

MAY/JUNE 2018

VET NEWS

DOG ACCOMMODATION

PNEUMONIA IN LAMBS

ANIMALS TO SLAUGHTER



Some photos by Richard Hilson

VETservices
www.vshb.co.nz

'SMOOTH CRIMINAL'

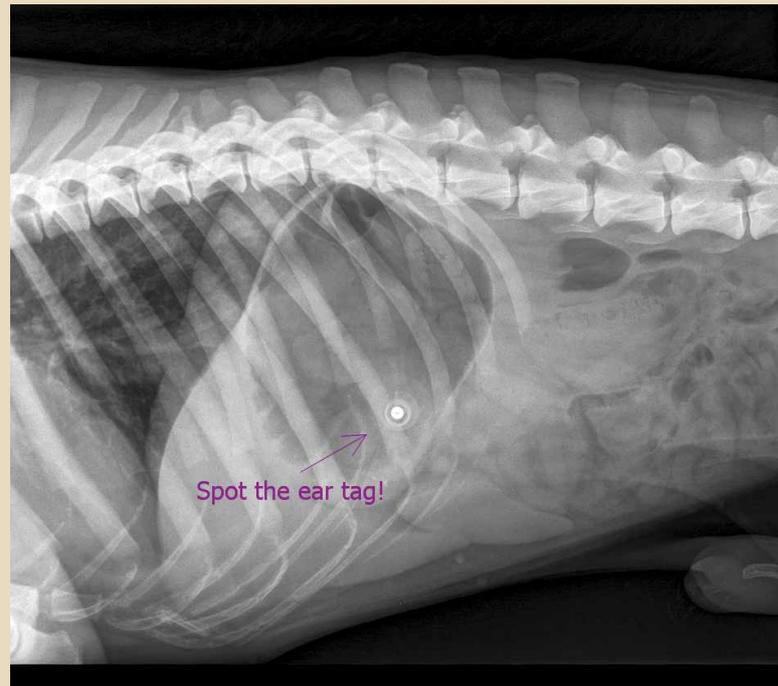
VICKI GILCHRIST

When one of Hastings' clinic's former vet nurse's Huntaway 'Criminal' began vomiting and rolling around on the ground in pain after a hard morning's mustering, she knew to bring him in to the clinic straight away.

We were initially concerned about a possible bloated/twisted stomach (Gastric Dilatation Volvulus), so took radiographs of his abdomen immediately. The xrays showed that while he did have a bloated stomach, there was also something very suspicious looking in there too!



Criminal was stabilised on intravenous fluids and taken to surgery. A cattle ear tag was located stuck fast between his stomach and small intestine. It was causing a blockage and considerable pain. The ear tag was retrieved surgically via the stomach and his abdomen closed routinely. Huntaways are not known for their ingestion of 'foreign bodies', unlike Labradors who are notorious for eating anything and everything! However we do occasionally



see cases of farm dogs eating ear tags - most likely as a mistake when ingesting some delicious cattle droppings.... Or potentially when having a chew on a rogue beast's ear? Just because you didn't see it happen, doesn't mean it didn't.

WORKING DOG ACCOMMODATION

KATHRYN SIGVERTSEN

A warm dry place to sleep, a good meal and clean fresh water – it's something we may take for granted, but it really makes a difference to how we feel. A bad night's sleep can really affect how we work the next day. So what about your working dogs? Are they shivering all night in winter? Are their kennels cold, draughty or damp and leaking? The benefits of having good quality kennels and well rested dogs are more than just good animal welfare. A significant amount of extra energy is burned keeping warm in winter. Providing good shelter and a warm, draught-free environment will cut down on the dog food bill, and increase the working life of older dogs with mild arthritis during the winter.

Good kennels will have some if not all of the following features:

- A fully enclosed (insulated) box area for sleeping, with an access door that allows the dog to enter and exit comfortably without allowing too much cold air in
- A slatted run area that drains water/urine away
- Be raised enough to be able to clean out underneath
- A concrete pad under the runs to minimise dampness rising from the soil (and allow easy cleaning)

- Sheltered run area to provide shade in summer and some rain protection in winter
- A good clean water supply readily available

It is easy to include all of these features in a new kennel build, but what if you have existing kennels that are less than ideal? Some simple alterations may make big improvements to the dogs. Are the kennels too open at the front, allowing warm air to escape in the winter? Cut a piece of ply and fit it to the front to reduce the size of the opening. Are there gaps in the boards? Fill these with a gap filler or patch with boards over the top. Does the roof leak? Grab your gap filler again and fill any old holes in the tin roof. Consider adding a second layer of lining to the sleeping area and putting some insulation in, go all out and buy some new materials or stuff the gap with wool or polystyrene. If building new kennels, think about the prevailing weather and any natural shelter you have available that would provide protection from this. In all cases, try getting some jackets, either for the whole dog team, or for the higher risk ones – any with health issues (including arthritis), any that are hard to keep weight on, and older dogs. They will thank you for your efforts with all their hard work!



AUTUMN ACORN AWARENESS

JOAO DIB

Acorns from oak trees, especially unripe kernels are a common cause of fatal toxicity in cattle. Leaves and shoots will also cause toxicity especially during feed shortages when animals are hungry and graze down low, easily reaching acorns.

The main toxic compounds are tannins and the excessive amount produced from ingestion of kernels and/or shoots/leaves can cause irreversible kidney damage (they are nephrotoxic).

Clinical signs amongst many are abdominal discomfort,

diarrhoea which may become bloody, depression, lack of rumen movement and lack of appetite. Abdominal contents may become watery and sometimes a sloshing sound can be heard on ballotment of the rumen. Death may occur 1-4 weeks after ingestion.

There is no treatment. Some will survive, others will not.

Ensure access to oak trees is limited specially in summer/early autumn and even more so when grass is in short supply.

PNEUMONIA IN LAMBS

STUART BRUERE

During the autumn, production animal vets are often called out to examine flocks of replacement ewe lambs or ram lambs with symptoms of lethargy, poor growth rates and coughing. The affected lambs often have a very high temperature and through a stethoscope you can hear really "rattley" lungs.

Autopsy examinations of these animals reveal areas of lung that have become non-functional and full of pus. In the photo you can see a creamy coloured area of lung. This is pus and on the piece of reflected rib cage you can see where the lung "stuck" to the inside of the rib cage. Sorry about the graphic photo but it gets the message across.

In these cases, up to 50% of the lung may become non-functional. If animals are found before they die, antibiotics can be used to kill the bacteria involved. However the lambs take some

time to recover. It is not unusual to have moderate numbers of lambs die – in a mob of 1000 you may see 20 to 30 deaths.

So what causes this to occur? There are a number of factors involved and these include:

- Young sheep with low colostrum antibodies from the ewe
- An immune system that is fragile and only just starting to respond to infectious organisms
- Management events that cause the sheep to "mouth breathe". This assists the "bugs" to be inhaled into the front part of the lungs.

What can you do to mitigate this risk?

1. Acknowledge that young sheep are fragile!
2. When planning to yard young sheep, think about how you are going to manage their grazing in the week before you want to drench or dip them. Ideally is to have them right beside the yards the day before you get them in.
3. Muster them quietly. This is no time to be "revving up" a new and keen young huntaway!
4. The aim is to get them in and out of the yards without causing them to mouth breathe.
5. Take small cuts in and let them drift out of the yards, back to feed.
6. Don't get them in every other day, plan your animal health and animal handling.
7. If you hear any that are coughing and lagging behind the mob, let us know. We can help you manage this problem.
8. Settle dust with a light watering of the yards before yarding. A simple overhead sprinkler system on a timer tap can be set up for \$200 to \$300, the price of a couple of lambs.



RMPP ACTION NETWORK

ANYIKA SCOTLAND & CAMILLE FLACK

I am sure by now you have all heard about the Red Meat Profit Partnership initiative to form Action Networks. This is a farmer-driven initiative. A recent article on Stuff quoted "it's the closest thing red meat farmers will get to winning Lotto when it comes to exploring what they think is important."

At Vet Services we have multiple vets within our business that have completed the lead facilitator course. This has been an opportunity for professional development and provided us with excellent skills, tools and ideas to partner with farmers in this initiative.

Recently we invited you all to attend meetings. We had plenty of interest from farmers and are in the process of forming several Action Groups. These groups will meet in the next couple of weeks to form their own extension plan.

The overall aim is to give farmers the confidence to put their ideas into action on-farm. We hope to share some of the good stories that come out of these action groups once we get up and running. If you are interested in joining a group please give one of our clinics a call.

IF YOU EVER SEND ANIMALS TO SLAUGHTER PREMISES, READ THIS

RICHARD HILSON

That would be pretty much an all-encompassing title as almost everyone reading this will at some point send stock to slaughter. No matter how big your farm or lifestyle block is, it is inevitable that you will transport animals to a slaughter plant somewhere, someday. It is also likely that you will have a plant that you or your agent use most often. It is also possible that at some point you will need a veterinary certificate to allow an animal to travel to one of those premises. And that is where things are getting tricky for all of us...

We are asked every week to certify animals fit for transport. A decade or so ago, the required certificate asked us to certify the animals fit for slaughter but that is not really our decision alone as that is actually made by the works vets. We use specific certificates to do this and everything is in triplicate, with copies for you, the truck driver and us.

It is an offence to transport an animal whose condition or health renders it unfit for transport. For many conditions there are specific guidelines for what is fit, for others there needs some interpretation. Sometimes we need to communicate with the plant that the animals are heading to and videos and photos are often really useful.

You need to be aware that these rules are getting awfully stringent. We don't make the rules and we also get no input into

them. One of those rules, silly as it may seem, is that animals certified fit for transport must go to the nearest slaughter premises. In some cases these animals will be quite capable of traveling further, but that is what the rules state and that is part of each and every certificate, as shown below.

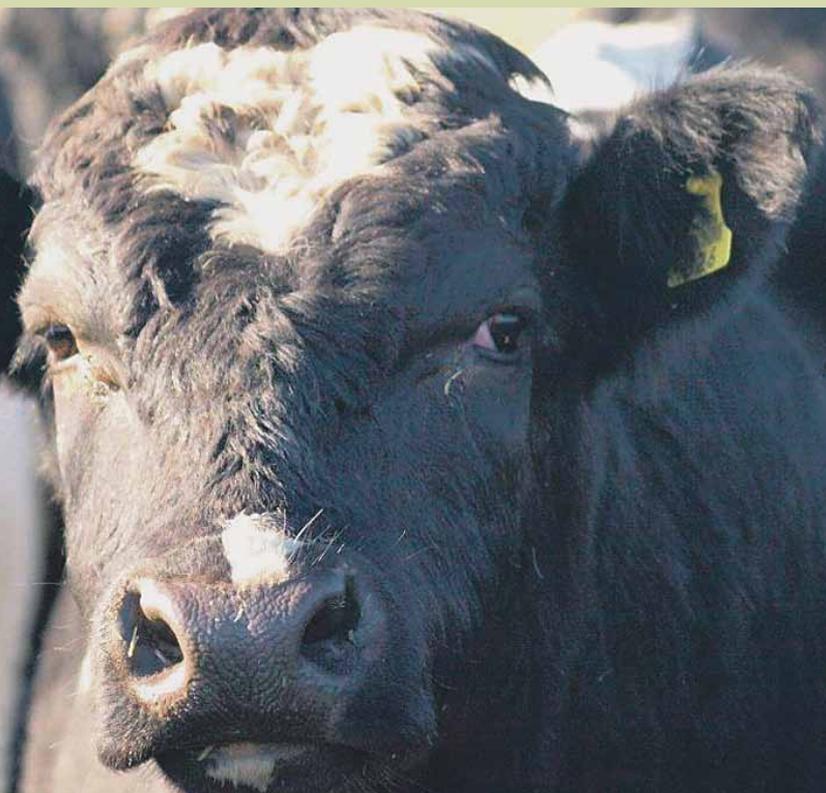
Why the fuss? Well, we realise that many of you will have working relationships with other meat companies and processors but this simple line means that we (and you) have absolutely no choice. For example, the nearest plant for CHB will be Pacific, in Hastings. Certified cattle will absolutely have to go there, no exceptions. Couple that with the fact that certificates are only good for seven days from time of signing and we are all going to have issues with getting stock examined, certified, booked, trucked and killed. Throw in a weekend and the timelines are terrible.

Why tell you all this? So that you don't shoot the messenger, basically. We know this is a damn fool system at times but MPI is coming down hard on any variation on these rules (some plants are worse than others, luckily Eltham is too far away from us to ever be the nearest plant!) and it is not worth doing anything else. We do have good lines of communication with most local MPI vets at plants so we can deal with many different cases, but none of us can send stock to anywhere other than the "nearest slaughter premises".

Destination and Transport Conditions (Must be clearly specified)

[NB: The animal must only be transported to the nearest slaughter premises which must be stated]

- Direct to slaughter premises
- Last on/ first off Lower Deck Alone in a pen Reduced pen density
- Other _____



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SEASONAL UPDATE

HASTINGS/NAPIER

Today it is raining and honestly in Hastings we needed it to keep grass growth ticking along. We have had a frost but it is still warm and grass/worms will still be growing and active. Spore counts have declined but just watch out if it stays warm as ryegrass staggers is still occurring, an example of how fungal activity is still present.

On the equine slant we are seeing regular cases of laminitis and colic with fresh autumn flush especially in ponies! The staggers we are seeing is particularly in horses grazing on short new tillers, as there tends to be a higher concentration of endophyte down at the crown [base] of the plant. There is really no effective treatment other than removing them from feed and therefore the neurotoxin and it will

WAIPUKURAU

Wow! What an autumn we are having after the threat of rapidly drying conditions earlier in the season. The countryside and stock are looking really well set up going forward and the skies have been busy with planes and helicopters dropping fertiliser before soil temperatures begin to fall off significantly.

We finished cow scanning recently with overall averages looking encouraging; an update will no doubt follow in a forthcoming newsletter. We continue to follow up on disappointing results and have found bull failures to be responsible in many cases so now is an ideal time to reconsider the performance of your sires ahead of the June sales.

DANNEVIRKE

It's been a warm and wet autumn, meaning great grass growth for many but also a long period of high eczema and parasite challenge. As I write this, temperatures have definitely dropped finally bringing counts for both down (about time!). It's looking good around the place at the moment, most of you are hopefully heading into winter with reasonable covers and feed available.

On the topic of parasite challenge we've completed a good number of 'Faecal Egg Count Reduction Tests' this year with ranging results depending on individual properties drench use and management. In general there is still a lot of single active and white/clear combination resistance out there. The take home message as always is work to 'Wormwise' management principles and get a test booked

WAIRARAPA

It's always great to hear the "buzz" of topdressing aeroplanes in the sky during the autumn. From what I've seen and heard around the district there has been quite a high volume of fertilizer applied this autumn. Overall, cow pregnancy scanning went pretty well on most farms this season – many of our BVD free beef herds are consistently scanning over 95% in calf rates and have been doing so for several years now. There have been a few farms where there has been obvious "bull failure" – this has been exacerbated by farmers forgetting to rotate their bulls during mating. The result has been many, if not all the cows/heifers in those mating mobs, scanning

RICHARD MCKENZIE

gradually be excreted from system. Toxin binders can help minimise some absorption of endophyte as a preventative.

The wetter conditions in autumn also bring a deluge of foot abscesses especially in any dry/brittle/cracked/overgrown hooves. Regular trimming and hoof maintenance/care should minimise this painful and debilitating occurrence. Hunting is underway and the horses will enjoy some 'give' in the ground now it's raining - hopefully not too many riders find out the hard way how much 'give' there is!

The Canes seem to be able to win even when they don't have any ball - lets hope the Magpies get more ball and win this season!

HARRY WHITESIDE

Sheep scanning will soon be underway and it will be interesting to see whether or not facial eczema will impact on these results following a number of "small scale" clinical cases throughout late March-April. If you haven't already done so, please contact the clinic for a scanning date as the booking system gets very hectic in short time!

Keep parasites on the radar in the next few months; both external (lice) and internal (worms). In particular watch those egg counts in younger stock as the recent mild conditions have also been very kind to the worms.

All that remains to say is good luck to all duck shooters and all the very best for the next few months ahead.

JOHNNY ATKINS

in for next year if you haven't performed one for a while.

We have had good beef cattle scanning results with most cows in great condition, and hopefully the ewes follow suit. Topping will be over by the time you read this, and scanning not far from getting underway. Get yours booked in if you haven't already!

We're flat out teatsealing heifers (a great tool for mastitis control, especially in an era of increased scrutiny around antibiotic use), and most cows will be dry. Hopefully they are on track to meet condition score targets at calving time. If you are still in the process of making drying-off decisions we would love to chat about this and the most effective use of dry cow treatments and/or teatseal for your property.

All the best for the winter season ahead!

STUART BRUERE

empty. This comment leads into the topic of bull testing. Now is the ideal time to do this, so if you have had a problem or you normally do bull breeding evaluations, call us now and we will organise this for you. We saw a few "wicked" cases of enzootic pneumonia in lambs over the autumn. The pattern of this disease usually involves frequent yarding of young sheep when they are in a very fragile immunological state. In the late summer/autumn period, the colostrum antibodies in these sheep is declining; in sync with this the young sheep are still forming their own antibodies. If the "perfect storm" hits, you see lots of cases.

OUR VET TEAM

Napier & Hastings:

Clare Ryan, Dave Kruger, Dave Warburton, Georgina Campbell, Helen Crawford, 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:

Corinna Minko, Ingrid Meijer, Johnny Atkins, Kate Matthews, Naomi Barrett, Simon Marshall and Tim Hogan.

Masterton:

Elke Blommers, Jacques Van Zyl, Louisa Broughton, Nicola Haglund, Sandy Redden, Sara Sutherland, Sarah Wolland and Stuart Bruere.

TAKE A CLOSER LOOK



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