

SEPTEMBER 2016

# VET NEWS

CALF DEBUDDING

EQUINE SERVICES

NON-CYCLING COWS



PHOTOS BY RICHARD HILSON

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

# CALF DISBUDDING THE PAIN-FREE WAY

KATHRYN SIGVERTSEN

Adult cattle with horns can be dangerous, and although removing them as an adult is possible it is much better for all involved if they never grew in the first place. Some breeds or lines within a breed are not born with horns, but those that are need some attention.

The best way to deal with horns is as a very young calf. The ideal age for disbudding is approximately 4-8 weeks old. Several batches may need to be done to fit them all in if you have a large number or a spread age group. The method we prefer to use involves local anaesthetic injected near the horn bud. Hot irons are used to seal around the horn bud and prevent it from growing. Remember that this procedure, if done properly, is a permanent solution to a lifelong issue.

In some clinics sedation is routinely used – the calves are injected with a sedative that makes them sit down before the local anaesthetic is given. Gold standard treatment is to also add a longer acting pain relief injection to this protocol. With the use of and local anaesthetic (with or without sedation and long

acting pain relief), the procedure is pain free for the calf and the disbudding team! Use of sedation means that the calves have no memory of the procedure and recover well without any bad feelings toward people. Some people also take the opportunity to perform other procedures while the calves are having a quiet sleep, such as ear tagging, DNA testing, and vaccinating. We can also remove extra teats from heifers if required (some are born with five or six!).

Minimising any pain associated with disbudding by using local anaesthetic is far preferable to dehorning an adult animal, where it is much more difficult to provide a painless procedure. A solid headbail is also required to do adult animals on an individual basis, which takes time and energy. Disbudding as a calf also removes the potential bother or danger of having to handle a horned animal to remove these horns before transport later in life. If you are going to be rearing calves this season please let us know that you may have some disbudding to do, and we can fit in your calves at a good age and size, for a pain-free permanent procedure.

# KEEPING YOUR WORKING DOGS PROTECTED AGAINST FATAL DISEASES

SAM BURROWS

A puppy with parvo is not a happy sight for either owner or vet, and can be fatal if not attended to early enough. There are a number of diseases which can be fatal to puppies and young dogs, particularly Parvovirus, Distemper, Hepatitis and Leptospirosis. Thankfully, protecting them from these diseases is easy through a simple vaccination program, and just like vaccinating your livestock, vaccinating your dogs is essential in protecting your future investments from these diseases.

Vaccines work by exposing the immune system to the virus in order to produce a protective immune response, therefore at a later date if exposed to that disease the immune system is able to mount a response and protect the dog.

Your newborn pups will receive some immunity through the bitches colostrum but this quickly wanes; hence, the need to provide a form of protection through vaccination. We recommend a vaccination schedule beginning at 6-8 weeks of age; this involves an initial sensitiser followed by booster

vaccinations at 4 week intervals. Following this, yearly boosters are recommended to remind the immune system of what it is protecting your dog against. It is important to remember that protection is only achieved by completing the full vaccination schedule, and then allowing at least 10 days following the last vaccination before exposing your pup to risk areas.

When buying pups, it is important to ask their vaccination history. This ensures they are not sitting around on farm unvaccinated being exposed to potentially fatal diseases; it also provides the opportunity to bring your new puppy in for a health check with our team and to start the vaccination process.

With the dog vaccination run coming up it is important to remember that your dogs are investments in the farming future and many farmers would struggle without them. Protecting this investment is simple by getting any pups vaccinated and keeping your working dogs up to date.

# DOG VACCINATION RUN YES, IT IS NEARLY THAT TIME AGAIN!

**Yes, we will come to your place, to vaccinate your dogs.**

**Yes, we will contact you from mid-October onwards to confirm times.**

**If you have not heard from us by mid-October you may not be on our runs so please call us at the clinic:**

**Waipukurau (06) 858 9060**

**Hastings (06) 876 7001**

**Napier (06) 843 5308**

**Dannevirke (06) 374-7021**

**Dannevirke runs begin in December**

**Wairarapa dates are coming soon**



# EAR TAGGING FOR JOHNE'S VACCINATED SHEEP: NO MORE

RICHARD HILSON

To cut a longer story short right from the start, there is no longer any requirement for sheep that are vaccinated against Johne's disease (JD) to have a special ear mark. Post mortem inspection for vaccinated and unvaccinated sheep are now the same so that trimming may occur for any carcase with small lesions and there is no need for more invasive inspection. The original version of this vaccine, Neoparasec, left some massive carcase lesions: the modern versions such as Gudair (for sheep) and Silirium (for deer) are far less nasty.

By and large this change has little effect on local farms as there is very little vaccination done against Johne's disease in our region. There is a requirement to continue to note this on ASD forms and this is maybe where local farmers need to remain aware. The onus is on lamb finishers to note this on ASD forms when

these lambs pass from their farms too, which may make for some difficulty in tracking vaccinated animals.

We have not had the same notification about the use of Silirium in deer though. This vaccine has not been used much in NZ deer but does carry the requirement for special ear notching too. We would assume that it is unlikely that ear notching will be dropped here as vaccinated deer may be more likely to react to standard TB tests and therefore confuse diagnosis of tuberculosis.

And if this has piqued your interest in JD in your stock (cattle, sheep or deer) then please contact one of our vets. This is an insidious disease of usually low level nuisance value but can cause larger and ongoing losses in some herds and flocks- a complicated disease but one that is well worth understanding.

# NON-CYCLING COW AND SYNCHRONY PROGRAMMES THIS SEASON

GEERT GELLING

Over the last couple of years CIDR programmes for Non-Cycling cows and for Heifers have been fine tuned for New Zealand conditions. Originally these systems were used in intensive dairy systems in the US where they enabled farmers to AI cows without heat detection. Heat detection is a bit of an art and definitely complicated when managing large numbers of cows in housed systems. In high input systems cows are often cycling, but not showing sufficient heat signs to be picked up by staff: high producing cows often show signs for a few hours only and often in the evening or at night.

In an overseas continuous system cows are calving year round and the interval between calvings could easily be 15 – 16 months; with high production per cow there is less pressure to have a calf each year.

In New Zealand most of our dairy systems are still seasonal calving, where calving is timed with expected grass growth and availability of pasture to be grazed. The consequence is that cows in these systems need to produce a calf every year, preferably as early as possible after the planned start of calving, to maximise days in milk in the milking season. The success rate of a mating season, the six week in calf rate and the ultimate empty rate, is defined by management actions and decisions earlier in the season. Drying cows off in the right body condition, feeding the right dry cow ration, managing the transition period correctly, preventing metabolic diseases around calving, providing plenty of high quality feed to fresh cows, metri-checking and metri-curing the herd in time, checking blood mineral levels; all these issues need careful management to optimise the results of the next mating season.

But, even when all the right management is in place, there will be cows that have not started their reproductive cycles at the start of the mating season. These cows will struggle to get in calf early. Identifying those cows by tail painting the herd 35 days before Planned Start of Mating will enable us to treat these cows with a CIDR programme. On average CIDR programme treated Non-Cycling Cows are in calf 16 days earlier than their non-treated Non-Cycling herd mates. This translates to 16 days more in milk in the next season. Even at a \$4.50 payout this will give a return on investment of more than 100%. As the return of CIDR programmes is days in milk it makes sense to treat Non-Cycling cows early, at the start of mating. To optimise the return on investment it pays to have a good hard look at those cows: only treat younger animals with a higher than average production.



For this season we will stick with the 10 day programme that we have used over the last years. Adding an eCG injection on Day 7 in lactating cows makes sense and has shown to increase success rates of the program.

For heifer AI programmes we will use the 9 day programme. The last injection and AI will be on the same day, day 9. Heifer programmes have been successful and popular when export markets were asking for black and white high quality heifers. From a management point of view there is an advantage to use a fixed time CIDR programme in heifers as well. These programmes are highly successful, with 55-60% of the heifers pregnant to AI. These heifers will all calve in a short period, often before the main herd starts to calve, enabling staff to spend time and attention looking after this vulnerable group of animals. Heifer calves born out of these heifers could be early replacement calves, if the right semen has been used to AI those heifers.

So, even in a low payout year, there is a place for CIDR programmes in Non-Cycling Cows and Heifers. Remember that the results of a successful mating period will be visible in the next payout year, which could/should be higher than the forecasted payout for this year!

# IMPORTANCE OF LEPTO VACCINATION

INGRID MEIJER

Here at Vet Services we are concerned about the recent low compliance with leptospirosis vaccination in dairy cattle locally and nationally. Although leptospirosis vaccination of dairy cattle is voluntary, vaccination is important to ensure that you are protecting yourself and your staff from leptospirosis. Human infection can be severe, ranging from flu-like symptoms to organ failure and can take several months to recover from.

Currently there is no human vaccine against leptospirosis, so vaccinating dairy cattle to reduce shedding of and exposure to the leptospire organisms is the best way to prevent disease. The leptospirosis vaccine has the added advantage of protecting dairy cattle against clinical leptospirosis which can present as chronic subfertility, abortions, birth of weak calves or mastitis.

Any animals shedding leptospire organisms are a source of infection. Any unvaccinated animals are at risk of becoming infected and shedding these organisms. In order to get the most protection out of vaccination, all cattle on the property need to be fully vaccinated.

Calves are the most susceptible stock class to infection, therefore it is important that calves receive their vaccinations prior to becoming infected. If calves are vaccinated after they are infected and shedding leptospire organisms then vaccination will not prevent long term shedding.

In order to vaccinate calves prior to infection we recommend the first 7 in 1 vaccination to be given to calves prior to Christmas, with a booster 4-6 weeks later. Adult cattle should be vaccinated with lepto-2way annually, ideally before winter.

We would ideally like to see all stock vaccinated for leptospirosis by a veterinarian. This is for the following reasons;

- Vaccinations will be administered correctly, at the correct intervals
- You will only be charged for the exact number of vaccine doses used and you don't have to worry about correct vaccine storage or expiry.
- We can certify that your stock have had the correct vaccine and course to be protected. This is becoming more important under the tightening health and safety requirements.
- Whilst vaccinating calves we can also weigh and drench them, remove supernumerary teats or discuss any animal health concerns you may have.
- We are hoping to combine several farms in each vaccination run to help reduce mileage costs.
- In previous years, when we have controlled the vaccinations ourselves the compliance has been a lot greater.

If you are choosing to vaccinate your own stock, there are several important points to ensure that your vaccination will be effective.

1. Vaccine must be correctly stored (refrigerated) and any unopened vaccine should be disposed of after 30 days.
2. The full dose of vaccine needs to be correctly administered under the skin.
3. The correct timing between the first and second vaccinations in calves is important, with the first vaccination administered prior to Christmas.

Regardless of whether you want to vaccinate your dairy cattle for leptospirosis yourself or get us to vaccinate them for you, it is important for the health of yourself and your workers that the stock are vaccinated correctly. We will be in contact with you shortly to discuss options for this year.

## EQUINE SERVICES – HAPPY AND HEALTHY HORSES!

JOHNNY ATKINS

Keeping your horse happy, healthy and performing at its best can be a real juggling act and often requires input from a range of sources. Nutrition, training and of course animal health are major components of your trusted companions wellbeing. If any one of these aren't quite up to scratch then problems can arise. It's a lot to keep track of, but we are here to help!

Routine preventative treatments are crucial to maintaining a happy horse (and happy rider!), but it's not necessarily one size fits all.

Worming programmes will differ between properties and between individual animals, depending on management and individual horses' differences. Have you used faecal egg counts to target treatment for specific animals? Are there options to change grazing management and cut down on routine drench use?

Vaccine and dental programmes are important to maintaining good health and preventing the spread of disease such as strangles. Are you up to date? Are the right horses getting the right treatments?

At the other end of the scale, when things do go wrong it can be a major blow, and timely and proper management of any issues will ensure you and your horse are back riding as soon as possible.

Colics, severe lameness and wounds can all be emergencies and should be seen ASAP! Are radiographs or an ultrasound required?

Nerve and joint blocks for a more detailed lameness workup? Don't leave your horses health and possible riding future to chance!

We have a passionate team of vets with a wealth of knowledge and professional facilities and equipment for all things horse health related. Routine health treatments and plans, emergencies and everything in between including reproductive work and pre-purchase exams. We are always only a phone call away and happy to help.



# SEASONAL UPDATE

## HASTINGS/NAPIER

Winter has finished up quite mild with one major storm making us realise it was in fact winter. Farmers have handled the snow to the best of their ability in a difficult situation and losses were fewer than expected.

Hopefully now heading into spring the grass will start growing

## WAIPUKURAU

Calving and lambing are now in full swing but unfortunately as I write we are experiencing the first real lash of winter and many lambs have succumbed to the recent cold and the rain; "Anlamb" milk powder has rarely gone out of the door in such volume. The cold and wet conditions have also led to a spike in calf scours which this season has been compounded further by a lower than usual uptake of Rotavirus vaccination in cows (another knock on effect of the low dairy pay-out).

As predicted from our pre-lamb seminar last month there have been lots of sheep going down with sleepy sickness and milk

## DANNEVIRKE

The Hurricanes have finally fulfilled their prophecy! Hopefully this change of fortune filters through to the farming sector where the bizarre weather patterns have made for a very challenging start to the season. Western areas under the ranges were been water logged with days on end with rain in late July-early August.

The coastal country, particularly Akitio, has remained very dry. This has meant lambing will be tough with poor pasture covers and light ewes for those affected. Some of the early lambing mobs were particularly vulnerable to the bad weather at the start of August which was severe enough to subdue the hardiest Lion.

Calving has progressed well once the sun started to shine. We have seen few calving troubles or metabolic problems to date as most dairy herds get half way through calving. We've had

## WAIRARAPA

There has been welcome rain in many districts of the Wairarapa since the last newsletter. As usual August proved to be one of our most challenging months as we experienced colder weather and headed towards set stocking for ewes. There has been time to reflect on how well feeding options such as grain, hay, baleage and various crops have performed since the start of the year. Some of the common themes observed are how important it is to handle the feed transition from pasture to any form of supplementation. The learning here is that the rumen takes up to 10 days to adjust to new/different feeds. When the decision is made to use supplementary feeds it is important to

**CAMILLE FLACK**

and things will get back on track. This will ensure heaps of fat Christmas lambs available. The season has been pretty good for the dairy farmers with fewer calving and metabolic issues reported than in previous years.

Go the All Blacks!

**HARRY WHITESIDE**

fever and with covers still not picking up much stock are not having it too easy right now. Quite a few cases of milk fever involved the sudden transition of sheep from plantain to grass. No doubt some of these issues are also consequent to such a high facial eczema challenge throughout the autumn period when livers would have been knocked around a fair bit.

Hopefully by the time you read this temperatures have climbed a little and the grass may be starting to lift and on a positive note, there's always the Olympics to watch at lunch time which has to be better than The Jeremy Kyle Show!

**TIM HOGAN**

vets hovering on standby much like an Olympic rowing team awaiting call-up. Its fantastic news the latest milk auction went up, hopefully it keeps heading in that direction. There are also promising signs for new season lamb, although the red meat sector coming to fruition could be as elusive as either a Super rugby title or Rio Gold!

Lastly, this month marks an end of an era as Pete McNeil retires from the veterinary team. Pete has decided that a change of lifestyle is in order after 38 years servicing the Dannevirke area. We are hugely grateful to the contribution he has made. His leadership and experience will be missed. We wish Pete and Maggie all the very best for the future and expect a postcard or two while we are still here up to our armpits in cow poop!

**STUART BRUERE**

start early so that animals adjust before critical physiological events. For instance, grain feeding ewes pre-tup needs to start at least 4 weeks prior to mating so that the rumen adjusts and the ewe gets an opportunity to get the benefit of flushing. Starting 10 days before tupping with a significant dietary change will negatively impact ovulation. At the other end of the breeding cycle, suddenly changing to lush feed may actually induce metabolic conditions such as milk fever. I have assisted numerous farmers with these issues this year. If you feel you would like some help with this, please call the clinic and make an appointment.

## Equine Nutrition and Gastrointestinal Diseases Seminar

**Waipukurau** - Monday 12<sup>th</sup> September, 7:30pm  
43 Takapau Road, Waipukurau

**Hastings** - Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September, 6:30pm  
Arena on Ormond - 333 Ormond Road, Hastings

**Dannevirke** - Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> September, 6:30pm  
193-195 High Street, Dannevirke

**Topics include:— What to keep in your first aid kit • Signs of colic, when to call your vet  
• Nutrition requirements • Gastric ulcerations • Anatomy of digestive tract**

**Limited Spaces Available – Free to attend (Drinks and nibbles will be provided)**

**RSVP:** Waipukurau - Hannah 06 858 9060 – [hannah.tully@vshb.co.nz](mailto:hannah.tully@vshb.co.nz)

Hastings - Nick 06 650 3090 – [nic.mconie@vshb.co.nz](mailto:nic.mconie@vshb.co.nz) Dannevirke - Hannah 06 374 7021 – [hannah@vsdvk.co.nz](mailto:hannah@vsdvk.co.nz)

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\*PROMOTION ENDS 28/10/16

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**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**

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