



The magazine of Cambridge Vets & Cambridge Equine Hospital

Summer 2015

(07) 827 7099

THEILERIA

The summer-autumn is another risk period for Theileria, particularly if you have cows calving (or under nutritional stress). Taking blood samples from your herd will give you an idea of their exposure or susceptibility. If a large proportion of the cows are naïve, or you know there is a high tick burden on your farm, you may want to consider using Bayticol, 2 doses 3 weeks apart at calving to minimize the risk of an outbreak of anaemia at a time when the cows' physiological status can't cope with it very well. The worst scenarios we have seen are when Theileria coincides with calving.

FACIAL ECZEMA AND FACEBOOK - FE & FB

It is FE season again, and it is vital to monitor the spore count on your property to assess the risk. Just drop off some grass samples (from a variety of spots) into the clinic and we will give you the spore count the same day. Another good way of keeping up to date with the area risk is to friend us on Facebook, and receive the updates we post on our wall. All the zinc doses from the December newsletter can be found on our website, but look over the page at the article on zinc toxicity too – be careful to administer the correct quantity of zinc!

A Dry Cow Reminder: If you are drying cows off early, please contact your veterinarian for a consultation. Dry Cow products are restricted drugs and cannot be given over the counter without a prescription.

Scanning - ON TARGET!

Early scanning results look quite promising this year, but with **no inductions** being allowed next year (except for exceptional circumstances), you need to start preparing for next year's repro already!

- Young stock growth is critical to maximize their reproductive success both as yearlings and heifers, as well as first season milk production. If you're not measuring it, you can't spot and fix a problem! Calves should be weighed regularly, and those animals behind the live weight curve need to be run in a separate mob and fed preferentially.
- CVS are offering a new service – **OnTarget – for weighing and recording young stock** the easy way, with EID wand and computerized results for easy uploading. Give Kelvin a ring on 027493 3611.
- Monitor feed quality and quantity for the R2 heifers; have a plan in place for a feed deficit.
- Body Condition Score the herd to ensure the average is on target (85% cows BCS 4.0 +). Cows that don't reach the target of 5.0 by calving are on the back foot for mating, with reduced fertility! Consider early dry off for cows that are too light (especially if they have been scanned as early calvers). We have certified BCS vets who can give you an independent assessment and report for your herd.
- Make sure you have booked in your scanning at an appropriate time to identify late calvers and empties.

INDUCTIONS, NO LONGER AN OPTION!

Just to repeat: routine inductions are no longer permitted.

There are some criteria for dispensation, but they all require extensive evidence for a factor outside the control of the farmer (AB failure, farmer health, earthquake or weather disaster, falsified records for purchased animals, BVD despite management plan, unusual animal health issue). Make sure you have a plan for reproductive success covering all seasons of the year, including nutrition and young stock growth and health.



●●●●●●●●●● COPPER ●●●●●●●●●●

There have been quite a few articles on copper recently.....

Copper level trends have gone up dramatically since 2000; liver levels have risen from an average of 400 to 1200 umol. The maximum levels have gone from 2700 to 11800 in the North Island – toxicity may be seen above 2800! The industry has shifted from monitoring for deficiency to monitoring for toxicity!

This upward shift coincides with PKE feeding patterns; imports have grown from 400 tonnes in 2000 to 1862000 in 2013. PKE has 25-30mg copper/kgDM and very little molybdenum, so it is readily available. Feeding 5kg PKE will provide up to 150mg copper; a 500kg cow producing very well will only need 180-200mg daily.

Copper Toxicity is generally seen as very sick / dead animals with anaemia, jaundice, redwater and liver damage. Abdominal pain and scours may also be seen.

Copper deficiency is a cause of ill thrift, often with a poor coat, and also potentially anaemia.

Biopsy vs. blood test: Numerous studies have suggested that liver biopsies are a more accurate way of assessing copper stores than blood samples. Blood samples are quick and easy, and useful to give an average approximation, but liver biopsy gives a more reliable result. Biopsies on 5-6 cows can be done in a race, or via the abattoir.



Typical stance of a humeral fracture – totally non-weight bearing in front left (note the healthy looking dark coat)

*There has been an outbreak of **leg fractures in NZ heifers** over the last few years!* They present as a young cow bearing no weight at all on a front leg. Examination will reveal a fracture of the humerus, typically a diagonal break. Cases are often seen around calving or mating. Oamaru vets have documented multiple cases almost all of which had very low liver copper. The hypothesis is that with PKE being fed / in-line dispensers used, and herd copper levels being monitored and maintained via that feed, little copper supplements are being given. However, young stock are potentially receiving no copper and may be deficient, in contrast to the main herd. **It is recommended that the R2s have copper levels (liver biopsy) checked** in the autumn in addition and separately to the herd.

ZINC POISONING

Facial Eczema often hits us February-March. Zinc supplementation is the common solution to minimize the impact on the herd, but too much zinc can cause as many problems as not enough! Last year I saw a herd which suffered from zinc poisoning from eating the soil / faeces. Because of the drought they were kept on a sacrifice paddock which was also an effluent paddock. As zinc is excreted in the faeces, the soil had very high zinc levels, which led to high zinc levels in the cows, which cause pica (aberrant appetite) – the cows started eating soil and faeces which raised zinc levels still further in a vicious cycle! Signs included:

- haemolytic anaemia (like Theileria) seen as white fannys and red urine
- death
- milk drop
- weight loss
- scours with a fishy smell
- rough coats
- abortion
- weak and dying calves



I suspect the soil zinc levels are getting high on many farms in the Waikato, so I recommend taking blood samples from the herd to check their zinc levels are high enough for FE but not toxic, and consider getting soil and herbage samples tested for zinc levels. Double check dose rates are correct, especially for young stock.



Above: Xrays of the fractured left humerus.

Left: Photograph of a cow with zinc toxicity. Note the low body condition score and poor coat. Normally this herd calve down at 5.0+. Multiple cows needed assistance to rise from recumbency or were humanely culled due to body condition loss.

Johne's Disease

There is now a milk test available (for herd testing samples) for Johne's disease. This is a very useful tool if you want to control Johne's in

your herd, but there are some potential pitfalls in interpreting the results. A negative result does not guarantee the cow is negative for Johne's disease, just that she is not at the high-shedding stage that elicits a massive (and measurable) immune response. In addition, you need to have a plan for what you will do with the positive cows – some herds may have a very large number of positive cows! Cull them all? Cull them when they show clinical signs (watery scours and wasting in adult cattle)? What about their risk of passing the bacteria onto the calves? Don't keep their calves? Or snatch and grab? Keep their colostrum and milk out of the calf milk vat? Talk it over with your vet.

WORMWISE UPDATE

Faecal Egg Count Reduction Tests (FECRTs) can be used to see which drenches are most effective on your farm. Specific lambs need to be marked, faecal samples taken, treated, then re-sampled to see the impact of the drench on the worm egg count. The best time to do them is between January and March; too early may miss Barber's pole, too late may miss Ostertagia and be dominated by trichostrongylus.

Targeted Selective Treatments

To reduce resistance, and to maintain sustainability of drenches, a proportion of the population must remain unexposed to treatment – refugia. Identify and treat only those animals that will benefit from a drench.

One option is to treat individuals according to efficiency of production measured by bodyweight gain. Several studies have reduced drench usage significantly (50%) by just treating stock that were below target, and yet maintained production levels (LWT gain) in the mob.

When to drench – when there is a worm burden. However, FECs only rise nearly 3 weeks after the worm burden rises when growth is already affected, so it is a good idea to monitor production figures in young stock for early warning. FECs are a good trigger for drenching after 9 months of age (when calves and lambs develop some natural immunity to worms), or for stock on "clean" grazing.

Which drench – FECRTs will give specific advice, otherwise combination drenches select less for resistant worms.

Route of Admin – oral is best for sheep (combinations are available, and there is no tail of activity).

Which animals

Mature animals need less drenching than youngstock. They are most likely to be at risk with the rain after a drought – when the animals are stressed and susceptible, and the worm burden increases.

Youngstock drench – dictated by the level of worm challenge.

Leave some untreated to provide refugia (to protect against selecting for resistant worms) but if there is a high risk (e.g. outbreak of Barber's Pole in lambs), treat all animals.

Where to graze

Expose youngstock to lower levels of worm challenge. If calves and hoggets can be grazed away from their winter grazing, the winter growth rates can be lifted. Grazing undrenched ewes over the same area as lambs over summer and autumn decreases risk of resistant worms.



- *Why do bees hum? Because they don't know the words.*
- *Why do birds fly south for the winter? It's too far to walk.*
- *Why is there a crab in prison? Because he kept pinching things!*
- *What do you call a brainy insect? A spelling bee.*
- *What happened to the cat that swallowed a ball of wool? She had mittens.*
- *What do you call a fish with no eyes? A fsh.*
- *Where do cows go with their friends? The mooovies!*
- *What do you call a fly without wings? A walk.*



"Man! What I wouldn't do for some croutons!"

SBE - Sporadic Bovine Encephalomyelitis

Two outbreaks have been seen in calves in Canterbury, caused by the bacteria *Chlamydophila pecorum*. In ruminants it can cause pneumonia, polyarthritis, encephalomyelitis and gut signs, although it does not always cause disease. Clinical signs include fever, loss of appetite, dull mentation, and nervous signs including incoordination or head-pressing. If you see anything like this in calves, sheep or goats, as it has only recently become recognized in NZ, please contact us.

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Clinic Gossip...

After enjoying a suitably hot Christmas and New Year break, the Cambridge Vets staff are back into the full swing of things and ready for a busy year ahead!

Christina is busily planning for her upcoming nuptials at the end of March and is hoping for a sunny day (chances look good!). We wish you all the best, Christina and John.



Richard is looking forward to 6 month escapade around the world visiting not 1 but 5 countries in total. One of our nurses, Kimberley is also

off on an intrepid journey to Vietnam in February for 10 days. We hope she spends all her 'dong' and brings us back some souvenirs. Congratulations to Peter Briston who will be celebrating his 40th in February. Best wishes Pete, you don't look a day over 39!

Smoked Marlin should be on the menu soon... Bill, Kelvin, Christina and Kimberley are going Big Game fishing over the second week of February. Good luck guys and gals, we hope you don't feed the fish too much!



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