



SUMMER NEWSLETTER

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www.cambridgevets.co.nz

Merry Christmas from Cambridge Vets Clinic Opening Hours for Christmas and New Year 23/24

Saturday 23rd December	9am - 12:30pm
Sunday 24th December	Christmas Eve - CLOSED
Monday 25th December	Christmas Day - CLOSED
Tuesday 26th December	Boxing Day - CLOSED
Wednesday 27th December	8am - 5pm
Thursday 28th December	8am - 5pm
Friday 29th December	8am - 5pm
Saturday 30th December	CLOSED
Sunday 31st December	New Years Eve - CLOSED
Monday 1st January	New Years Day - CLOSED
Tuesday 2nd January	New Years Holiday - CLOSED
Wednesday 3rd January	8am - 5pm
Thursday 4th January	Normal Hours Resume



Welcome to your Farm Newsletter for Summer of 2023/2024!

Scanning

If we get the El Nino dry summer being predicted, it will be vital to confirm your empties and identify your late calvers so excess stock are not being carried in a feed pinch.

Scanning is a quick, cheap way of getting this data. We can enter it on a tablet into Infovets and then upload it to Minda automatically.

Timing is critical though – we recommend scanning at 6 weeks after the end of mating to be able to get as many accurate date measurements as possible.

Gossip

With a sad, sad heart we bid farewell to Brenda, who is departing Cambridge Vets after 3 ½ years as our Go To person on the office phones.

The voices greeting you on the phone now will already be familiar to you - Sonya will be our primary staff member on the phone, with Dani, Shally Christina, Katrina and Natalie alongside her.

Facial Eczema

Every year we see cases of FE, where the animal is losing weight or is showing skin signs. *Pithomyces chartarum* is a fungus in the pasture whose toxin sporidesmin poisons the biliary tract of the liver in deer, cattle, alpaca and sheep. This may be obvious and seen as red peeling skin and photosensitivity as the chlorophyll cannot be processed, or it may just be vague sick weight loss signs. You can also get redwater as the red blood cells break down.

Unfortunately there is no great treatment.

- Provide shade
- Manderson's Mixture
- Vitamins
- Zinc cream

So prevention is the best option.

Interestingly chicory, plantain, legumes and tall fescue are less prone to *Pithomyces*, but zinc is the mainstay of prevention.

We generally see spores rising in February to peak in March and continuing past April.

Drop off grass samples at the clinic and we can do a spore count to see the risk profile on your farm. We publish these on our Facebook and website, so keep an eye on these for your area trend.

If you are using zinc in the water to protect against Facial Eczema, you may need to start at half rates in the new year. We find adding flavouring helps mask the bitter taste, either aniseed or apple.

Zinc levels need to be in the Goldilocks zone – high enough to protect the liver from the oxidative damage cause by sporidesmin, but not so high as to cause poisoning which damages the pancreas and causes the animal to look sick, potentially with redwater, and fade away.

Check your dose rates carefully—check out our website: <https://www.cambridgevets.co.nz/farm-animal-services> and call us to take some blood samples to confirm zinc levels are right in the animal.

Options for zinc administration are:

- Zinc oxide in the feed or drench
- Zinc sulphate in the water
- Zinc bolus e.g. Time Capsule, FaceGuard (cattle, sheep) – these last 4-6 weeks depending on brand, so mark on your calendar when the next one is due!

An alternative is spraying paddocks with fungicide e.g. Mycotak, this needs to be done before the spore count rises.



Anti-microbial Resistance

Who remembers the O'Neill Report from the UK?

It painted a grim picture of antimicrobial resistance, and predicted that 10 million people around the world would die of AMR annually by 2050 if the risks were not addressed.

As 75% of antibiotics used are administered to animals, we have all been put under some scrutiny to reduce and refine antimicrobial use to slow down AMR developing in people.

In 2016 NZ was assessed as the 3rd lowest user of antibiotics in animals globally. The veterinary and livestock sectors have been working together using the Traffic Light system, designing and implementing proactive disease management strategies, and having good conversations about prudent use.

The good news is that the usage (10mg/kg population correction unit in 2015) is no longer increasing by 5% a year, it has flattened in 2021 and is likely to actually drop to <6mg/kg in the finalized 2022 figures.

Hopefully this will mean, having taken this seriously, we will still retain access to the products we need for welfare and reasonable management decisions.



Sheep and Lifestyle Block - Summer Jobs

I know summer should be beach-based!
But there are a few jobs you will need to consider over summer:

Have you got your sheep booked in for shearing? If there is a bit of a wait, you may need to just crutch / dag them yourself in the meantime to minimize the risk of Fly Strike if they are bit dirty round the back end.

Barber's Pole can strike hard and fast. *Haemonchus contortus* is a roundworm which causes anaemia and can kill or debilitate lambs / hoggets. It is particularly seen over summer / autumn, and leaves them weak and thin with pale membranes in the mouth and eyes. Consider using a long-acting 'mectin drench such as Cydectin. We can run worm egg counts on faecal samples in our clinic lab if you want to assess the level of worm burden / need to drench.

Goats will often need a drench over summer too, but unlike sheep they do not develop natural immunity to worms, so drench all ages not just youngstock. For most drenches goats need a higher dose rate than sheep.

Worms

There is some great updated information coming out of the WormWise group now – check it out online <https://beeflambnz.com/programmes-partnerships/current-programmes/wormwise-programme>.

A parasite burden may be sub-clinical (decreasing appetite, reduced growth rates and lower production) but it may extend to being visible clinically as weight loss, diarrhoea, bottle jaw and anaemia.

However, there is a continued increase of anthelmintic resistance, with resistance to triple-actives in calves for example increasing from 6% 18%.

Not only does this have an impact on greenhouse gas production, but as the seasons become warmer and wetter, so the parasite burden will become heavier, more resistant eggs will be spread, and parasites will move further south.

- So blind drenching of whole mobs with a random product at prescribed intervals is no longer a viable option. We need to be looking at parasite management from a whole farm perspective:
- Maintain general health and condition to minimize their susceptibility to parasites

Foot trimming for both sheep and goats – take the opportunity of these yarding jobs to trim their feet too. We can show you how if you are not feeling confident.

Cobalt deficiency is also often observed over summer, resulting in ill thrift and poor-growing youngstock. A vitamin B12 injection can really make them bloom.

Fly strike – best avoided by shearing and keeping on top of a worm burden and footrot. Often first noticed as a black stain in the wool over the rump or shoulders. It needs to be clipped out and a product applied to kill the maggots and repel the flies. We have some Zapp for small numbers of sheep. If the animal is sick, it is best to speak to one of our vets.

Facial eczema - This is a risk for sheep, cattle and alpacas in the Waikato. Generally we see high spore counts from February through April; keep an eye on our Facebook page for updates. Zinc boluses are a highly effective method of reducing the risk (see Facial Eczema article).

- Keep youngstock on pastures with good cover so they are not grazing low and hoovering up worm eggs
- Broadleaf summer crops such as brassicas, chicory, plantain have a reduced worm burden compared to grass pastures
- Rotate old stock and youngstock or different species, to reduce worm burden on the pasture
- Reduce drench use to specific stock classes
- Focus on youngstock. Adult sheep and cattle should not need drenching
- Focus on under-performing animals, consider not drenching the best 10% (leave as Refugia)
- Only drench when needed – get counts done
- Ensure the right dose is given by weighing a sample of the mob, and calibrating the drench gun in a measuring jug.
- Choose the best product for the time of year; calves should get oral drenches as they are much more effective than pour-ons, levamisole is best for *Cooperia* worms, long-acting 'mectins may be needed for Barber's Pole.
- Check efficacy of the product with Faecal Egg Count Reduction Tests, where samples are taken at drenching and compared to samples 10 days later.

Sheep - Mating Vaccines

Toxovax

Toxoplasmosis never goes away and has been shown to be present on every sheep farm in New Zealand. One shot of Toxovax gives your ewes a lifetime of protection against the devastating abortion storms Toxoplasmosis can cause.

Vaccination can increase lamb numbers by an average of 3% as well as decreasing the number of dry ewes by 14% on average.

Ewe hoggets and two toothers are most at risk, but any susceptible ewe that contracts Toxoplasmosis during pregnancy is at risk.

Infection causes:

“At early gestation – embryonic loss or reabsorption” Mid gestation – fetal death, mummification and abortion” Late gestation – birth of weak, non-viable lambs.

The life cycle of Toxoplasmosis involves wild birds and rodents who have cysts in their muscle and are then eaten by cats. Cats then pass out the infective stage of the life cycle directly onto pasture or hay via faeces.



Sheep grazing on this contaminated pasture or hay can pick up the disease, and if this occurs for the first time during pregnancy, abortions can occur. Often the farmer sees a reduced scanning percentage and a lot of late or dry ewes. Abortions are not always seen.

Toxovax is a live vaccine, has a short shelf life and is made to order. Please order your Toxovax from us at least four weeks before you need to use it, which should be at least 4 weeks before mating, to ensure supply.

Campyvax

Campyvax requires a booster pre-tupping and a sensitizer 4-8 weeks earlier for ewe lambs. Vaccinating with Campyvax® improves lambing performance and prevention of Campylobacter abortions. Flocks that are vaccinated have lambing percentages on average 9% higher than flocks that are not. Vaccination should happen 4-8 weeks prior to mating. Hoggets need a sensitizer dose 4 weeks before this shot (ie 8-12 weeks before mating).

- Campylobacter is present on 88% of New Zealand farms.
- Maiden Ewes hoggets or two toothers are most at risk but mixed age ewes who have not been previously exposed (up to 50%) are still at risk too.
- It is the most common infectious agent causing abortion on New Zealand farms, with 60% of sheep abortions diagnosed attributed to Campylobacter.
- Occurs when susceptible animals ingest contaminated feed or water, or by direct contact with infected fetuses or fetal membranes. Scavenging birds such as the Black Backed Gull may spread the disease between paddocks and even farms.
- After infection, the organism is present in discharges for up to six weeks, with some ewes becoming longer-term carriers.
- Infection can persist for a number of years in carrier sheep without overt signs of disease.
- Signs are not just aborted lambs, there may be reduced scanning and lambing percentages too.



BVD

I must admit I got a bit bored of banging on about BVD. After all, everybody knows about it, and we have some good systems in place don't we? However, I have seen multiple incursions and misunderstandings over the last few seasons, so I am going to revisit an old favourite!

The Disease

BVD is caused by a very contagious virus which is excreted in many bodily secretions. It is estimated to cost the national dairy industry \$120M per year, averaging \$70,000 per farm.

If a pregnant cow is infected while pregnant in her first trimester, the virus will cross the placenta to the foetus. The calf's immune system will never recognize the virus as foreign and the calf will be Persistently Infected. Ultimately, they will develop Mucosal Disease (ulcers down the throat and intestinal tract) and die.

The virus compromises the immune system. In a herd of cows, this can present as a cell count or mastitis problem, lower yield, poor conception rate, abortions, still births and deformed calves. In a mob of youngstock, they will be poor do'ers and may have scours and be prone to infections.

The Testing Options

Fortunately the tests available these days are both very accurate and very good value.

Bulk Milk can be tested for both the virus and antibodies. This can be done via CVS and our lab (SVS) as a single sample from the dairy company, a program of tests, or a sample direct from the vat (when all cows are contributing), or as a program by LIC. Obviously it only tests the cows in the vat, not any drystock, youngstock, or girls not in the vat. Aim to do it before mating. If the virus is detected, it is likely to be due to a PI in the milking herd. Often this is a low-producing, poor looking heifer. If the antibody levels suddenly shoot up to "very high", there is likely to be a PI on the farm.

Individual animals can then be tested via the herd test (targeted or all of a group) or blood tests.

Blood tests are useful for beef animals, drystock, bulls or dairy cows.

Tissue samples can also be submitted, using the ear punch. Ideal for a line of animals like bulls or calves.

Control

- Biosecurity – Keeping a closed herd will reduce the risk, but I have seen several BVD cases in closed herds. Ensure all boundaries are secure, and preferably double-fenced with adjoining properties that have live-stock. Visitors should disinfect boots and equipment.
- Regular bulk milk testing (see above).
- Blood testing new animals – all bought-in animals should get tested.
- Ear punch testing of calves – this can be done on the same sample as DNA testing ear punches. When they are sedated for disbudding is a good opportunity, but be aware there are 2 types of punch now – wet and dry – and if they are less than 35 days old you can only use the dry ones for BVD (but not DNA).
- Vaccination is highly effective (except for PIs) to protect both the cow and the foetus. This option is particularly important for at-risk stock which are mixing with other animals. In most farming businesses locally, this would primarily be the youngstock. Vaccination before mating will reduce the chances of them picking up the virus and potentially giving birth to a PI calf back on the dairy platform. Either 2 shots as a calf and a pre-mating booster, or 2 shots in the 1st winter before mating.
- Bulls must have been tested (to prove they are not a PI) and vaccinated (to prevent them becoming transiently infected /picking it up and spreading it between cows). The vaccine needs 2 shots a month+ apart, and an annual booster. Don't wait till November to get this done!
- Culling – PI animals should be culled as this is a fatal, and they will be busily shedding heaps of virus to all the other stock.





Calf Club Season

Cambridge Vets was delighted to sponsor Newstead Model School's Calf Club.

Congratulations to all the participants who did a great job looking after their animals.

It was a lovely bright day too!

We've got Christmas covered this season!

Enjoy absolute satisfaction this season with the ultimate parasite control combinations from Alleva Animal Health. Plus receive a ham with qualifying products.

Purchase a 2.5L or 5L of TURBO® or BOSS® Pour On, 20L of TURBO Triple + Tape or 2 x 20Ls of BOSS Triple and receive a ham.

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