the product up into the canal.

## SHEEP SECTION

### Vaginal Prolapse "Bearings"

Vaginal prolapse is a common occurrence in New Zealand breeding flocks, resulting in medical and welfare implications for those affected and frustration for the farmers having to deal with them.

Most bearings occur two to three weeks prior to lambing, with around 0.5-1% of ewes affected annually; occasionally, serious outbreaks can see up to 10% of ewes affected on individual farms. Losses are not only through ewe and lamb deaths, but also time/costs associated with treatment and the premature culling of recovered ewes. An additional cost is the lost productivity on farms where the dietary intake of ewes is restricted in late pregnancy due to the widespread belief that this will reduce the incidence of the problem.



A recent New Zealand study conducted in Hawkes Bay and Southland aimed to identify any environmental, animal and management factors associated with an increased risk of vaginal prolapse in the hope that control measures may be implemented to reduce the incidence of the condition.

It is widely known that the incidence of vaginal prolapse is higher in ewes bearing multiple lambs and the risk increases progressively between the first, second and later pregnancies; affected ewes are therefore at greater risk of recurrence. In addition to these known risks, the study identified further factors as having an effect on the incidence of bearings;

#### 1. Multiple lambs

Risk of prolapse was over five times higher for MA ewes scanned with multiple lambs

than singles; the extra risk for triplet bearing ewes is considerable.

#### 2. Time of Shearing

Shearing in the three months prior to the start of mating has a protective effect, as does shearing in the second half of pregnancy. The reason for this protective effect is not completely understood, but is likely to be related to the effects of shearing on appetite, physiology and number of lambs produced. However, negative impacts of scanning at these times must also be considered e.g. reduced scanning percentages secondary to stress near tupping and ewe metabolic problems.

#### 3. Farm Terrain

Farm terrain and specifically that of the lambing paddocks has long been associated with the incidence of bearings; higher risk of bearings is associated with hill farms compared to flat type farm terrain. Unfortunately, ewes on hill terrain tend to lie and graze with their hindquarters lower than their head; lying in such a position results in positive pressure within the abdomen which can encourage vaginal prolapse. This knowledge can be very useful

when used in conjunction with scanning data, enabling set stocking of multiple-bearing ewes on flat terrain paddocks and particularly flat lambing paddocks.

#### 4. Weight Gain

Weight gain between mating and scanning was associated with an increased risk of prolapse. This is thought to be linked to placental development and the placenta's subsequent effect on the size of lambs at birth; weight loss during this period may have a negative effect on placental development resulting in smaller lambs at birth and a sparing effect in relation to bearing risk.

#### 5. Salt Intake & Swede Feeding in Late Pregnancy

Both of these practices were found to be associated with a slight increased incidence of bearings. It is thought that this is linked to the high levels of water intake associated

with both feeding practices, resulting in distended bladders and straining at urination. Whilst this association was found, the risk was relatively small and further research is needed.

The study also identified factors that are not associated with occurrence of the disease, which may influence management practices that have long been thought to be protective in the control of bearings.

#### 1. Body Condition Score

No association was found between the incidence of vaginal prolapse and body condition score. This was contrary to common belief as farmers often associate higher incidences if ewes are well conditioned or there is abundant feed, particularly around mating time.

#### 2. Culling Policies

Culling of female offspring of affected ewes did not make any difference to the incidence of disease.

#### 3. Tail Length

There was no association with length of tail.

#### 4. Feed Restriction in Late Pregnancy

Restricting feed in the latter stages of pregnancy had no effect on the incidence of vaginal prolapse. Despite anecdotal reports of body condition, levels of feeding during autumn and spring, and pasture quality and quantity having an effect on the incidence of bearings, neither this study nor previous field observations support this.

Other practices such as feeding hay or grain in late pregnancy and calcium/magnesium supplements have also been shown to have no effect on the incidence of vaginal prolapse.

If you have previously had problems with high numbers of bearings in your ewes or you are experiencing problems for the first time this season, please contact the clinic and speak with one of our vets.



## DOG & CAT SECTION

### Working Dog Nutrition

Working dogs are athletes and their ability to perform is dependent on adequate nutrition to meet their daily energy and nutrient requirements.

Energy requirements will vary greatly with the type of work being undertaken; the semi-retired farm dog that spends the majority of its time on the back of the quad bike will have very different requirements to a huntaway out mustering all day and feeding levels should reflect this.

#### What are the dietary requirements of working dogs?

Consuming adequate calories to meet daily energy expenditure can be a challenge in some working dogs, highlighting the importance of a highly digestible, energy dense diet to prevent loss of lean body weight.

Working dogs at peak work should have a diet with high metabolisable energy (4,000-5,500kcal/kg on a dry matter basis); fat has the highest energy density and so a diet high in fat (15-30%) enables the working dog to eat smaller meals whilst still meeting their energy requirements. It is also important to remember that pregnant and lactating bitches have additional energy requirements and should ideally be fed a diet designed for growth e.g. a commercial puppy food.

Like athletes, working dogs have increased dietary protein requirements (22-33%) which is used by the body for structural repair and maintenance. A diet that has insufficient protein and energy can lead to poor performance, poor condition, weight loss and muscle and ligament injuries.

A highly digestible diet (>80%) is also extremely important; diets with higher digestibility will have a greater proportion of their nutrients reaching the tissues. The higher digestibility also has the advantage that a greater proportion of the food is digested and used by the body and so less comes out the other end!

Working dogs also require anti-oxidants in their diet to neutralise the harmful by-products of energy metabolism; Vitamin E, Vitamin C, Selenium and  $\beta$ -carotene are all important components in a working dog diet.

#### Feeding Plan for Working Dogs

##### 1. Ensure that you are feeding the correct amount of food

Energy and nutrient requirements will vary greatly with the intensity and duration of the work your dogs are performing and feeding levels should reflect this. If you are feeding a high-quality commercial diet, feeding guidelines should be available to help you with this.

##### 2. Assess body condition regularly

The body condition of all your dogs should be assessed on a weekly basis to ensure that they are maintaining condition; if they are losing or gaining condition, feeding levels should be adjusted accordingly.

##### 3. Time meals correctly

Working dogs should be fed after their days work or more than four hours before work in order to maximise digestion and reduce the likelihood of a twisted stomach.

##### 4. Water

Dogs should have free access to water at all times.

High-quality commercial diets such as Hill's Science Diet Adult Active are specifically formulated for working dogs and their nutritional requirements. A clinical trial performed in 2013 with high country working dogs in peak work showed that working dogs fed Hill's Active had improved performance compared with dogs maintained on biscuits & farm-kill. Dogs fed Hill's Active maintained their body weight with greater ease and their average body condition score improved over the 8-week period of the trial.

If you have concerns about the condition of your dogs or have previously struggled to maintain weight on individuals, please come in to the clinic and speak with one of our vets. A change in diet may make all of the difference going in to spring.

### Puppy Preschool Classes

The first 8 to 16 weeks is the perfect time to begin to socialize and train your new puppy. Otautau Vets offers a 3 week course that will educate both owners and puppies on how to ensure your puppy grows into a healthy, sociable and well balanced adult.



Amongst other things, puppies will be taught to 'sit', 'stay', 'lie down' and walk on a lead, all in a relaxed and enjoyable environment. Owners will also be given information on a wide range of topics including feeding, toilet training, vaccinating, dental care, worming and neutering.

At the end of the 3 weeks, puppies will graduate with a free bag of goodies kindly supplied by Hill's Pet Food.

If you're at all interested, please give us a call to book your pup into the next class.

– Andrew McQuade

## REMINDERS

### Sheep

#### • Pre-Lamb

- o FEC Ewes to assess need for drench
- o Vaccinate Ewes and consider second Iodine/LSD/Healthy Ewe drench
- o Investigate any abortions
- o Autopsy early lamb deaths for Thyroid index

#### • Tailing

- o FEC Ewes to assess need for drench
- o Administer tailing vaccine if ewes not 5-in-1 vaccinated pre-lamb
- o Scabby Mouth Vaccine (*Scabiguard/Phenax® Classic*)
- o FEC replacement hoggets
- o Palpate/Blood test rams for B.ovis accreditation

#### • Pre-Wean

- o Drench for Lambs.

### Cattle

#### • Early Calving

- o Mineral Check cows
- o Calcium enriched, high energy Starter Drench for old or thin cows at calving +/- heifers
- o Consider worm drench for young/old/thin cows or Bulk Milk test to assess herd worm infection level prior to drenching
- o Magnesium Oxide and Limeflour supplementation post-calving
- o First BVD vaccine for yearlings (if not vaccinated as calves), followed by booster vaccination 4 weeks later (no closer than 4 weeks prior to mating). Booster vaccination for any pre-vaccinated heifers/cows (no closer than 4 weeks prior to mating)

#### • Pre-mating

- o Mineral check cows and R2's
- o Metrichick & treat cows 14 days post-calving; batch checking and treating cows early will maximise time for recovery pre-mating
- o Plan/discuss heifer synchrony and anoestrus cow programmes
- o Preventative treatment for bloat.

### Deer

- Investigate illthrift problems; FEC, trace elements, John's Disease
- Pour-on drench for yearlings
- Review Copper & Selenium status of hinds pre-fawning.



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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, Teresa 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 Fietsen 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

