



Issue **NOVEMBER 2013**

STAFF NEWS

Staff News

We had to goodbye to another long-standing staff member at the end of July, with Nicole leaving us after three years at the clinic. We would all like to thank her for her hard work and long commute over the past three years and wish her all the best for her future and whatever it brings.

We shall also be bidding farewell to Martha this month and would like to wish her the best of luck for the future. Martha has been with us for just over a year and is leaving to take up a Small Animal position in Dunedin.

We welcomed Robyn Burnett and Tiarna Graham to Otautau Vets in early August. Robyn has replaced Nicole as our clinic Nurse/Receptionist and Tiarna will be working in the same role through until the end of the year. Both have just recently completed their Veterinary Nursing Diploma's through SIT and we would all like to congratulate them on their achievement.

Thanks must go to Val Ellis of Orauea Pastoral for the fantastic photos of our staff hard at work teat-sealing heifers and as Val commented...."Just to prove that the vets do get their hands and everything else dirty"



STAFF PROFILE

Ally Marshall - Vet Nurse

Ally joined our nursing team in 2012, having completed her Certificate in Veterinary Nursing at Otago Polytechnic. Ally originates from Middlemarch, Otago and has previously worked at a small animal clinic in Dunedin and a mixed practice in Wairoa. Outside of work, Ally is keen on walking and other outdoor pursuits, in particular equestrian related activities.

In addition to her Veterinary Nursing Certificate, Ally has spent the past year studying towards her Rural Animal Technician qualification through Otago Polytechnic and will be completing her studies later this month.



SHOP TALK

Ladies Night

The ladies night held back in July was a great success and seemed to be thoroughly enjoyed by all those who attended. We would like to thank Kim Kelly (MSD), Richard Cruickshank (Merial Ancare), and Jamie Chamberlain (Westrange Beauty), together with OVL's Louise Ingram and Martha O'Connor for their excellent and very informative presentations.

We would also like to thank Boehringer Ingelheim, Merial Ancare, Virbac, Hill's Pet Nutrition, Eco Store, Trilogy and Westrange Beauty for being so generous in providing gifts and spot prizes for the evening.



Bayer Dairy Presentation Evening

The Bayer evening held in early August was well attended and provided a wealth of information about reducing early season mastitis and treating non-cyclers. Congratulations go to Steve Rowe and Patrick Oostveen who were the lucky winners of the double passes to the Bledisloe Cup test in Dunedin.

Calendar Photos

The end of the year is now upon us and we are in need of photographic contributions for the 2014 Otautau Vets Calendar. If you have any local photos you would like to contribute, please Email them to sandy@otautauvets.co.nz, and if you don't have any, get your camera out and get snapping!

Broadline

Broadline is an exciting new product on the market for the treatment of parasites in cats. Broadline is the first complete parasite treatment for cats that kills both roundworms and tapeworms as well as providing complete flea control, breaking the flea life cycle at every stage. Broadline comes as an easy to use topical applicator that ensures complete and accurate dosing. For more information, please call into the clinic and speak with one of our vets.

Flea Promotion

Got all-round flea protection for your pets this summer? If not, then Merial Ancare has the promotion for you. Simply purchase any Frontline® Plus Cat or Dog pack or two packs of Broadline® spot-on solution for cats, and go in the draw to win one of ten Shade 7 Umbrellas or an outdoor furniture set to the value of \$10,000. The promotion will be running until 22nd November 2013, so get in quick for your chance to win.

Merial Ancare Drench Promotions

All purchases of selected Merial Ancare drench during November and December go in the draw to win a fabulous Outdoor Furniture set. The Christmas Ham promotion will also be running again this year, so for more information on qualifying drench purchases, please ask at reception.

CATTLE SECTION

Abamectin Toxicity in Calves

Abamectin worm drench is used extensively in both cattle and sheep for parasite control, but awareness of the risks associated with the use of this product in young animals is poor. There have been several reports of abamectin toxicity in both young cattle and sheep throughout New Zealand, and we have also experienced some cases here in Western Southland.

The product is used in many different concentrations and formulations (oral, injection, pour-on) and in combination with other products e.g. Eclipse, Genesis, Matrix, Startect, Switch. It has been suggested that this product variation may create some confusion in dosing when switching between drenches and may result in overdosing, but the problem may also be the result of poor drenching practices on farms.

Clinical signs of toxicity appear fairly rapidly after drenching with deterioration from no visible signs to weakness, stumbling, recumbence, coma and death over the space of 30-60 minutes.

The drenching of all young animals should be undertaken with caution and I would strongly recommend reading the guidelines listed below before drenching your calves this season

1. Never use Abamectin containing drenches on calves under 120kg or 4 months of age

- Determine whether these calves actually need drenching at all. There is evidence to show that worm establishment and the effects of parasitism are much less in animals on a milk diet, so it is questionable whether calves even need a drench prior to weaning.
- Providing 'clean' pastures by not grazing paddocks used for calves the previous season will help keep the worm burdens low in pre-weaned calves.

2. Drenching at the Calfeateria and mixing drench with milk are not recommended practices

- It is much easier to cause toxicities in calves when drenched at the calfeateria, particularly when using abamectin. The oesophageal groove reflex that occurs when calves are drinking results in the drench by-passing the rumen and heading into the abomasum, which speeds up the absorption of the drench and increases the likelihood of toxicity.



3. Split the mob and drench according to weight, NOT to the heaviest calf

- It is normally recommended to drench to the heaviest animal in the mob, but this does not apply to young animals. Weight is often over-estimated, particularly with youngstock, and a small volume overdose has a much greater effect on a young, lighter animal than a fully grown adult.
- Most drenches suggest splitting the mob into smaller groups by weight in order to reduce dosing variation.

4. Check the drench gun accuracy prior to use

- Always check that the drench gun is measuring the correct dose and weigh enough animals to get an accurate mean weight for the group.

5. Never swap drench containers

- If you are decanting drench into a smaller drenching container, always write the name of the product on the container or transfer it back to the original container when finished. Double check that the correct product is being used.

Leptospirosis & Clostridial Vaccination

Combined Leptospirosis and Clostridial vaccines such as 7-in-1 are widely used on dairy farms to complete the primary vaccination course for calves. Relatively little has been known about the calf's immune response when challenged by such a large number of antigens, but results from a study have suggested that these 'combined' vaccines are not necessarily offering the best disease protection for our calves.

The study looked at the immune response of 7-8 month old calves following vaccination with either a combined Lepto+Clostridial vaccination or separate Clostridial and Lepto vaccines administered concurrently, but at different locations i.e. on different sides of the neck. Each group in the study received a sensitiser and booster vaccination 4 weeks apart.

The results were as follows:

- Calves vaccinated with a combined Lepto+Clostridial vaccine produced similar or lower Clostridial antibody levels to those calves given separate Clostridial & Lepto vaccines.
- Variation in antibody response to different Clostridial antigens was seen between the groups with *C.tetani* and *C.perfringens* type D showing the greatest variation; calves in the combined

Lepto+Clostridial vaccine group showed significantly lower antibody levels to these antigens than the calves receiving separate vaccines.

- The antibody response to *Leptospira hardjo* (most common strain of Leptospirosis in cattle in NZ) was significantly lower in the combined Lepto+Clostridial vaccine groups compared to those calves receiving separate Lepto & Clostridial vaccines.
- There was no difference in the antibody response to *Leptospira pomona* and *Leptospira copenhageni*.

In view of the marked reduction in antibody response to certain Leptospirosis and Clostridial components of the combined Lepto+Clostridial vaccines, it is questionable whether the use of these combined vaccines is the best option for your calves. Combined vaccines may seem like the easier option, but if you really want to protect the health of your stock and your staff, using separate vaccines may be the better option.

If you would like more information about protecting your herd, make an appointment for your annual Lepto Prescription Visit or alternatively come in to the clinic and speak with one of our vets.

DOG & CATS

Arthritis in Dogs and Cats

Arthritis is a very common cause of lameness in dogs and cats. It is most common in older animals, but can develop at any age and often involves multiple joints. It can be secondary to an injury of the joint or a developmental problem with the joint. This may have been a fracture or torn ligament which has been treated in the past, but may also be a mild problem which went unnoticed at the time.

In a normal healthy joint the bone ends are covered by smooth, even layers of cartilage which glide against each other as the joint moves. In a joint affected by osteoarthritis there is damage to this cartilage leading to inflammation and pain in the joint.

Arthritis in Dogs

Many dog owners will notice that their dog is slowing down, but dismiss it as old age without realising that their dog is in pain. Common signs of arthritis are:



- decreased activity level
- stiffness and reluctance to jump
- lameness/ pain
- change in temperament.

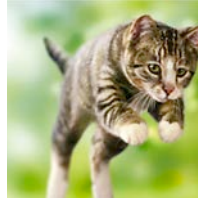
Pain from arthritis is usually most obvious when the dog first gets up after sleeping or after exercise. These signs can also be associated with other diseases and clinical examination by a vet is important as there may be more than one problem going on.

Arthritis in Cats

Arthritis is thought to be as common in cats as it is in dogs, but it is diagnosed less often because

cats do not show pain in the same ways as dogs; clinical signs tend to be more subtle and often go unnoticed. Behavioural changes are usually the key to diagnosis and may include:

- reluctance to jump
- playing less & sleeping more often
- difficulty grooming
- change in temperament.



Treatment

While we cannot cure arthritis it can be managed to reduce pain and slow down deterioration of the joint. Each case will be managed individually depending on several factors including the severity of the disease, the age of the animal, bodyweight and other health issues. Dogs may also be managed differently depending on whether they are working dogs or pets.

Options for treatment after investigation and diagnosis may include:

- exercise & weight loss plan
- change of diet e.g. Joint health diets for arthritis management
- food supplements e.g. Omega-3 Essential fatty acid supplements
- anti-inflammatories/pain killers

If you think your dog or cat is suffering from arthritis please bring him or her in to the clinic for a consultation. One of our vets will examine your dog/cat and have a chat with you to find out how much the pain is affecting them on a day to day basis. After consultation and investigation we hope to be able to help you improve your animal's joint health, pain management and quality of life.

Aileen Scott

REMINDERS

Sheep

Rams

- Palpate and blood test rams for annual check or B.ovis accreditation
- Vasectomise Rams; at least 60 days prior to using
- Footrot vaccinate if required

Lambs

- Pre-wean drench followed by weaning drench
- FEC lambs for subsequent drenches and drench if required
- Consider Drench Resistance Test (late summer)
- Mineral check first draft for B12 & Selenium if unsupplemented
- 5-in-1 Vaccinate replacement Ewelambs and booster 4-6weeks later
- Order *Campyvax4*, *Campylovexin* and *Toxovax*. Consider *Androvax/Ovastim*.
- Condition Score Ewes
- Vaccinate Dogs

Cattle

- Check and treat non-cycling cows
- Start *Lepto/Clostridial* vaccinations for calves in November with a booster dose 4-6 weeks later
- Start BVD vaccination (*Bovilis 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 (must be completed by 15/12/12)
- Cut velvet regrowth

CONGRATULATIONS

We would like to pass on our congratulations to Barry MacDonald of Torrisdale Murray Grey Stud who was a winner at the National Steak of Origin finals in Fielding over winter. Barry's "Ballyhooley Beef" was crowned Best of Brand; Retail class champion, which is great reward for many years of hard work.

Roger and Alison Thomas were recent winners of the Environment Southland Farming Award and we would all like to congratulate them on their success and hard work. With areas of

protected native bush, extensive tree plantations and a wetland area, Roger and Alison were praised for their dedication to environmental sustainability on their Sheep & Beef farm.

Congratulations must also go to Anita Erskine who was awarded the Supreme Champion Fleece trophy at this years Black & Coloured Sheep Breeders Association competition. The Supreme Champion Fleece trophy has only been awarded to a Southland breeder twice before, with Anita previously having held the trophy on one of these occasions back in 2009.

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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, Aileen Scott BVMS, Julia E Nuttall BVSc, Ruby A Davidson BVetMed



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SHEEP SECTION

Condition Scoring

Condition scoring is an easy and effective way of assessing the body fat and condition of your sheep, providing useful information for flock management decisions. Scales are routinely used as a way of assessing body condition or recording changes in weight, but the numbers can be very misleading; scales do not take account of condition, so a small fat ewe may record the same body weight as a large-framed skinny ewe. It is possible to get an idea of body condition when a ewe is newly-shorn, but it is very difficult to assess the amount of body fat in unshorn sheep by eye.

The body condition score (BCS) of an individual sheep may be assessed by feeling the amount of body fat and muscle around the vertical and horizontal processes of the spine i.e. along the spine and the loin region. The palm of your hand should be placed on the lumbar spine (loin) and use your fingers on one side and thumb on the other side to feel the transverse spinous processes. The condition scoring scale can then be consulted to determine the score for that individual. This technique takes no account of bodyweight, although as a general rule, there is about a 5kg difference in liveweight between condition scores for an individual sheep.

What are the benefits of Body Condition Scoring?

The most obvious benefit to condition scoring your sheep is that lighter mobs can be drafted for preferential feeding, thus maximising production from your stock. Ewes that have been well-fed both before and during mating will generally show higher ovulation rates and lambing percentages, but the results will be influenced by liveweight and whether or not the ewes have been gaining condition during this period. Heavier ewes in good condition invariably have better lambing performance than lighter, poor condition ewes. It has been estimated that lambing percentages increase by 6-10% for every extra unit of body condition score at tupping. In addition to this, the flushing effect may provide an additional 5-10%.

The management principles that need to be considered prior to mating are:

- Change in liveweight over the 3-4 weeks prior to ovulation will influence the number of eggs produced; condition loss over this period will result in poorer ovulation rates, and the effect will be greatest in the poorer condition ewes.

- High energy or protein feeds and high pasture allowances in addition to standard weight gains can result in further increases in ovulation rates.
- The greater the liveweight and body condition score (up to BCS4.0), the greater the number of lambs born, however, allowing ewes to become over-fat will have a negative effect.
- Ewes at or below BCS 2.5 may become anoestrus after the second cycle if measures are not introduced to increase the level of nutrition.
- After mating, it is normal for ewes to lose up to 10% of their mating weight. This means that ewes at or below BCS 2.5 should not be mated unless winter feeding is available at above maintenance rates so that they are able to maintain or gain condition prior to lambing. If winter feed levels will not allow for this, greater ewe and lamb losses will occur as ewes are unable to rear their lambs.

In order to maximise lambing percentages, ewes should have a body condition score of 3 or 4 at mating and should be maintaining or preferably, gaining condition during the mating period.

To achieve this target, the ewe mob should ideally be rotated rapidly on pasture that is 5-6cm height to maintain intake levels of at least 12.5-13.0 MJ ME/day of high quality green pasture for a 65kg ewe. Grazing below 1,500kg DM/ha will result in loss of body condition and lower lambing rates.

In summary, body condition score can have a major impact on your flock performance and assessment of your stock at certain key times throughout the season could make all the difference to your production levels.

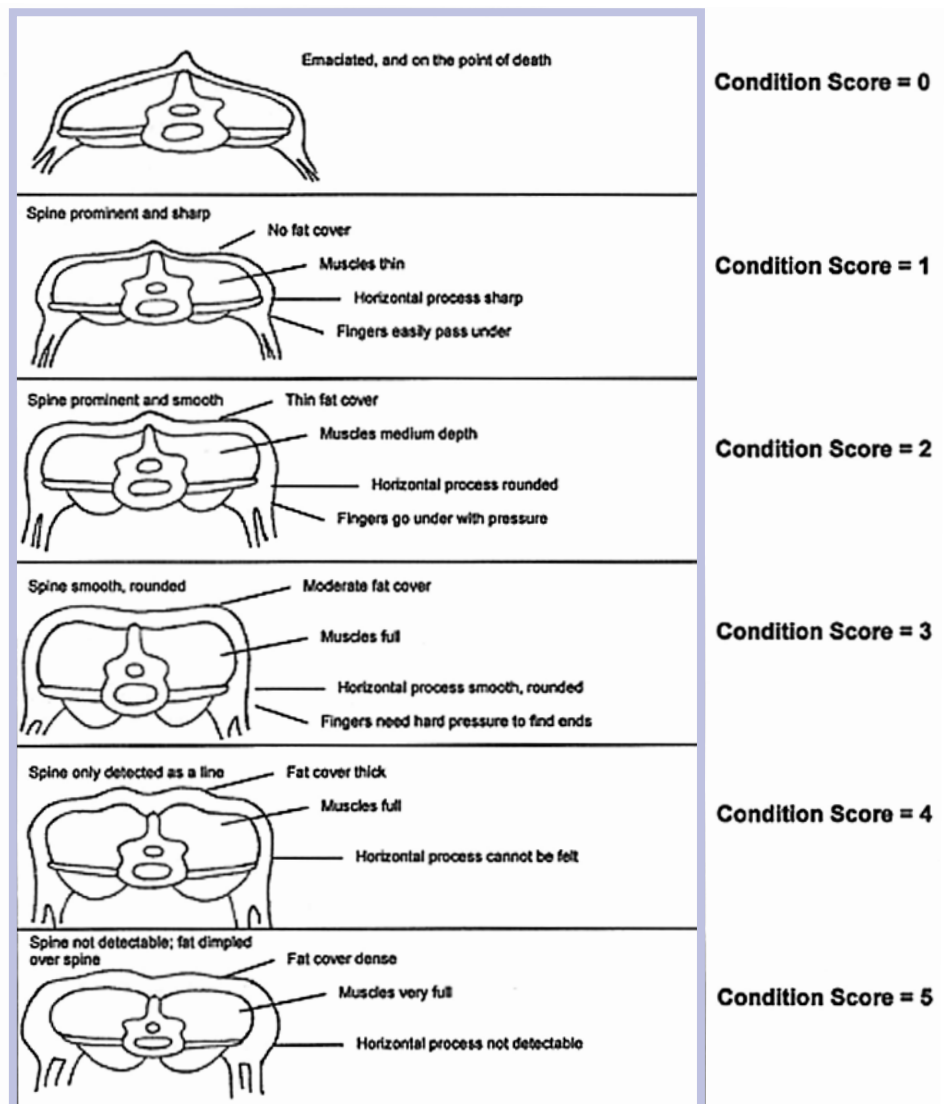


Figure adapted from various sources.