

MAY 2021

VET NEWS

LICE IN SHEEP

TRACE ELEMENTS

M. BOVIS



VET SERVICES

HAWKE'S BAY | DANNEVIRKE | WAIRARAPA

HASTINGS / NAPIER

Clare Ryan, Veterinarian & Clinic Manager

The Autumn in this side of the bay has not really come to much with limited rain fall in areas after a reasonable good summer growth period. It is looking as it could be a hard few months with winter looming. Fingers crossed we get some rain before the temperatures drop down too much and we don't head down the same track as last year. Please get in touch if you are getting short of feed to discussion options and time frames for managing stock through this tricky period.

Facial eczema spore counts have been on the low side but in the last 2 weeks have suddenly spiked into dangerous levels in areas with the warmer nights. Reminder that those that capsuled animals in February will be running out of protection so need to think about re-capsuling or other prevention treatments.

Cattle scanning is starting to slow up with pretty normal empty rates except in a few cases of single sire bull breakdowns... remember to keep an eye on the boys when working.

Sheep scanning is about to get underway again with Russell Atkinson and Summa Maybury (the A team) rearing to go! If you haven't got your booking sheet in please contact the clinic or you can book online via our website.

There are a few new faces in the Hasting Clinic with Sal Bredenkamp (vet graduate), Henry Yule (with 3 years of experience), and Anyika Scotland (experienced vet returning from maternity leave and moving up from the Waipukurau Clinic) joining the Production Animal team, Nicky Eade joining the reception and support team and Mitch Lowe (vet graduate) joining our companion animal team.

WAIPUKURAU

Camille Flack, Production Animal Veterinarian Group Leader

This time last year we were in lockdown and midst drought. This year no lockdown, the Australian bubble is opening up and we are still asking for rain. Rainfall around the region has been majorly variable with the wet autumns a dream of the past. The discussions with many are that we are in the dry cycle. A positive about the disappointing autumn is that those pesky diseases haven't caused us too many issues. As we start to get cold mornings it is a sign that winter is on the way. Consider a quick and easy feed budget to ensure there is enough feed for all between now and lambing/calving.

Dry cow consults are underway with our dairy clients, if you haven't got yours booked in give us a call. Cattle scanning is pretty much done with the normal range in results. Our full team of sheep scanners will be in operation this season and bookings are coming in thick and fast. You may also see our teatsealing trailer driving the roads around the region next month as we start to protect the dairy heifers over winter. Don't forget winter is a great time to get your paperwork in order – is your script and animal health plan up to date?

Some new faces to look out for are Nicole Lansdowne, a mixed vet who was working in Taumaranui for 2 years, and Alyse Hansen a new graduate.



Gabby's whopping 33.8 kg pumpkin took out this years Giant Growers Competition.



Congratulations to Vet Services Netball Team who won the local social tournament in April.



Omakere School met a variety of animals on their recent Vet Visit. We look forward to hosting more schools visits this year.



Farmers watch on at Lloyd Smith's recent sheep dog training day in Waipukurau.

WAIRARAPA

Sara Sutherland, Veterinarian

By the time you read this the ram will be finished his one job for the year and you will be looking forward to scanning. The main feedback I have had from our clients is that ewes have lost weight and condition over the mating period. A number of issues could be involved but feed quality appears to be the main culprit, especially with early mating. By mid April a touch of rain had greened things up for most people.

Regarding beef cow scanning we had a small number of clients with bull breakdown disasters. Remember semen testing your bulls tells you whether they are producing viable sperm on that day. Testing bulls at the end of mating will give you more time to replace an animal that is not performing. Talk to us about the best timing on your farm.

Coming into winter is a good time to review your animal health plan for the coming year – give us a ring any time to book in an animal health consult. These are hugely useful for making sure your animal health inputs are giving you the best results. A bit of preparation will help prevent animal health disasters next year – even if you haven't had a poor result this year! The same is true for parasite management plans. The focus is moving away from "what drench do I use" to "how do I manage worms on my farm". There's a lot of information out there on worms and we can help you navigate the wormy waters, to make sure parasites aren't affecting your production levels or the long term sustainability of your farm business

DANNEVIRKE

Simon Marshall, Veterinarian & Clinic Manager

The region has had varying amounts of rainfall over the last 6 weeks. Some parts of the region have had almost adequate rain to keep pastures growing but other parts are as dry as this time last year but with a green tinge to the pastures. This has meant that on the dairy platforms a lot of supplement has been fed out to keep cows going and on dry stock farms potentially body condition has dropped in some stock. There are a few reports of ewes going to the ram in less than ideal condition.

The facial eczema spore counts are sitting at a level that could cause damage if exposure is prolonged. The Kumeroa region has the highest counts at over 100,000 spores. The amount of clinical disease being reported is low.

The dry off of dairy cows is underway and we are conducting dry cow consultations to decide on the best approach for cows at drying off. These consultations are a great chance to review the milk quality for the year, set targets for the coming season and plan any treatments that may be required. The teatseal trailer and tech team that runs it are about to get underway.

This time last year we were operating the clinic in a very different way. We are very glad to be in a position to be able to operate without those restrictions and be able to talk to our customers face to face!

Congratulations!!

Silver Fern Farms Hawke's Bay Farmer of The Year winners Andrew & Maddy Mclean

Other winners on the night were Mark Warren, R J Flowers Ltd, Kate Radburn, Rex Newman, MyEnviro, William McDonald, & Marie Taylor. Overall a fantastic night celebrating the sector!

Congratulations to the following winners at the Dairy Awards!

- "Dairy Trainee" Kevin Liengme, received 4 Merit Awards, and was awarded 3rd overall.
- "Dairy Manager" Leon McDonald, received 2 Merit Awards and won overall!
- "Dairy Manager", Claire Douglas, won 3 Merit Awards and came 2nd overall.
- "Share Farmer" Adam Hands & Zoe Haylock won 4 Merit Awards.



PREGNANCY SCANNING & BULL TESTING BEFORE SALES.

Dave Warburton, Veterinarian

Unfortunately, our region is looking green but is still very dry and many farmer comments are that the water table is lower than last autumn in many parts of the Bay. This could be affecting stock conditions and pregnancies.

Foetal aging to identify "late" calving cows has many benefits

1. The "late" cows are the least profitable. Calves are lighter at weaning and the cow needs to be in good order to get back in calf and not be a "late" again.
2. "Late" cows are the first candidates that can be sold if need be. This mob can also be shut down for longer over winter than the early calving cows, if cow conditions are satisfactory.

Although heifers look to be in quite good conditions at the moment, heifer pregnancy test results have been back 5-10% in our area with more lates recorded than in a normal year.

Our prediction is that the 2020 Autumn drought meant heifers were lighter on weaning and this resulted in them playing catch up to reach target mating weights in the spring.

Cow pregnancy test results were pretty disappointing in early season jobs, but we are now starting to see results more on par with a normal season.

Bull sales are around the corner as we sneak into Autumn.

From what we have seen, bull weights and condition may be back on usual because of the season. This is NOT a reflection of inferior genetics or poor breeding and may not be an accurate example of how your bull will perform for you going forward. Store weights have been about bang on for where bulls should be which will help them stay sound and mobile for longer.

Bull 12-month insurance policies will expire soon so it's time to give your bulls a check up. We need to make sure they didn't give each other any permanent injuries from when you boxed them up after mating.

You may want to also consider vaccination boosters for leptospirosis and clostridial protection now with BVD boosters given 4-weeks before mating.

Thanks to everyone who attended Lloyd Smith's working dog training workshop which was hosted by Blackhawk & Vet Services last month.

We had a great turn out and hope to have Lloyd, Linda & their team back again next year!





LICE IN SHEEP

Naomi Barrett, Veterinarian

A common winter issue, lice are prevalent at this time of year due to their preference for cooler, darker and drier weather conditions. Infestations develop as a slow burn on healthy animals, with numbers gradually increasing on individuals. The entire lifecycle of lice is spent on sheep, so transmission between individual animals can only occur following very close contact. For example, a lice infested ewe will infect her lambs within 24 hours as they feed and remain close to their mother.

Lice infestations have a serious impact as they stimulate an immune response in the skin of a sheep. This can lead to damaged wool with reduced yield and quality as well as causing damage to the skin itself. The strong itch reflex triggered by lice causes scratching which leads to further damage to the wool and pelt, also distracting sheep from grazing.

Sheep in good body condition are less susceptible to lice, so when trying to determine whether your flock has an issue, the poorest condition animals are the ones to check by parting the fleece and counting lice numbers at key locations across the body.

Fortunately shearing will remove the bulk of lice from an animal. In particular shearing during warmer weather will expose the lice and their eggs to increased UV light leading to a higher kill. However, for various reasons this might not always be an option and chemical treatments are often required to help break the lifecycle.

Chemical treatment is best done when lice numbers are at their lowest – either in summer and/or immediately off shears. Winter shearing may provide the opportunity to do this. A range of products are available with a variety of application methods. The key is to use the product that will be most effective for the situation and to apply it properly according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Products should be rotated every year to avoid resistance issues developing.

Any new sheep brought onto a property should get a quarantine dip. Treated animals should not be mixed with untreated ones. Regular monitoring will help ensure treatments are working properly.

Have you booked your sheep scanning?

We strongly encourage investing in pregnancy scanning as the scanning data allows you to maximise your flock performance with appropriate feed allocations, monitoring a ram's performance, and determining early and late lambing ewes.

The optimal time for scanning is regarded as 85-90 days post-ram introduction.

Contact your local Vet Services or visit our website to book your scanning dates.



A MINOR CHANGE THAT CAN HAVE MAJOR IMPACTS - WHY YOU SHOULD BE LOOKING INTO YOUR TRACE ELEMENT STATUS.

Victor Sanders, Veterinarian

As the days shorten and the grass stops growing, mobs of animals may start to drop behind their target weights. Worm burdens are commonly blamed for ill-thrifty animals however they are just one of an extensive list of possible reasons for animals to stall or to start to go backwards. Another culprit that can be associated is a trace element deficiency.

Trace elements are essential elements that are required in very small quantities. A deficiency can occur either through a soil or plant deficiency or due to a lack of absorption in the animal. The main trace elements of concern are cobalt (B12), selenium, iodine and copper. Hawke's Bay soils have traditionally been deficient in selenium and copper.

Selenium deficiency can be insidious and only picked up when stock are weighed often, becoming apparent through reduced growth rates and stock not meeting targets. Selenium levels in pasture can be low during good grass growth which is, unfortunately, not right now. It is also used by muscles for protection against damage along with helping the animal remain resistant to infections. The response to treatment for deficient stock can be astounding. Lambs growth rates can improve by up to 100g+ a day or R2 bulls can go from 300g a day up to 2-3kg a day on the same diet! Other subtle signs of deficiency are diarrhoea, early embryonic death in ewes and decreased milk production in dairy cows.

Iodine deficiency is commonly associated with ewes being fed a brassica crop during gestation and is something to be aware of.

Increased lamb deaths or weak lambs around lambing should sound some alarm bells.

Copper can be a significant issue for individual farms. Deficiency presents slightly differently in various species with deer being the most susceptible followed by cattle then sheep. Cattle can show ill-thrift and diarrhoea, loss of coat colour and more seriously, spontaneous fractures in young growing animals. Young deer with low copper levels can have ill thrift and abnormal bone growth while older deer can suffer from swayback in winter and early spring. Copper is a challenging and complex trace element as it interacts with other elements, such as molybdenum, iron and sulphur, meaning that there may be a primary soil deficiency or a created one. A change in fertilizer practice (e.g more molybdenum, a lot more lime) can create problems when there have previously been none. Copper in the soil is at its lowest in winter so ensuring levels are high enough pre-winter is essential in avoiding clinical issues.

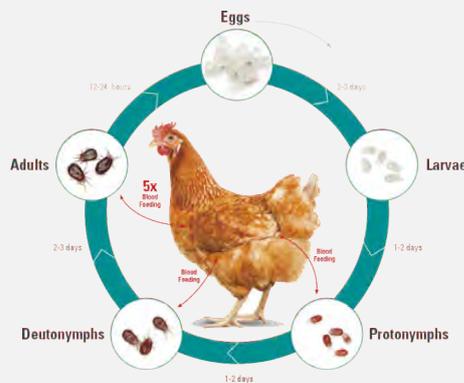
Luckily, testing for the trace elements can be done easily through a number of avenues. B12, selenium and copper are all stored in the liver so assessing levels for sufficiency can be done either through liver biopsies or through liver testing of animals that have gone to slaughter. Blood samples are a good way to assess deficiency. While supplementation of copper and selenium on known deficient properties is common practice, care must be taken not to over supplement as selenium and copper toxicity can result in death. If you have any questions about the best policy for your farm regarding trace element supplementation or testing, do not hesitate to give the clinic a call.

Red mites are small external parasites that live in the cracks and crevices of poultry housing.

They are blood feeders and mainly feed at night but if there are large numbers they may be seen during the day. They then return to the housing during the day where they lay their eggs. They can be a problem in large numbers causing anaemia and affecting the health and production of birds.

Tell-tale signs of red mite infestation are grey speckled areas around perches and nest boxes, or clusters of grey to red moving specs that are small but still visible to the naked eye. If they have fed they will be red, if not they will be grey/black. They are commonly found where there are joins or small cracks in poultry housing.

Until now, treatment of red mites has been tricky and multiple treatments at regular intervals have been needed, often with poor results.



Vet Services now stocks a new product called Exzolt, a red mite treatment licensed for poultry, given orally (usually in the water). Treatment involves 2 doses, given 7 days apart, and is effective for at least 3 months.

This product is very effective but is only available in commercial sized packs. We are now able to offer this dispensed in small amounts for your backyard flock, with the added bonus of no egg withholding, so it is safe to eat eggs after treatment.



M. BOVIS : WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON AND WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

Camille Flack, Veterinarian

Vets a key part to the M.Bovis Beef Surveillance Programme.

From 1 April, MPI's National Beef Cattle Surveillance (NBCS) Programme for M. bovis has transitioned to a more focused, risk-based surveillance of beef and dry stock herds. While sampling during TB testing has worked well, most TB testing happens in areas where M. bovis hasn't been prevalent. As a result, sampling will no longer occur during TB testing.

Sampling will include multiple herd types, including dairy heifers, beef breeding animals and bulls. Samples will be collected from up to 150 animals and a results letter will be issued by MPI within 14 business days.

So far, the programme has tested over 300,000 animals, 99.9% of which were negative. It is extremely uncommon for animals to be positive. On-farm testing in this manner is a screening test which won't definitively determine if a farm is infected so if a positive result does occur, follow-up is required.

If you are contacted to arrange a sampling visit, please ensure your animals are NAIT tagged and registered before they are bled. Participating in the surveillance programme will put you in good company alongside thousands of farms that have already sampled and made a huge contribution to eradicating M. bovis from New Zealand.

Vet Services will now book and schedule sample collection at times when cattle are already yarded for other reasons. What's in it for me you say?

- Up to 150 cattle, 6 months and older blood tested for free
- Free mileage to your property
- There is also a special offer for lab testing including BVD and trace elements
- Doing your part for biosecurity in New Zealand

If you are yarding animals on farm, need a vet to visit your property, are considering a hunt for BVD in your herd, want to know your current trace element status then give us a call and see how this can work for you.

VET SERVICES

HAWKE'S BAY | DANNEVIRKE | WAIRARAPA



Receive a **100% NZ wool throw**
with every 15L Startect®



Using Startect in your drenching programme means you can:

- **PROTECT** your flock from resistance
- **PROLONG** the life of your older drenches
- **PERFORM** better using a fully effective drench



*Offer available while stocks last.

Zoetis New Zealand Limited. Tel: 0800 963 847; www.zoetis.co.nz. STARTECT is a registered trade mark of Zoetis. ACVM No. A10353.

NAPIER (06) 846 5308 . HASTINGS (06) 876 7001

WAIPUKURAU (06) 858 9060 . DANNEVIRKE (06) 374 7021 . WAIRARAPA (06) 378 2662