



Issue FEBRUARY 2013

STAFF NEWS

We have some pretty big pieces of news for the start of 2013, with two new arrivals to Western Southland over the festive season.

We would all like to congratulate both Sylvia and Regan who welcomed their daughter Sophie Hildegard Summerfield on Christmas Eve, and Ashleigh and Mark on the birth of their son, Troy Alexander Dobson on 30th December 2012. Both mothers and babies are reported to be doing well, although I can't comment on the fathers at this stage. We are all expecting lots of baby visits to the clinic and look forward to both Sylvia and Ashleigh returning to work later in the year.



Sophie Hildegard Summerfield



Troy Alexander Dobson

SHOP TALK

Merial Ancare Drench Promotion



The lucky winners of the Merial Ancare Christmas Eve draw for the garden furniture set were Arnie & Fiona Gray. Now we just need to hope for a warm & sunny autumn so that it can be put to good use.

Seresto

Seresto is the revolutionary new product for the management of fleas and ticks, providing 8 months of continuous protection for both dogs and cats. The collar provides controlled release of a consistent low dose of the active ingredient to kill fleas and repel and kill ticks. The added benefit of this new product for indoor cats and dogs is that it also protects the animal's immediate surroundings against flea larvae development. The collar is odour-free, water-resistant and also has an in-built safety release system for cats to avoid strangulation if trapped.

5-in-1 reminder

Just a reminder to get your orders in for 5-in-1 as soon as possible. We only have a limited amount of stock at last season's prices and so it will be on a first come, first served basis.

Toxo & Campy

Another reminder to complete and return your order forms for Toxo & Campy vaccines. It is now recommended that Toxovax be given at least 8 weeks pre-tup and orders are required at least 4 weeks prior to intended use.

Hill's Dog Food Promotion

Any purchases of large bags of Hill's Dog food will receive a Hill's Science Diet plastic storage bin while stocks last.

Fitness of Livestock for Transport

Changes have recently been made to the Fitness of Livestock for Transport (for slaughter) Veterinary Declaration Certificates. Any animal requiring a Veterinary Declaration for Transport *must* be transported within **7 days** of the Veterinary Examination and completion/issue of the certificate. If the animal is not transported within this time, re-examination and evaluation by a Veterinarian will be required.

CATTLE SECTION

Body Condition Score and Drying-off Decisions

Body Condition Score (BCS) targets at key stages of lactation have been identified to optimise dairy production systems in New Zealand. Management and nutrition in early lactation have little impact on BCS loss, however management and nutrition during mid-late lactation and the dry period can have a significant impact on the rate at which a cow gains or loses body condition.

Your herd should be condition scored on a regular basis, but there are four particularly important times throughout the year when body condition score assessment allows individual groups of cows to be managed differently:



- **Pre-calving** assessment indicates how well the cows have wintered and whether changes to BCS targets at dry-off are required.
- **Pre-mating** assessment allows determination of BCS loss between calving and mating.
- **Pre-Christmas** assessment determines if cows have gained condition since the start of mating and considerations can be made for autumn feed management.
- **Pre-Easter (mid Feb-mid March)** assessment allows decisions to be made with regard to preferential feeding, once-a-day milking or early dry-off.

Body Condition Score Targets

Research has indicated that mature cows should calve at BCS 5.0 for greatest efficiency for milk production and to maximise reproductive efficiency. Younger cows (R2 & R3's) should be

slightly fatter (BCS 5.5) than mature cows at calving in order to improve their chances of becoming pregnant early. Cows fatter than 5.5 at calving will lose more condition post-calving and take longer to cycle.

Achieving Body Condition Score Targets

There are several strategies to help you achieve BCS targets and more than one strategy may be required to ensure that all cows are meeting these targets.



- **Once-a-day Milking**

This is a useful strategy to improve BCS which results from both reduced energy consumption (decreased activity + reduced milk production) and altered physiological processes to promote BCS gain. It is best implemented in mid-late lactation and helps to improve BCS whilst still achieving relatively long lactations. One limitation to this strategy is Bulk Milk Somatic Cell Count and it can only be recommended for herds with an SCC below 200,000.

- **Early Dry-off**

Drying-off cows early to ensure that BCS targets are met prior to winter does not result in reduced profit; the milk forgone in autumn is approximately equal to the production gained the following spring, resulting in no net change in milk revenue. However, there are considerable gains to be made through improved fertility as a direct result of ensuring that cows reach the BCS targets at calving.

Body Condition Score		Days cow needs to be dry before calving	
Mature Cow	Rising 3yo	Autumn Pasture (days)	Autumn Pasture + high quality supplement fed above maintenance (days)
3.0	3.5	160	120
3.5	4.0	130	100
4.0	4.5	100	80
4.5	5.0	70	60
5.0	5.5	30	30
5.0	5.5	Calving	Calving

• **Preferential Feeding**

Cows less than a BCS 3.5 require immediate preferential treatment. They are best run as a separate herd in order to reduce stress and high quality feed should be offered; feed to generous grazing residuals and offer supplement feeds such as PKE ad lib.

* **Supplement Feeding**

Supplement feeding of milkers is of limited use for achieving calving BCS targets in autumn unless poor pasture covers would result in loss of BCS if not supplemented. Unfortunately, high-producing cows are programmed to convert nutrients into milk not body condition, so any supplementary feed during the lactation simply results in increased milk production.

• **Winter Feed Management**

Winter crops are an economical option for feeding cows to maintain BCS, but even well fed cattle can only be expected to gain 0.5BCS during the 8-10 week dry period. Smooth transition periods will help to maximise condition gains on winter crop, but cows will not gain much condition in the first 3-4 weeks on crop due to the adjustment to the change in diet.

There are several points that are important to remember when managing feed and stock to achieve BCS targets:

1. Cows are unlikely to gain more than 0.5 BCS units in 30 days, even if well fed,
2. Cows do not gain BCS in the month prior to calving,
3. It is very difficult to gain BCS over winter on pasture alone,
4. Cows require time to adjust to crop before they will start to gain BCS and they are unlikely to gain more than 0.5 BCS units on winter crop.

Experience and training are important for consistency when condition scoring livestock and this is of particular importance when management decisions are based on the results. We have several vets accredited under the DairyNZ BCS training programme who are available to help you with your drying-off decisions and other condition-based management decisions throughout the season. If you would like more information, please contact the clinic and make an appointment to speak with one of our vets.

SHEEP SECTION

Uddering Ewes

Uddering ewes and culling those with damaged udders is important to ensure that next year's crop of lambs have the best chance of survival especially when you have gone to the trouble of making sure the ewe gets in lamb to start with.

Udder damage is caused from infections that occur during the season and also after weaning. These infections can end up forming hard lumps in the udder and teat canal which means next year she may not be able to suckle lambs.

It is important to get the timing right with uddering ewes; about **one month after weaning** is the best time. Too soon after weaning and the udder is too full of milk so you won't be able to feel all the lumps, and if you leave it for more than a month then a lot of the damaged areas can reduce in size and are harder to feel. These damaged areas may have remodelled so are no longer lumpy, but may still affect milk production and flow next season.

What to look for

- Any firm lumps and bumps in the main part of the udder indicating scarring and possible walled-off abscesses,
- A thickness or hard cord felt within the teat canal; roll the teat between the forefinger and thumb to feel these,
- Ewes with pendulous udders should also be removed as newborn lambs find it hard to latch onto the teat,
- Burst or gangrenous udders; the shearers are likely to pick these up,
- Cut/missing teats; shearers may not tell you about these if they caused them!

This is not as easy as it sounds as some udders may have normal mammary tissue that can feel slightly lumpy or hard especially up high.

Many farmers use the shearers to identify any udder problems, however they will only look and don't actually feel the udder. They will pick up the obvious cases, but there will be many more that could have problems within the udder that are missed.

Preventing mastitis

Not an easy task, but some suggestions to help prevent cases of mastitis during spring are:

- Good pasture cover at lambing,
- Avoid yarding ewes just after weaning when udders are tight and dripping milk; this only causes more mastitis,
- After weaning, ewes should be put onto semi-restricted feed (do not restrict water) for a few days to help them dry off,
- Avoid paddocks where black mastitis has been prevalent before or reduce exposure to the 'grubby' areas in these paddocks; fence off the bare dirt areas under shelter belts or trim shelter belts.

For farms that haven't uddered their ewes in the past, you may find up to 5% or more with damaged udders, but if done annually then you should only have around 1% cull rates.

If you are not sure whether you are uddering them correctly, then keep aside the group that you have picked out to cull and we are happy to go through them with you. You could probably get your rams checked at the same visit.

Teressa Skevington

DEER SECTION

REMINDERS

Worm Control

There has been ongoing debate in recent years as to the most effective products and protocol for the control of intestinal and lung worms in deer. Fortunately, recent studies have provided more reliable information on which to base our drenching decisions.

With regard to the Drench actives, Moxidectin has been shown to have the greatest efficacy, followed by Abamectin and Doramectin. Ivomectin and Eprinomectin are the least effective of the macrocyclic lactone drench family. When considering route of treatment, Pour-on drenches are at best only 80% effective and are therefore not recommended for use in deer.

There are only a limited number of drenches licensed for use in Deer, but the current (off-label) recommendation for drench detailed below will expose the worms in your deer to three drench families, thus slowing the development of resistance.

• **Cydetin injection for cattle and Sheep (Not Cydetin LA)**

- Subcutaneous injection 1ml/50kg lwt (do **not** over or under dose)
- Can apply 49 day meat WHP in spite of off-label use; Cydetin Injection has been shown by ACVM to be safe (NB. In their trial work no other products were used)

Plus

• **Combination Oral Drench e.g. ArrestC 1ml/10kg lwt or Scanda 1ml/10kg lwt**

- The **cattle** meat WHP for Arrest C is 14 days and for Scanda is 10 days.
- All other precautions described on the Data sheet of both products should also be observed.
- A 'White' drench e.g. Oxfen-C can be used, but Combination oral drench preferred.

With the main lungworm challenge between Feb and June, young stock should be drenched at least every 3 weeks throughout Autumn. Red Deer generally develop immunity over autumn so may not need a drench the following spring. If you have any queries, please ask to speak with one of our Vets.

Deernz.org

The much anticipated new Deer Industry website went live in November 2012 at www.deernz.org. The standout new feature is the Productivity Improvement hub. The hub contains detailed production and management information to assist producers, new entrants, students or whoever is seeking information about deer farming. The site is well worth a look as a project team of AgResearch staff and DINZ Executives along with farmer representative reviewers gathered and assessed information from years of research and industry knowledge.

Sheep

- FEC lambs and drench if required; consider Faecal Egg Count Reduction test to assess resistance levels
- FEC ewes
- Udder Ewes (one month post-weaning)
- Mineral check if signs of ill-thrift
- Mix replacement stock with mixed-age ewes at least 2 months pre-mating (HSD risk)
- Vaccinate Two-tooths (and/or hoggets if mating them) with *Toxovax* and *Campylovexin/Campyvax*[†]
- Consider *Androvax/Ovastim* vaccination
- Iodine supplementation pre-mating with *Flexidine* or Potassium Iodide drench
- Palpate +/- Blood test rams and vaccinate dogs
- Teasers in 14-17 days before joining
- FEC & 5-in-1 vaccinate Hoggets.

Cattle

- 7-in-1 booster vaccination for calves
- Drench calves for GI worms/Lungworm – interval depends on drench used (save Endectocides for later); weaning drench for beef calves
- BVD Vaccinate calves with Bovilis
- Pregnancy test cows 6 weeks after the end of AB and/or 6 weeks after the end of bull mating; mark/tag any empty or late cows.
- Arrange Dry Cow Consultation
- Pre-Winter mineral check (Liver Biopsy or blood samples)
- Clostridial vaccine +/- Lepto beef calves at weaning.

Deer

- Sort Dry hinds for culling
- Consider Mineral check through works
- Pre-mating copper supplementation if required +/- Selenium if indicated
- Vaccinate fawns with *Yersiniavax* (first dose) and drench for lungworm
- Certified Velveters required to return all unused drugs with completed and signed record book.

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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, Louise Fieten BVMS MRCVS, Ashleigh S Braithwaite DVM, Aileen Scott BVMS, Julia E Nuttall BVSc, Ruby A Davidson BVetMed, Martha O'Conner MVB MRCVS



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