

AUGUST 2016

# VET NEWS

PAIN RELIEF IN CATTLE

EQUINE ULTRASOUND

TAIL PAINTING



PHOTOS BY RICHARD HILSON

**VET** services  
[www.vshb.co.nz](http://www.vshb.co.nz)

# PAIN RELIEF IN CATTLE

HARRY WHITESIDE

There has been a massive drive in recent years towards minimising the pain animals may experience from time to time. Spring brings with it no end of opportunity for such potentially painful processes!

Giving birth is of course the number one trial at this particular time of year and whilst the majority of animals go through labour without complication there are always going to be those individuals for whom the process is a whole lot tougher. A timely treatment of anti-inflammatory after a difficult calving not only lessens the pain of such a birth but can also significantly reduce the risk of more serious nerve damage resulting from inflammation. The often referred to "Downer Cow" will be suffering inflammatory damage to traumatised nerves one or two days after the event. The window of opportunity for response is quite limited and by the time we become involved the outcome of treatment has already become seriously compromised.

Mastitis and metritis (uterine infections) are also commonly

seen at this time of year; both of which can be extremely uncomfortable. Much work in recent years has shown a positive correlation between recovery rates and treatment of mastitis with anti-inflammatories. This benefit has even been shown to improve conception rates in New Zealand trials.

Further down the line when calves are 3-4 weeks old we can start to think about debudding and whilst there is no legal requirement to provide pain relief for this procedure the job is infinitely more humane and easier with it. Again, much time and money has been invested in this area in recent years and the results of trial work are unequivocal. Calves that have been treated with anti-inflammatory pain relief achieve much better growth rates than those left untreated. These benefits are not just short term gains and carry through to the achievement of mature live weights in heifers. Our policy has always been to use a local anaesthetic for this procedure and the lack of distress makes not only for happy animals but happy farmers too!

Don't let pain become a pain for you and your stock this season!

## Introducing .....

# CHECK UP IN CLINIC MILK SAMPLE CULTURE

GEERT GELLING

Culturing mastitis milk samples will help to treat mastitis in dairy cows efficiently. Knowing which bug is the culprit will narrow down the choices of antibiotics to use and will increase the success rate of treatment of clinical mastitis. Getting it right the first time will mean lower treatment cost and less milk lost due to milk with holding.

Check Up mastitis culture, now available through VSHB clinics in Waipukurau, Dannevirke and Hastings, will give reliable results overnight.

Please contact your clinic for more information.



# REGULAR VET VISITS ON DAIRY FARMS OVER THE SPRING PERIOD

GEERT GELLING

Not many people outside the dairy industry realise how busy and how challenging a spring calving season is on a dairy farm. Large numbers of cows calving daily means that large numbers of calves need to be picked up and fed colostrum in a hygienic and timely way, while calved cows need to be drafted off from the springer mob, then milked and moved to the colostrum mob.

Cows need to be checked (udder health and general health) before they move out of the colostrum mob into the milking herd, while treated animals need to be milked and grazed separately in a hospital mob. Calves need to be fed twice a day and checked for animal health issues. In the meantime increasing numbers of cows need to be milked twice a day. It is clear that a lot of labour is involved, often at times that most people are still fast asleep.

When animal health problems occur timely intervention is the most effective way to solve these problems. Solving animal

health problems as soon as possible will result in cows being in the best position to start the milking season, and in October to enter the mating season. As monitoring animal health and treating sick cows and calves takes time, while labour supply is stretched already, an option is to book in regular, weekly or fortnightly vet visits over the busy spring period.

Cows not doing well, or cows not reacting properly to treatment, can be dealt with in an organised and efficient way. Checking endometritis (metri-checking) early is far more efficient than checking cows just pre mating, resulting in higher pregnancy rates for treated animals. Lame cows treated early will produce more milk, will maintain a better condition and will have a higher pregnancy rate later in the season.

Regular vet visits will help you to maintain high levels of animal welfare and will help you to look after your staff over this challenging period.

**Existing clients can now order/request products online at  
<http://www.vshb.co.nz/request/>  
these products will then be sent the following day on the RD.**

# TAIL PAINTING AND NON-CYCLERS

HARRY WHITESIDE

Accurate heat detection is essential to reproductive success i.e. getting as many cows as possible back in calf as quickly as possible post-calving and therefore achieving a compact calving the following season.

Tail painting is probably the most commonly used means of achieving this on NZ dairy farms.

Cows are in heat for only a very short time (average 8 hours) and it is easy to miss. Missed heats are costly and calculating a missed heat for a cow producing 1.2kg MS per day equates to a loss of 25kg MS over the 21 days between the missed heat and the next cycle. At a pay out of \$4.25 per kilo of MS this represents a loss of \$106...and that is for just one cow!!

Pre-mating heat detection is a particularly useful tool to assess whether or not early intervention may be necessary.

The use of one colour of tail paint is recommended from at least 3 weeks out from the planned start of mating (PSM).

A second (and maybe even a third) colour is then used as cows lose their paint.

Cows retaining the original first colour before PSM are the non-cyclers and decisions need to be made whether or not to get in early and "wake" these girls up.

If cycling is less than 75% by 10 days PSM there are too many non-cyclers.

Good record keeping and a rigid adherence to checking cows and changing tail paint colours is crucial.

An alternative and easier to interpret alternative to tail paint (though more costly) is the use of heat mount detectors which can be of the pressure activated or scratch-off variety.

Once a cow has been inseminated it is important to reapply yet another colour of tail paint or a new heat mount detector in order to pick up returns.

The decision when to bite the bullet and deal to non-cyclers is never an easy one and the temptation to wait another day is understandable with poor payouts. However, delays in treating non cyclers could turn out to be the most expensive mistake of the season and will further impact on future seasons; 7-10 days before PSM treatment benefits are far greater than waiting until 1-2 weeks have elapsed. This has been shown time and time again but it is still a very difficult one to have faith in!

This season it may be prudent to concentrate on the 2, 3 and 4 year old girls as a means of targeting the most valuable cows in the herd.

# THE PRE-LAMB SEMINARS- WHAT NEXT?

RICHARD HILSON

We held a very successful and well-attended series of seminars in mid June (Wairarapa) and early July (Dannevirke, Waipawa and Hastings), focusing on ewes in particular. We are about to send out printed copies of the presentations to attendees. If you would like a copy give your clinic a call.

There was a wide range of topics covered, including an update on scanning for 2016, the effect of facial eczema on scanning, animal health pointers and some local trial work. A significant part of the seminars was spent providing farmers with a good understanding of the way in which long acting anthelmintic products, and capsules in particular, fit into the approach to pre-lamb treatments.

**Pre-lamb treatments?** The net result was that we have had a tremendous amount of interest from farmers who were at these seminars, to discuss parasite management this spring and the follow up programmes we have in place. There is no doubt that this has been a very tough winter and this was the underlying message throughout the seminars. Scanning results have largely been reasonable but there are now very low pasture covers, stressed and light conditioned ewes, and plenty of parasites. We need a very kind spring to sneak through now and the discussions regarding plans for spring have taken into account all the factors that affect the choices around pre-lamb treatments (or in some cases, no treatments). To assist in that decision we are using purpose-printed decision tables and we have these available at the clinics for you to use in conjunction with your vet. It doesn't take long to make some measured decisions, while considering the different classes of stock one at a time.

**Follow up monitoring?** We absolutely need to monitor how well some of the long acting products are working. On one hand, it is nice to prove that they are fully effective and that is what we all hope we'll see, in the main. On the other hand, if they aren't working really well on your farm then we need to know that- continuing to use a specific product when there is "leakage" due to resistant parasites will only mean the problem grows worse as the resistant parasites breed up slowly over time. If we know this

is happening we can look to a short term fix with an "exit" drench and then take a longer term view to other options (and not just another drench).

So we will be monitoring a significant number of flocks where long acting products such as Extender and Bionic capsules or any of the injectable products have been used. What is the cost to you? Nothing. We have good support from Merial Ancare and our aim is to involve farmers who have expressed an interest already as well as contacting other users of these products to see if they would like to take part. We will require ten faecal samples per farm (and more than one set if more than one type of product was used) from ewes known to have been treated: from there we'll do the rest. We'll get your information back to you and we'll discuss those results.

We have not done monitoring on this scale before and we know it will throw up some really good results. And it'll also throw up some results that we'd all rather not see, but which will assist us in making sensible sustainable choices for your farm, into the future. Want to know more? Please contact one of our clinics to get set up to know even more than you did before about worms and drenches.



I was fortunate enough to attend a recent equine tendon and joint ultrasound course held at Massey University. This was run by Jean-Marie Denoix, arguably the world's leading equine ultrasound expert. He has pretty much written just about everything published in the field of horse ultrasound technique and interpretation.

The course was run over three days and covered a large range of anatomical areas including the flexor tendon area, carpus (knee), tarsus (hock), stifle, shoulder, fetlock, pastern, suspensory ligament and foot.

Whilst we use ultrasound examination routinely in the diagnosis of "bowed tendon" the information from this course should allow us to accurately assess other areas.

The format of the days included Jean Marie doing a demo with two big screens – one with anatomical dissection photos, adjacent to the image he was scanning on a horse's leg. This allowed the audience to compare the ultrasound image to the structures imaged.

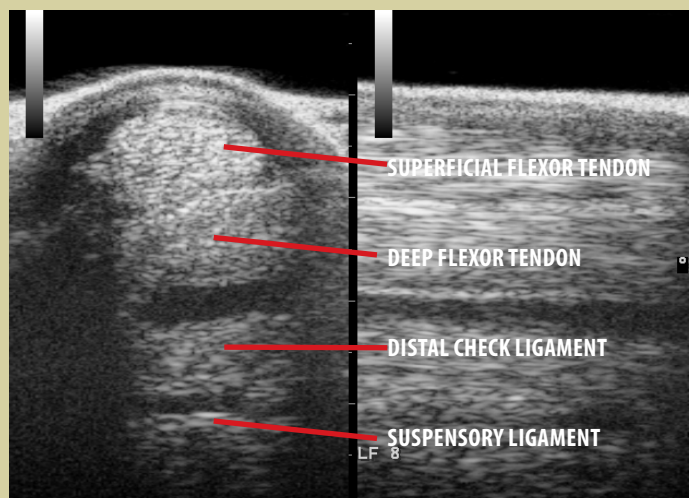
After the demo on each area we then had a go at the very patient Massey mares! I found the practical nature of this course very valuable. Whilst Jean –Marie made the techniques look very simple it took some time and perseverance to achieve images of similar quality. The ultrasound units we used on the course were identical to ours – Mylab machines – very fortuitous as it makes it a lot easier knowing the individual machine settings.

The following are a few examples of different cases we have seen recently.

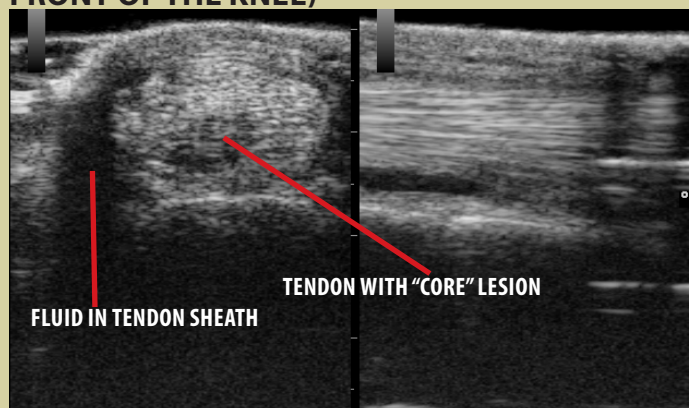
## NORMAL DEEP FLEXOR TENDON AT LEVEL OF HEEL BULBS



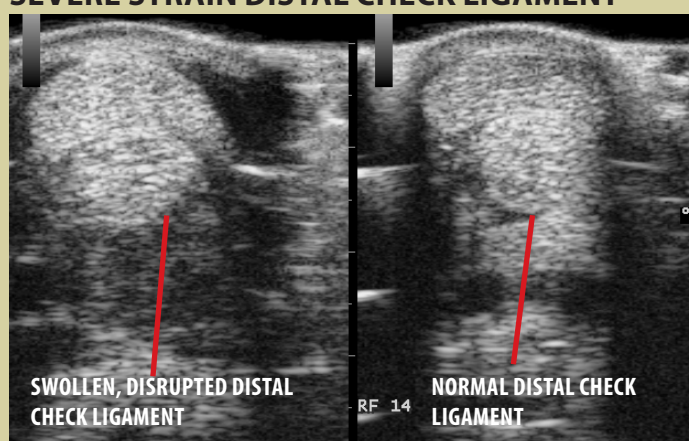
## NORMAL FLEXOR TENDONS AT MID- CANNON



## EFFUSION OF THE EXTENSOR CARPII RADIALIS TENDON SHEATH WITH TENDONITIS (OVER THE FRONT OF THE KNEE)



## SEVERE STRAIN DISTAL CHECK LIGAMENT



**Congratulations to East Coast winners at the recent national Sheep Industry awards in Masterton. James and Jane Hunter, "Rangitoto", Porangahau, Derek Daniell "Wairere" and Emily Crofoot "Castlepoint Station", Wairarapa**

# SEASONAL UPDATE

## HASTINGS/NAPIER

Finally some rain but just how much growth with it will be interesting. Some reports indicate soil temps are still high enough so there may be some.... but reality bites that this autumn/winter drought plus facial eczema is making it very challenging!!!

Many farmers are supplementing and some farmers supplements are very innovative with cattle being offered pasta a new one!! Half way to spaghetti and meatballs!

A reminder that transitioning onto supplements needs to be a gradual increasing process over 10-14 days to allow rumen to adjust and to minimise risk of acidosis.

Covers are low and the old adage that "80% of the worm burden is in the bottom 2cm" is also a timely reminder that the parasite challenge is likely to be major. If it stays mild and you get growth the worm burden will be significant. We never really get cold enough to have a significant impact on worms over winter. The skiers amongst you might like it to be "minus 10 for 3 weeks" but that does not even happen in a normal winter and that is the cold required to damage parasite challenge significantly. Plan ahead with your preferred vet and Harold - make decisions, then

## WAIPUKURAU

Winter began uncommonly dry, but as mid July rolled by we received some welcome rain, which has helped in alleviating the soil moisture deficit we are experiencing. This was a welcome relief to many with lambing and calving around the corner and fingers will be crossed for a few more good showers before spring arrives.

Teat-sealing has come to an end and has been another successful season with many heifers now prepared for calving, by the end the team was in full swing and will look to continue this

## DANNEVIRKE

The moisture has definitely arrived in most areas over July. This was probably a bit too late for most but will have gone some way to topping up empty dams and ponds. I can testify to being at a rugby game in the worst wind and rain I have ever seen last weekend but also seeing some of the best rugby, so adverse weather isn't always bad!

We have been seeing some stock in lighter condition than normal so some thought about how they are managed over the next few months is a good idea. Animal health wise we have seen some fairly high parasite burdens in some young stock,

## WAIRARAPA

Many of our farmers down this way have been kept busy applying capsules, injecting long and short acting pre lamb products or bringing in Faecal egg count samples to see whether their mobs need to be drenched or not. Some of the earlier country has been sprinkled with some very lucky lambs that managed to avoid being born in a bitter southerly.

The next job on the cards is pre lamb 5 in 1 vaccinating, traditionally this has been done at set stocking, with around 14 days from the start of lambing. This year with the season we have been thrown, we are recommending moving this procedure forward to 4-6 weeks pre lamb. This is to mitigate the risks of ewes off feed for an extended period of time, or if you have dramatic changes weather issues.

**RICHARD MCKENZIE**

make it happen [is often obvious but once you have a plan that you can work to it can save on some sleepless nights and grey hairs].

Amongst the horses a lot of them are light and always take longer than you think to put the weight back on. We are seeing a number of colics due to the above also a) supplements being a major change in feed and b) larvae migrating through intestinal tracts so again gradual introduction of new feeds and maybe greater worming than normal required. Be aware that larvae and encysted larvae don't produce eggs so a faecal egg count is a guide but not an absolute that worms are not active at this time of year.

If mares are in foal /or breeding time to think...

- increasing feeding to 20% above maintenance for last 3 months of pregnancy -empty mares if looking to breed this year and want an early mating get on rising plane of nutrition from mid July and consider lights /equilume -pre foal vaccinations. Pnemequine has not been available and Pnemabort is now.

Bring on an early spring please.

**SAM BURROWS**

momentum next year. Similarly deer scanning has come to an end with some good and bad results, highlighting how much of a difference a dud stag can make. Our pre-lamb seminars were well attended on the whole, with some very topical points outlined especially from our own sheep and beef vet of the year, Harry Whiteside's talk on what to keep an eye on for ewes around lambing. As many will be aware Harry was named Sheep and Beef Vet of the year at the recent NZVA conference, well done and congratulations.

**SIMON MARSHALL**

lung worm in yearling cattle and internal worms in lambs. Just a reminder to be vigilant in your monitoring and not too push drench intervals out too far if you are not monitoring.

We are really happy to provide advice around any animal health issues you may be seeing or want to try and prevent. Relevant issues at this time of the year are metabolic disease in sheep and cows, or parasite management of ewes at lambing time. Even half an hour spent talking over these issues can make a big difference. We look forward to seeing you over the spring!

**KATE SOUTHEY**

We are starting to see a fair few Rumetrace Magnesium capsules head out the door in preparation for calving time. This is a timely reminder to plan ahead, these capsules take 7-10 days to reach full effect. But rest assured they do provide a continuous release of available Magnesium in the rumen for 9-12 weeks. Feel free to call Kate at the clinic to discuss further.

The equine team have been busy out and about lately and they are pleased to announce their up and coming Equine reproduction evening. This will be held on Tuesday August 16<sup>th</sup>, at the Masterton clinic at 24 Lincoln Road and starts at 5:30pm. Dr Erica Gee from Massey University will be our guest speaker at this event. Please RSVP to Kate at the clinic for catering purposes.

# Take a load off



**VET**services  
Hawke's Bay, Dannevirke & Wairarapa

Purchase \$500 worth of Merial Ancare products at Vet Services and go into the draw to **WIN 1 of 11 Brent Smith BS4C Farm Bike Trailers**, valued at \$1923 each.

**NAPIER** 210 Taradale Road 06 843 5308

**HASTINGS** 801W Heretaunga Street 06 876 7001

**DANNEVIRKE** 193-195 High Street 06 374 7021

**WAIPUKURAU** 43 Takapau Road 06 858 9060

**MASTERTON** 24 Lincoln Road 06 378 2662

[www.vshb.co.nz](http://www.vshb.co.nz)

**VET**services