



Issue **NOVEMBER 2015**

STAFF NEWS

We don't have a huge amount to report on the Staff News front at the moment, which is usually a good sign that everyone is working hard and staying out of trouble.

We thought we had managed to survive the winter ski season with all staff members in one piece, but that turned out to be wishful thinking... fortunately it wasn't another broken leg!

Everyone is now looking forward to an enjoyable summer and hoping some good weather will join us.



▲ Emma Parkinson

STAFF PROFILE

Emma Parkinson BVMS – Veterinary Surgeon.

Emma joined OVL in 2015 having spent two years working predominantly in small animal practice in the UK.

Emma is another Glasgow University graduate with particular interests in small animal internal medicine, surgery and cardiology.

Emma enjoys the challenge of the farm veterinary work here in Southland, together with the variety of work New Zealand mixed practice has to offer.

She is yet another outdoor enthusiast and appears to have a particular liking for any sports that involve an element of risk; mountaineering, skiing and horse riding are particular favourites.

SHOP TALK

Rumenox

Bloat control is a high priority when it comes to assessing disease control measures at this time of year.

Rumenox is receiving wide acceptance for its ability to prevent bloat, with observational evidence strongly suggesting that Rumenox out-performs bloat oils when it comes to bloat protection. Rumenox is now the most cost effective option for controlling bloat, not to mention the added benefits of reducing ketosis and improving cow condition.

Cows don't always drink regularly and the short duration of activity of most bloat oils means that cows are still

SHOP TALK Continued

vulnerable to a bloat challenge when not drinking. Rumenox has a single dose rate regardless of the bloat challenge and its unique mode of action means herds are protected for a longer period of time, giving you added peace of mind. There are also no issues with administering Rumenox while calves remain on the milking platform.

Merial Ancare Drench Promotion

The latest Merial Ancare drench promo is under way with all qualifying cattle and sheep drench purchases going in a draw to win a weekend break for two on Stewart Island. Included in the prize are flights for two with Stewart Island Air and two nights accommodation.

We hope that the lucky winners will get a chance to escape from the pressures on the farm and enjoy a well earned, relaxing break.

Calendar Photos

It's that time of year again and we are welcoming photo submissions for the OVL 2016 calendar; we are looking for animals, wildlife, Southland scenery or anything else you wish to submit!

Please mail your entries to: sandy@otautauvets.co.nz by the end of November.

OVL SNAPSHOT

No entertaining OVL hat shots for this newsletter, but a lovely photo of the July graduates from the OVL Puppy School. Congratulations to Oliver James and Daisy Officer.

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



The puppy graduates and their owners ▶

CATTLE SECTION

Anoestrus “Non-Cycling” Cows

Treating anoestrus cows in a low pay-out year is always a tough decision, but you need to consider the impact of not getting those cows back in-calf. Cows that are anoestrus at the start of mating are less likely to get in calf than their cycling herd mates. Several studies have shown that in seasonally calving herds, anoestrus cows are less likely to be mated in the first three weeks of mating, have lower conception rates and longer calving-conception intervals than cows that have had a pre-mating heat.

Whilst treatment of non-cyclers will have no effect on your Empty rate, it will get cows back in-calf earlier in the mating season resulting in more days in milk, more AB calves and a reduced probability that those cows will be non-cycling next season. **Research data from McDougall et al (2009) has shown that there is economic benefit in treating anoestrus cows with lower projected milk pay-outs.** Earlier conception post-treatment results in extra days in milk compared to no treatment, which more than covers the cost of the treatment programme; an extra 16 days in milk are gained when a progesterone-releasing intravaginal insert (CIDR/ Cue-mate/Dib-h) is included in the treatment programme. In addition, inclusion of the hormone eCG (Pregnenol/ Novormon) results in further improvements in 28-day in-calf rates of around 5%, which will have a significant effect in getting more cows in-calf earlier in the mating season.

Pre-mating heat detection and recording is essential for determination of those cows that may benefit from inclusion in an anoestrus cow programme. All cows should be tail-painted 35 days prior to the Planned Start of Mating (PSM) in order to give them sufficient time to cycle prior to treatment and it must be touched-up on a regular basis to ensure success. To reach the target 3-week submission rate of 90%, around 75% of the herd should have cycled by PSM-10; any less than this is an indication for early intervention prior to the start of mating.

If you are being selective, younger cows will hopefully have a longer future in the herd and should be considered for treatment ahead of older cows whose fertility has already started to decline. Culling potential should also be considered prior to treatment; is it worth treating a cow that may be culled at the end of the season due to ongoing mastitis or lameness issues? Body Condition Score (BCS) also has a significant impact on treatment success and should be considered; cows at or above BCS4.0 have greater first-service conception rates and greater 21 day and 42 day pregnancy rates than those with a BCS less than 4.0.

Ovarian Palpation

In recent years there has been a move away from palpating the ovaries of anoestrus cows to try and determine if they have cycled, with blanket treatment of suitable candidates becoming the norm. Some of you have questioned whether this is a more expensive option due to the risk of treating individuals that may have had silent heats and asked whether we should be reverting to palpation or ovarian scanning.

There are two types of anoestrus cows:

1. Cows that have not ovulated since calving,
2. Cows that have ovulated i.e. ovaries are ‘cycling’, but they have not displayed an overt heat (silent oestrus or ‘missed heat’).

The main purpose for palpating or scanning the ovaries of anoestrus cows is to identify a structure on the ovary called a Corpus Luteum (CL); a CL forms on the ovary following ovulation and if detected, you can assume that these cows have had a silent heat.



In New Zealand, studies have shown that between 10% and 30% of anoestrus cows has a CL present at the time of examination. The studies have also shown that these CL-positive anoestrus cows have reduced pregnancy rates in the first 28 days of mating and greater empty rates at the end of mating compared with cows that had a true pre-mating heat. When enrolled in an anoestrus cow programme, these CL-positive cows had a greater submission rate, higher first-service conception rate and higher 21 day and 42 day

pregnancy rates than those cows without a CL present at the start of treatment; this amounts to extra days in milk post-treatment for CL-positive cows and a better return on your investment. Overall, the data suggests that both CL-positive and CL-negative non-cycling cows benefit from treatment with a progesterone-releasing intravaginal insert as part of an anoestrus cow treatment programme and that detection of a CL in an anoestrus cow, by palpation or ultrasonography, is probably irrelevant and should not warrant a change in treatment.

If you would like to discuss your options for treatment of non-cyclers, please contact the clinic and make an appointment with one of our vets. We want to help you plan for a successful mating season.

SHEEP SECTION

Zoetis Veterinary Advisor Series

Having completed the Zoetis Veterinary Advisor Series for Sheep & Beef Production, Teresa and Jenny are now trained to consult with famers to help increase productivity and reduce costs. The course covers numerous aspects of farming business, with experts from around the country training the vets in whole farm business, animal production and genetics.

In the first module they gained valuable knowledge about farm accounts and how to identify anomalies in income or expenditure through benchmarking; for

example, lifting your farm performance into the top 20% can potentially lift your farms profitability by 134%. The second module had a focus on Animal Production, covering feed budgeting, condition scoring, ewe and beef cow performance and hogget management, with the final genetics-based module looking at breeding values and understanding the SIL database in order to help farmers choose the best rams/bulls for the appropriate farm and farmer goals.

If you are interested in improving your farm's performance, a good way to start

is by measuring and recording stock/farm data with comparisons to Key Performance Indicators (KPI's). With the help of programmes such as FarmIQ, Stockcare and Farmax, we can work with you to analyse your farm's performance and establish achievable targets. If you would like to find out more about this service or have some questions about how we can help your business, please call us or drop into the clinic.

Johne's Disease

Johne's Disease (JD) is a wasting disease that affects sheep, cattle and deer. With infection present on over 70% of NZ sheep farms, the disease is widespread, however the level of clinical disease in infected flocks is low at around 1%. The most significant effect of the disease in sheep is on adult mortality, with animals dying from dehydration and severe malnutrition. There is no cure for the disease.

The disease is caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium avium paratuberculosis* (MAP), with spread from infected individuals occurring via faeces, colostrum, milk or transplacentally. Young lambs are therefore at highest risk of infection, which usually occurs soon after birth as a result of faecal contamination of the dam's udder and teats. Faecal contamination of pastures and waterways will also result in spread of the infection through the flock as the bacterium is hardy, surviving for 3-18 months on pasture. Higher infection rates on individual farms are thought to be linked to lambs grazing contaminated pastures for lengthy periods.

Once infected with MAP, the majority of animals remain healthy and disease-free for their lifetime, but a proportion will become sick with diarrhoea, wasting and ultimately death anywhere from 1-5 years post-infection. Stress can increase the incidence of clinical disease and so pregnancy, adverse weather conditions and poor nutrition may lead to an increase in clinical cases. As the infection progresses, some animals will shed more and more bacteria in their faeces. These 'Super Shedders' will contaminate the pasture with significant amounts of bacteria, which is an infection risk for the rest of the flock.



How do I know if Johne's Disease is affecting my flock?

JD should be considered if you have unacceptably high numbers of ewe deaths or high numbers of ewes losing condition and wasting away despite adequate feeding and parasite control. There is a blood test available to confirm clinical disease, but unfortunately it is not very sensitive in the early stages of infection and false negatives are common.

How do I control the spread of Johne's Disease in my flock?

On most NZ sheep farms, JD is a low level threat to animal health; clinical disease is rare and only causes a small number of deaths per year. An awareness of the disease and good farming practices are recommended to minimise losses. Suggested controls to aid in reducing the impact of JD in high-risk flocks are;

- *Vaccination (Gudair®)*
Single dose administered at 4 weeks of age or at weaning once replacements have been selected. Whilst the vaccine will not prevent infection, it will reduce shedding and the incidence of clinical disease.

- *Test & Cull*
Any individuals showing signs of clinical disease with diarrhoea and/or wasting should be blood tested and culled immediately if positive.
- *Clinical Disease Management*
Watch for signs of clinical disease and isolate any individuals that are unwell. Young animals are most susceptible to infection and should be kept away from potential clinical cases and hospital paddocks.
- *Nutritional Management*
Ewes should be maintained in optimal condition, with attention to stocking rates, levels of nutrition and body condition scoring.
- *Stress Reduction*
Aim to reduce the impact of stressful events e.g. timing of weaning and shearing. Follow best practice parasite control and minimise the impact of other diseases e.g. Footrot, flystrike & pneumonia.

The impact of the disease is different for each farm and should be assessed prior to deciding on appropriate control measures. If you are concerned that you may have a problem with Johne's Disease in your flock, please contact the clinic and have a chat with one of our vets.



DOG & CAT SECTION

Pet Insurance

Despite having one of the highest levels of pet ownership in the world, the uptake of Pet Insurance in New Zealand is relatively low; only 5% of cat owners, 8% of dog owners and 13% of horse and pony owners have pet insurance cover.

As pet owners, we can be faced with difficult decisions if veterinary treatment costs are high and more than we can afford to spend. Pet insurance removes much of the financial strain and guilt out of making these decisions and ensures that our pets get the best possible medical and surgical care available. For this reason, the New Zealand Veterinary Association recommends that owners with new pets should insure them.



Pet insurance effectively pays out for veterinary treatment, with policies generally covering most companion animals. As the owner and policy holder, you are responsible for making the claim directly to the insurance company for medical and/or surgical treatments. Most claims are made for illness and accidents in the young and elderly with relatively little in between; insuring consistently from the arrival of your pet ensures that both of these risk periods are covered.

Most policies are easy to understand, have easy claim systems and can be tailored to your individual needs. Premiums will be kept down by opting to pay for certain elements only, paying a percentage of the costs up front or by excluding day-to-day costs such as vaccination.

The most important thing when choosing a plan is to read the fine print carefully to find out what is included and excluded. It is worth ensuring that both medical and surgical treatments are covered as some medical treatments can be ongoing and expensive. Breed may also have an impact on premiums as some medical conditions are more common in certain breeds leading to raised premiums or exclusion of the condition from the policy completely.

Three main pet insurance plans are offered in New Zealand;

- **PetnSur (www.petnsur.co.nz)**
100% NZ owned. B+ financial strength rating.
- **PetPlan (www.petplan.co.nz)**
PetPlan is the world's largest pet insurer and has been in NZ since 2009. Strong AA- rating.
- **Southern Cross Pet Insurance (www.southerncrosspet.co.nz)**
100% NZ owned company with a strong A+ rating.

FMG also offers a policy for working farm dogs.

CONGRATULATIONS

We would all like to congratulate **Mike and Frank O'Brien of Westend Station** who were named winners of the Farming Award at the 20th Annual Southland Environment Awards. The judges were particularly impressed with their 'state of the art' water scheme installed on their sheep and beef property in 2011, which provides a great example of using innovation to benefit the farm and the environment.

REMINDERS

Sheep

- **Rams**
 - o Palpate and blood test rams for annual check or B.ovis accreditation
 - o Vasectomise Rams; at least 60 days prior to using
 - o Footrot vaccinate if required.
- **Lambs**
 - o Pre-wean drench followed by weaning drench
 - o FEC lambs for subsequent drenches and drench if required
 - o Consider Drench Resistance Test (late summer)
 - o Mineral check first draft for B12 & Selenium if unsupplemented.
- 5-in-1 Vaccinate replacement Ewelambs and booster 4-6 weeks later
- Order Campyvax4, Campylovexin and Toxovax. Consider Androvax/Ovastim.
- Health check & Vaccination for Dogs.

Cattle

- Check and treat non-cycling cows
- Start 7-in-1 vaccination for calves in November with a booster dose 4-6 weeks later
- Start BVD vaccination (Bovilis BVD/ Ultravac BVD) from 4 months of age if part of a vaccination programme
- Drench calves for worms
- Consider mineral check for calves
- Book in early pregnancy testing (6 weeks after the end of AB).

Deer

- Book Velvetting Supervisory Visit
- Cut velvet regrowth.

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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 Fietsen BVMS and Emma J Parkinson BVMS.



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