

VET NEWS

TOXOVAX

DIPPING

NEW STAFF

*Season's Greetings to All —
Have a Safe and Happy Christmas and a
Prosperous New Year*



WHAT IS THE STORY WITH TOXOPLASMA ABORTIONS AFTER TOXOVAX?

SARA SUTHERLAND

This year we have had a number of farmers bring up the idea that Toxovax isn't working, or that there is a "new strain" of toxoplasmosis that the vaccine doesn't protect against.

Before I address these myths, here is a brief review of how this disease works. Cats eat an animal (mouse or lamb or afterbirth) infected with *Toxoplasma gondii*. Within about 10 days, millions of eggs (oocysts) start to be shed in the faeces, and continue to be shed for several days. These oocysts survive for a long time (months to years) in the environment and are infective after a couple of days. When a mouse, or a sheep that is not pregnant, accidentally eats one of these microscopic eggs, the organism spreads throughout the body and makes little cysts. The *Toxoplasma* organisms sit quietly in the cysts and wait to be eaten by a cat. If a pregnant unvaccinated sheep eats an oocyst, the organism spreads through the body and into the foetus. Depending on the stage of pregnancy, the sheep will either detect that the foetus is infected and spit it out (abortion), or the infected foetus will die (abortion), or the lamb will be born infected (and either have brain damage and die soon after birth or survive but be slower and smaller than an uninfected lamb), or be born normal. This is why there is a variation of presentations of toxoplasmosis in a flock – from dries at scanning to lambs that are born small and weak.

Vaccination with Toxovax infects the non-pregnant ewe with a strain of *Toxoplasma* which has been modified so that it cannot spread from the ewe to infect cats and continue the cycle. The ewe mounts an immune response against the organism. If the ewe then encounters *Toxoplasma* while she is pregnant, her immune system detects and closes down the organism so that it cannot form cysts or spread through the body, or get into the foetus. The immunity from the vaccine is not as great as the immunity from natural infection, but it is normally good enough to prevent the clinical signs – abortions and dead lambs.

Worldwide, there are hundreds of strains of *Toxoplasma gondii*, and there are probably strains of *Toxoplasma* that the vaccine doesn't protect against. However, none of these strains are present in New Zealand. Where there have been apparent failures of the vaccine to protect against abortion, this has never been due to the vaccine failing to cause an immune response in the ewe, nor is it due to a "new strain" that the vaccine doesn't protect against. What likely happens in that situation is that there are so many *Toxoplasma* oocysts around that the immune system

of the ewe can't close them all down. The odd hogget may still abort despite being vaccinated. If you did not vaccinate in that case, you would get many more abortions – having these failures is not a reason to avoid vaccination. This is supported by the observations of the original trial data, which demonstrated that ewes vaccinated with Toxovax may abort if the field challenge is extremely high.

This year we had two or three farmers who decided not to vaccinate with Toxovax despite having done it for many years previously. When they started seeing abortions we took samples from the foetus. In ALL cases where the farmer had not vaccinated with Toxovax, toxoplasmosis was the cause of abortion. When we worked out the cost/benefit of vaccination compared with all those dry ewes and dead lambs, vaccination came out ahead.

We did see a lot of abortions this year, particularly in hoggets. In the cases of abortion that we investigated this year, there were NO cases due to toxoplasmosis where the farmer had vaccinated with Toxovax.

If you see abortions, particularly if you have vaccinated against *Toxoplasma* and *Campylobacter*, we always recommend bringing in fresh foetuses for post mortem examinations to find out the cause. Without knowing the cause, you don't know if there is anything you can do about it. We find a cause for the abortion about 80% of the time. Sometimes we don't, despite a full workup, and this is very frustrating for the farmers and for us. In these situations it could be that there was a non-infectious cause, such as a toxin or fungus, or that the organism causing the abortions was not at a detectable level in the foetus. In general, the more foetuses you bring in the better the chance of finding something.

Can you get rid of *Toxoplasma* by shooting cats and not vaccinating? There is an old joke about a farmer who lived so far out in the wops that he had to import his own tomcat to get his farm cats pregnant. We don't have any farms that remote in the Wairarapa! There are a lot of cats out there, and you don't see them. The cats that shed the very high levels of oocysts on pasture are generally young cats, so don't necessarily line up your pet moggy in the gun sights.

If you have questions about abortions, or about Toxovax, please contact one of our vets to discuss.

VET SERVICES HOLIDAY HOURS

For emergencies, please note we have a duty vet available at all times

	WAIPUKURAU	HASTINGS	NAPIER	DANNEVIRKE	WAIRARAPA
Sat 23 rd	9.00am – 12 noon	9.00am– 3.00pm	9.00am – 12 noon	9.00am – 12 noon	9.30am – 12 noon
Sun 24 th	10.00am - 12 noon	9.00am– 3.00pm	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
Mon 25 th	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
Tues 26 th	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
Wed 27 th	8:00am – 5:30pm	8:00am – 6:00pm	8:00am – 5:30pm	8:00am – 5:00pm	8.30am – 5.30pm
Thur 28 th	8:00am – 5:30pm	8:00am – 6:00pm	8:00am – 5:30pm	8:00am – 5:00pm	8.30am – 5.30pm
Fri 29 th	8:00am – 5:30pm	8:00am – 5:30pm	8:00am – 5:30pm	8:00am – 5:00pm	8.30am – 5.30pm
Sat 30 th	9.00am – 12 noon	9.00am– 3.00pm	9.00am – 12 noon	9.00am - 12 noon	9.00am– 12 noon
Sun 31 st	10.00am - 12 noon	9.00am– 3.00pm	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
Mon 1 st	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
Tues 2 nd	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
Wed 3 rd	8:00am – 5:30pm	8:00am – 6:00pm	8:00am – 5:30pm	8:00am – 5:00pm	8.30am – 5.30pm
Thur 4 th	8:00am – 5:30pm	8:00am – 6:00pm	8:00am – 5:30pm	8:00am – 5:00pm	8.30am – 5.30pm

ANDROVAX / OVASTIM - DO THEY HAVE A ROLE ON YOUR FARM?

MARK MATTHEWS

These products have been available for several years and used by many farmers to increase lamb numbers. Company data suggests that on average lambing percentages should be increased by 20% but our extensive scanning data would suggest a somewhat lower expectation closer to 15% when used commercially. Regardless of the numbers there is potential to significantly increase lamb numbers.

Unvaccinated ewes require 2 vaccinations 4 weeks apart with the booster vaccination given at least 4 weeks before mating. After that an annual vaccination is required 4 – 6 weeks prior to mating.

There are 2 main reasons why farmers consider the use of these:

- To simply produce more lambs - when lamb prices are good like they are at the moment, this has to be very tempting.
- To maintain lamb numbers from fewer breeding ewes making more pasture available to grow lambs quicker or to be used by other classes of stock.

Some Do's and Don'ts about these products:

- Don't use on hoggets
- Results on ewes mated before 1 March are variable so if considering use in this class talk to one of our veterinary staff first.

- If scanning is below 140% underfeeding may be involved. In these circumstances a good response is unlikely and in the event there are extra lambs the extra feed required for the ewes and lambs could put you on a pathway to disaster.
- If scanning above 165% most of the increase in % will come from extra triplets. Can you handle this?
- Feed demand will be significantly increased in treated ewes so feed planning in late pregnancy and lactation will be important.
- The number of non pregnant ewes may be 1 – 2% higher than normal so make sure you scan so these extra ewes can be culled early and ewes with multiples can have preferential treatment.

The average cost to treat a ewe over 4 years is approximately \$2.50 per annum. To get a similar lift with extra feed would require about an extra 6kg of body weight per ewe. To do this requires about an extra 20kg of dry matter per ewe. At 20c / kg DM this is \$4.00. There may be an advantage in providing extra feed with less impact on tripletting but overall it seems a simple vaccination program should yield significant benefits when used in the right situation.



DIPPING: THE SAME AS EVER?

RICHARD HILSON

The fly season is pretty much upon us now. Have you a longer term plan or will you do the same as last year and the year before that?

We have put a lot of thought into long term thinking on ectoparasites of sheep recently as we have concerns about the longevity and usefulness of the range of products available. With some good science, a mix of best practice and some practical local thinking, we have streamlined the options with that in mind. Assuming that you want good fly control (and would rather not treat struck sheep) and that you are also likely to want to avoid lousy sheep in winter (without too much fuss), we have arrived at a range of practical options that should help make our current ecto options last as long as possible. When we look at the spectacular failure of some products further up the North Island, we know there is some urgency to get this right.

One of those options is worth considering soon and it is a top product that is not commonly used in our patch. Klik, from Elanco, is a pour-on fly treatment with astounding length of action – eighteen weeks. We trialled this on second shear ewes last summer and it was something of a rush to get it on early enough to take advantage of that long period of cover, bearing in mind that we wanted cover right through tugging. Then it rained. And rained. And not one ewe got struck all summer and autumn. In high rainfall conditions where most other products

can (and did) strip, Klik simply stuck around. That peace of mind is a big deal.

But we want to go further than a one-off recommendation as we aim to integrate that advice right through winter and help you plan fly control later in summer and lice in winter. That means a few questions to ascertain what you prefer to use, how you apply products and what your shearing dates are. Unfortunately, not every best practice option is dirt cheap but in the interests of good performance and long term thinking for sheep farmers, we can at least put those options in front of you and help make those decisions with you. We need to be careful how we rotate the various chemical classes and know how they should follow each other to remain most effective. There may be a gold standard but even then we still advocate rotation, allowing cheaper effective options a specific place.

Nationally, fly and lice control has been in the back ground for a while now as we struggle with the implications of drench resistance and internal parasites. As a result, ectoparasite control can be a bit haphazard. Understanding when to use a product and what might actually be “best” (rather than “cheapest or easiest”) adds a wee bit of complication to a complicated multi-season issue. We are not advocating something new everywhere though – if the current system is working well, there may be no need for big change. But understanding your options is a good idea and we are keen to have that conversation with you.

DEER: THE NEW GOLD?

RICHARD HILSON

Have things ever looked better for deer farming? In what has been a very topsy-turvy industry for much of the last thirty years, deer farming in NZ has a fairly settled look to it, backed by some extraordinary good product prices.

Venison is around ten dollars per kilogram and at record price levels. This isn't due to a nuclear calamity as it was in the early 2000s, just good marketing and some supply shortages. That bodes well for the next few years. Antler is also strong with good overseas demand and prices back up about 20% on last year's wee downward blip. The costs of materials for putting up a new fence would make a dairy farmer's eyes water so luckily not everyone is leaping into deer just yet.

How well are your deer performing? Are you making the most of these high prices by extracting every last opportunity or will you rest on your laurels instead? Productivity shortcomings are often masked by product prices – what are the underperforming aspects of your deer business? Animal health is a crucial part of good deer performance. For an animal only recently domesticated, deer are resilient. But they are also socially complicated, prone to stress and often underestimated. We see opportunity on many deer farms for improved performance and are keen to see every local deer farm do well.

Bearing in mind that deer product prices are so good, how do you feel when a \$600 animal drops dead? It hurts more than when they were worth just \$250, I know that. Well performed deer herds have annual death rates below 2%. And yours? There are aspects of animal health planning that may have fallen by the wayside in recent years, when risks were acceptable or the cost of vaccines and animal health did not warrant the intervention. But now is a really good time to re-think that.

Have you had a look at the new Deer Industry NZ animal health plan? This revamped process is designed for you and your vet to work through the key animal health issues for deer, considering what the current health status is on your farm versus the risk of things not going well or disease getting a foothold. It isn't complicated but having done a couple when the plan was in its

formative stages, I saw that a one-on-one conversation leads to much better understanding on both sides – farmers understood their risks better and vets understood the farmer's goals and farming system better. So have a look and ask us to go through that with you.

Do you have issues with things like ticks, Johnes disease, lameness, loss of weaners? Are you worried about leptospirosis in weaners or parapox in the velvet herd? These are all things that are worth considering fully and the more that I get to see what is happening in other parts of NZ, the more that I realise how well we understand deer health in our area. Have a conversation about these disease issues.

Beyond direct animal health costs, how is the deer farm tracking? How has the pregnancy scanning gone over the last few years? Hopefully over 95% for MA hinds and over 90% for yearlings. We have all the local comparative data and we know what makes the good herds perform every year so we would like to see all herds perform as well. How is the velvet herd doing? We are happy to toss around ideas regarding facilities and genetic direction, if you wish to have a think about that.

Deer farming is a high end farming option right now and this is a good time to review what you currently do (or don't do). One thing is guaranteed, if you keep doing what you always did then you'll keep getting what you always got!



NEW VETS FOR VET SERVICES

RICHARD HILSON

We are pleased to announce that we have signed on two top new veterinary graduates this year, as part of the ongoing requirement for vets in our business.

Georgina Campbell will join us in Hastings in early January. She was the winner of the VSHB scholarship for fourth year vet students last year and has seen practice in Waipukurau mainly. She also spent a couple of days in Hastings before accepting a job and was taken with the clinic, the wide range of vet work and all the friendly staff. She has a production animal leaning and has a strong farming background from the Manawatu. She is also a top sportsperson and has played to basketball to national levels and played overseas.

Nicolette Adamson will start in Waipukurau on Monday 11th December. Nicolette was also interviewed for the scholarship last year and, while she did not win, she took up an offer to come and see practice with us. She really enjoyed her time here and made an impression on our vets while she was with us. Nicolette is sporty too – she is a good soccer player and is involved in coaching as well. She is also keen on production animals, having been here this year with the final year vet students' Sheep and Beef special topic that is hosted in part by the Waipukurau and

Dannevirke clinics.

There has not been a job market for new vet graduates quite like the current year for an awfully long time. There are a large numbers of jobs advertised and many good graduates have had several job offers on the table since mid-year. With dairy practices finding themselves busy again (many were shedding staff over the last couple of years and all but shutting up shop) and a nationwide focus on companion animals, there has been a sudden requirement for vets right across the country. We had to be proactive to secure two new graduates and we think that we have two thorough rural vets in the making.

We have an excellent induction programme for our new vets that includes a mentor and the opportunity to become upskilled in a wide range of areas before they head off on their own. It has caught the eye of visiting students as the programme has allowed new vets to get established with staff and clients at a good pace, without too much pressure. Nearly every vet leaving Massey University wants to be a mixed rural practitioner so we aim to help them achieve that across a broad range of disciplines.

Look out for a new face in the next few months and please join us in extending a warm welcome to Georgina and Nicolette.

SEASONAL UPDATE

HASTINGS/NAPIER

Most farmers would now be happy to see a bit of rain, from the coast through to the ranges but we haven't got to the point of making some significant destocking decisions. Clover hasn't burnt off yet and the wind gods haven't been very angry either. Most farmers have been very pleased with the size/weights of the lamb drafts straight off Mum, and later born lambs look good at pre-wean drenching. The presence of fly rose dramatically on the lowland country at the beginning of November and then the mid-month cold snap has slowed up their rampage but be wary. New crop strikes look to be pretty good in general. Dairy farm production is well ahead for the

WAIPUKURAU

The Waipukurau clinic has been really busy over the last weeks. Velvetting, with Anyika on maternity leave, has meant we are all busier while dog runs and ram runs were happening at the same time. Vet wise we have been a bit stretched! The mild winter and the wet spring have resulted in higher egg count results than usual.

DANNEVIRKE

It has been a busy spring period and it is great to see some optimism in the agricultural sector. It's been a long spring for many with the earlier wet conditions rapidly giving way to the dry. Not much supplement around to be cut and crops have gone in relatively late. Who knows what the summer will bring but we are still a lot better off than many other areas.

Docking tallies on most places have been better than average, although ewe losses (especially bearings) took the shine off what could have been some really good results. However, lambs have grown well despite the lack of sun early on, allowing most to take advantage of the favourable schedule or at least get some ewes away at a good price.

WAIRARAPA

By the time you read this, most of you will have weaned your lambs, culled ewes and bought your "significant other" a Christmas present. From Vet Services Wairarapa, we wish you the very best for Christmas and the New Year. I am spending time with family in Christchurch and then cycling the West Coast Wilderness cycle trail. 2017 has given us many challenges on the East Coast of the North Island – recovery from the drought of 2016, a wet winter, some pretty impressive lambing percentages, a new government (an unexpected twist on MMP), a hard fought Lions Test Series and individually many family highlight moments.

DAVE WARBURTON

season and cell counts have been behaving in general. Beef cow condition is excellent setting up what we anticipate will be a great mating. BVD booster for breeding bulls are a must and should be done yesterday (but it's never too late!!). We hope to see a few lambs and weaner bull calves left undrenched for some faecal egg count reduction tests over the next couple of months. The dog and ram run is a bit later this year, there are some new long acting flea products ideal for working dogs, competitively priced, that we will bring with us. Roll on Xmas!!!

GEERT GELLING

We have even seen a few cases of lungworm infections in calves, heifers and dairy herds, unusual for Hawke's Bay, but definitely a risk when the conditions are right. At the time of writing summer has arrived, and, as one of our clients said this morning, shortly we will be moaning about the weather again: too dry!

TIM HOGAN

Cow losses also impacted on beef calving with a few losing cows around calving or in early lactation due to metabolic problems.

A bit of variation amongst the dairy farmers with some having a really good run and excellent submission rates through the early mating period. Slower pasture growth rates in mid-November put the pressure on a bit, especially where the wet late winter/early spring period caused extensive pasture damage.

Don't let the silly season get the better of you and make sure you take some time off the farm over the Christmas period to catch up with family and loved ones.

From all the team at Vet Services Dannevirke MERRY CHRISTMAS!

STUART BRUERE

As we head into 2018, give some time over the holiday season to reset your goals for the year. These can be split into business/farming goals and family/relationship goals. Write these down and share them with people who you respect. It is important to write this stuff down as it helps commit your mind to what the goals are. If you are "always" working on your farm, think about what recreational activity you would like to master/enjoy this year. Off farm activities are very helpful in giving perspective to your lives and provide you with a diverse group of friends. In the New Year, we will offer you some forward planning ideas for your farm to get you thinking.

VSHB SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

NEIL STUTTLE

VSHB is pleased to announce not one but two worthy recipients of the VSHB 4th year vet student scholarship. Nicole Lansdown (Dannevirke) and Ashlin Urieli (Hastings) are both outstanding winners showing a strong commitment and desire to work in rural practice. Nicole and Ashlin will be spending time at VSHB

doing work experience in the near future. Given the track record of previous scholarship winners you might see them become part of our veterinary team in the years ahead. Congratulations Nicole and Ashlin!

OUR VET TEAM

Napier & Hastings:

Clare Ryan, Dave Kruger, Dave Warburton, Georgina Campbell, Helen Crawford, Helen Taylor, Ian Leadbetter, Joao Dib, Mark Matthews, Neil Stuttle, Rachel Griffiths, Richard McKenzie, Roger McKinley, Sharné Boys, Stuart Badger, Veronika Pipe and Vicki Gilchrist.

Waipukurau:

Annelise Enslin, Anyika Scotland, Camille Flack, Caroline Robertson, Geert Gelling, Harry Whiteside, Kathryn Sigvertsen, Lucy Dowsett, Mike Fitzgerald, Nicolette Adamson and Richard Hilson.

Dannevirke: Masterton:

Corinna Minko, Ingrid Meijer, Johnny Atkins, Kate Matthews, Naomi Barrett, Simon Marshall and Tim Hogan. Elke Blommers, Jacques Van Zyl, Louisa Broughton, Nicola Haglund, Sandy Redden, Sara Sutherland, Sarah Wolland and Stuart Bruere.

SOME ANGUS PURE ON US!



Purchase selected Boehringer Ingelheim cattle and sheep product and receive an AngusPure Scotch Fillet Cube Roll!

Promotion runs November and December 2017

This is an alternative to our ham offer.

*While stocks last. Check with Vet Services for qualifying product purchases and details. AngusPure meat cut may differ from what's advertised depending on availability.

1/2 HAM QUALIFYING PURCHASES: ARREST® C 1x 20L, ARREST® 2x 20L, ARREST® Hi-Mineral 2x 20L, ECLIPSE® E Injection 2x 500mL, ECLIPSE® Pour-On 1x 2.5L, EPRINEX® 2x 5L, EPRINEX® 1x 20L, EXODUS® 1% Injection 4x 500mL, EXODUS® LAI Injection 4x 500mL, EXODUS® Pour-On 2x 5L, EXODUS® Se 1x 20L, FIRST® Hi-Mineral 1x 20L, GENESIS® Hi-Mineral 2x 20L, GENESIS® Injection 4x 500mL, GENESIS® B12 + Se Injection 4x 500mL, GENESIS® Pour-On 1x 5L, GENESIS® Pour-On 1x 10L, GENESIS® Ultra Oral Hi-Mineral 1x 20L, GENESIS® Ultra Pour-On 1x 5L, IVER MATRIX® Tape Hi-Mineral 1x 10L, IVER MATRIX® Tape Hi-Mineral 1x 20L, IVER SWITCH® Tape Hi-Mineral 1x 10L, IVER SWITCH® Tape Hi-Mineral 1x 20L, IVOMEC® Plus 4x 500mL, MATRIX® 1x 20L, MATRIX® C 1x 10L, MATRIX® C 1x 20L, MATRIX® Hi-Mineral 1x 20L, MATRIX® Hi-Mineral 1x 50L, MATRIX® Mini-Dose 1x 10L, MATRIX® Mini-Dose 1x 20L, MATRIX® Tape Hi-Mineral 1x 10L, MATRIX® Tape Hi-Mineral 1x 20L, SWITCH® 1x 20L, SWITCH® C 1x 10L, SWITCH® C 1x 20L, SWITCH® Fluke10 1x 5L, SWITCH® Fluke10 1x 10L, SWITCH® Hi-Mineral 1x 20L, SWITCH® Hi-Mineral 1x 50L, TRIMOX® 1x 20L, CALF PACK (1x 5L ARREST, 1x 2.5L ECLIPSE + 30mL gun), IVERMATRIX CALF PACK (1x 5L Ivermatrix Calf, 1x 2.5L ECLIPSE + 30mL gun), 2 X 1/2 HAM QUALIFYING PURCHASES: ECLIPSE® Pour-On 1x 5L, ECLIPSE® Pour-On 1x 10L.

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

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