

FEBRUARY 2018

# VET NEWS

WORKING DOG DIET

READY OR NOT!

THE YEAR AHEAD



Some photos by Richard Hilson

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# WORKING DOG DIET

STUART BRUERE

You all own them, working dogs that is. You work on feed budgets for your livestock such as cows and sheep. Have you ever considered what the feed budget for your 35kg Huntaway or 25kg Heading Dog should be?

When I began practice 38 years ago, working dog nutrition was largely based on feeding dogs a big chunk of thawed frozen meat at the end of the day. Sheep were generally home killed, cut into meal sized pieces and frozen in order to comply with the National Hydatids Regulations. Often dogs would consume large amounts of bone, which when mixed with wool, hay, woolpacks or hay bale twine ended up causing constipation. The vets delight – digging out a thin constipated dog on a Friday afternoon when the farmers came to town to do their various chores.

Thankfully, dog diets have moved on from those days. The Friday afternoon “dig” is now largely a thing of the past.

In the last 10 years there has been a terrific amount of work done to figure out the nutritional requirements of working dogs in New Zealand. There is now a wide range of well formulated diets to feed to dogs.

The amount of dog food required per day varies significantly depending on how hard they are working.

## So, what are the basics?

1. Dogs are carnivores. You will notice in wildlife documentaries, the carnivores eat lots of fatty, muscle laden carcasses. Hint – they consume high levels of fat and protein.
2. Trial work has demonstrated that dogs require high protein, high fat, low carbohydrate diets. So high protein means 30 – 32%, high fat means 20 – 30%. Check the label. Just because the manufacturers label says “high energy” or “high protein” doesn’t mean it is! Beware the marketing department or perhaps more correctly the “spin” department.
3. As with most things in life, you get what you pay for. “Economy” buys are often “cheap and nasty”.
4. Dogs work better when they are fed twice daily. They need and enjoy access to fresh clean water.
5. They have one simple stomach, so food is not pre-digested as it is with ruminants.



6. A low protein diet for a dog is 20% or less. Trials have shown dogs are 8 times more likely to get injured when on low protein diets compared to a diet above 24% protein. This is attributed to increased muscle fatigue. The muscle can’t take the expected load so the bone is stressed and more likely to fracture.
7. “Old School” sheep gut cookers can now be re-designated as boat anchorages. The feed value of cooked sheep guts is low and more likely to cause gastro-intestinal upsets than add significant energy to a dog diet.

## So, the message is check the label before you buy.

Let’s look at some common manufactured dog feed “numbers” in a Nutrition 101 kind of way. The energy figures used are based on what the manufacturers of these products have told us.

We have assumed a 25kg working dog needs 6250 kJ/day for maintenance and may vary from 12500 – 31250 kJ/day when working.

For a 35kg working dog we have assumed a maintenance energy requirement of 8750 kJ/day and 17500 – 43750 kJ/day when working. (Conversion factor – 1kcal = 4.16kJ)

Brand	Protein %	Fat %	25kg main	25kg work	35kg main	35kg work
			Gm/day	Gm/day	Gm/day	Gm/day
Royal Canin 4800	32	30	330	660-1650	460	920-2300
Eukanuba Performance	30	20	400	790-1980	550	1100-2760
Tux Energy	20	18	410	820-2030	570	1140-2840
Champ	20	15	470	940-2350	660	1320-3300

## Key to understanding the table:

The numbers under each dog weight represent the number of grams per day required to meet the daily energy requirement.

- Royal Canin is Endurance 4800
- Champ is the stock standard variety found at many stock and station agents
- Main – means maintenance requirement in grams per day
- Work – means the amount required per day when doing medium to heavy work in grams per day

Note that Tux and Champ have fat but it is below the recommended 20% minimum for working dogs. Both these brands are also below the recommended 24% protein required to reduce muscle lethargy.

An added bonus with the Royal Canin Endurance 4800 and the Eukanuba performance brands is that they also contain Glucosamine and Chondroitin, which help with joint health.

So when buying dog food, carefully check the protein and fat % of the product. At the top end of all these diets, dogs have to consume a significant weight of food to meet their daily energy requirement.

An animal such as a dog with a simple stomach may require more than one feed per day when they are working hard in order to eat sufficient food per day. You will notice that a 35kg dog working very hard has to be fed over 40% more in weight of dog food if being fed Champ versus Royal Canin Endurance 4800. The proportions are the same for the other examples here.

The message is clear – price per kg is not necessarily the best way to purchase working dog food. You may be “short-changing” your dogs if you are feeding them food which doesn’t deliver short term energy needs and long term health benefits.

# BUGGER THE FLY: TREATING FLYSTRIKE

RICHARD HILSON

Being in the middle of another on-again, off-again wet summer with a considerable number of problems with flystrike occurring in sheep recently, it is timely to consider the options for treating struck sheep. Any strike is bad news for sheep and devastatingly bad for production. With tupping approaching, bear in mind that if a ewe gets struck in summer or autumn she has only about a 20% chance of getting in lamb. We have recently considered the options for avoiding strike but what are you best to do when a problem actually occurs?

That is pretty much like telling farmers how to suck eggs! Most will treat the issue aggressively by mustering mobs containing affected sheep, dipping the mob and shearing the struck areas on any affected animals and applying something to kill the maggots still there. There are some issues that you might also like to consider along the way.

Have a think about why there are struck sheep. Are they uncrutched and offering smelly dirty bums to interested flies? Lambs missed a drench? Could things have been done sooner and more efficiently? When were they last dipped and how long has the protection period been since? If it is shorter than expected, we would like to know, to have the opportunity to investigate the problem and to assist in the next choice of dip. There are significant issues with fly resistance to commonly used dip products and we cannot assume that what worked yesterday will also work as well tomorrow.

Make sure the dip that you use on the mob can also kill any freshly hatched maggots that may cause problems for those sheep not obviously struck at the time. Not all products can do this and the IGR group only kill the maggots at their next moult, meaning the freshly struck sheep has to put up with them until then. Adding something effective to kill maggots to a cyromazine dip is what is done with both Cyrazin KO and Cyrex, for instance. Obviously, if you are ahead of the flies and there is no chance of any struck sheep in the flock, you might choose a product that does not have maggot knock-down like that.

What to do with the struck sheep? Make sure you look hard for a start and identify and draft as many as you can see. The early signs of uncomfortable sheep are subtle and I would suggest that not everyone is really good at spotting those signs. Struck sheep are not just those with massive areas of stained wool over their rump or down their flanks so make sure everyone is on the same sheet in terms of early identification of strike. Opinion has sometimes been divided on what to do with the individual struck animals. Conventional wisdom is to shear the wool off the affected area and well beyond the margins of the strike. Some thought a few years ago that the skin would heal better if the strike was treated but the wool not removed immediately. Hopefully I am not too old fashioned but I would suggest that a decent clip be done as it makes treated sheep instantly identifiable and tends to leave less scabs with matted wool that may either become infected or even re-struck in a few week's time. If possible, do put those sheep in another paddock in a small mob, with shade, and feed them as well as you can.

What to treat them with? At the risk of now beginning to complicate what has long been seen as a very simple procedure, we want to see a different class of product used to kill those maggots than the one they may have already been exposed to in the existing sheep dip on the animals. If they managed to get established in the presence of waning quantities of dip in the wool already, why would you try to kill them with the same thing? The commonly used product that actually fits that bill is Maggo, which is an OP. OP resistance is common but the dips themselves have very little use any more, so this is often a good option. Remember that Maggo will have very little residual

action so dip those animals within a week or so with an effective longer acting product to avoid a second round of strike for them. Another excellent option is Cyrex liquid, which contains spinosad as well as cyromazine, or Extinosad, which is spinosad on its own. These are safer products for humans to handle than OPs and offer a good "change" from what you might normally use. Cyrazin KO also offers an ivermectin component to kill the maggots.

We also note the value of OPs here to try to make sure it remains available to you as an option. A blanket ban of OPs is on the wish list for policy makers in Wellington but we have had the opportunity recently to ask that some of these products remain available, even if there are some tightening of rules around their use, to assist in treatment of flystrike. OPs are not used widely or indiscriminately in sheep farming now and it is in the best interest of our sheep that we retain this important option to treat with these products in a targeted manner.

If the idea of following up with a different class of product is a bit confusing, please ask our advice at any time. We truly want to make these products last as long as they possibly can and some of these basic guidelines are very important in helping achieve that.



# 2018 — WHAT DOES THE YEAR HOLD FOR THE RURAL SECTOR?

BRENDAN JAMES

We saw plenty of changes in 2017. A new government brought with it the usual fluff and bluster as a new government is formed, the world powerhouses seem to have their podgy fingers sitting on nuclear bomb triggers, Brexit and Britain's exit from the EU continues to progress and the climate locally was pretty kind to us. TPPA appears dead in the water with Donald Trump still flexing his muscle, but ironically other markets are opening up and presenting opportunities for our farmers.

So if 2017 was largely good for all connected to the rural sector what do the economic gods hold for us in 2018 according to the experts? Finding a common theme among economic commentators is similar to a bunch of mates at the local pub agreeing on the first All Black team of the year. However, there are a few key indicators which there is general agreement on. Projections with economic growth continue to look positive although for the first time in a while consumer and business confidence took a bit of a hit in the last quarter of 2017 - maybe their survey population was heavily biased towards those living north of the Bombay hills given the property market slow down!

The key drivers outside of market demand that drive farm gate prices are heavily linked to exchange rates which are in turn linked to confidence levels and risk appetites in some of the larger European markets, the USA and Asia. A couple of highlights are noted below:

- The NZ dollar should sit at around USD\$0.67 as an average for the year. So, not a lot of change from 2017 although I think the slow creep up to the low USD\$0.70 in December 2017 surprised most people. The Euro and GBP are showing signs of strengthening against the NZD which is only positive for export returns as we head towards the busy Easter trading period.
- Europe appears a lot more stable that it has been and attention has turned to what the hell will happen with Clown no.1 in the USA and Clown no. 2 in North Korea. Interestingly the barb throwing between Trump and Un has had little effect on growth projections in the USA, China and the other big Asian markets.
- Availability of credit and bank's appetite for risk has definitely edged upwards in the last six months. The Reserve Bank lifting of LVR restrictions has made competition for lending greater than it has been for a while, this appears to be having a small spill-over into the commercial markets which is great if you are in a position of needing to borrow! Interest rates are expected to remain pretty static with a small risk of some upward movement in late 2018. Looking too far past early 2019 and locking in interest rates seems to be akin to backing the last horse in the last race at Hastings - who knows what might happen?
- Economic growth should continue to hold steady at around the 2.5% to 3.5% mark based on tourism and consolidation of pricing in the dairy industry. For the first time in recent memory the words "economic cycle" and "potentially coming to an end" are surfacing – or is this just commentators arse-covering?
- The Hawke's Bay region continues to maintain its turnaround from 2015 with growth prospects and performance still looking good. Driven by tourism and horticulture in particular, 2018 looks like it will deliver what 2017 did plus a bit more. Roll in more Aucklanders and Wellingtonians gobbling up housing and the Sheep and Beef farmers banking more cash than they have for a while and it'd difficult to see anything but continued growth and positivity for the region.



## SHEEP, BEEF AND DEER SECTOR

Recently published information from Beef+Lamb NZ produced the following insights on the coming year;

- The number of sheep and breeding ewes appears to have levelled out after a number of repeated years in decline (certainly locally we expect to see some rebuilding of numbers if conditions allow).
- EBIT performance on farm is expected to increase by 6-7% on 2016-17 which is great news - make sure you save some money for tax.
- The medium-term outlook for lamb returns per head should continue at current levels - hopefully the \$100 lamb is the new norm.
- Wool prices may have bottomed out, hopefully. Out of all the sectors wool is currently the only bad news story with no real solution in sight it seems.
- Beef returns continue to look to hold steady, particularly if we see a slight drop in the USD. The big unknown continues to be just how much South American beef will be released back into the US market which may place some downwards pressure on our manufactured beef returns.

Deer is just flying at the moment, record velvet and venison prices with demand outstripping supply mean it's a great time to be farming deer. Global demand indicators show no sign of abating and it seems deer farming has a number of really good years ahead.

## DAIRY SECTOR

The latest forecast from the ANZ still has a '6' in front of it with no real danger signs looming on the horizon. \$6.25 to \$6.50 is a pretty consistent theme you hear touted and I guess the first couple of GDT's will set the tone through to the end of the season.



## WHAT DOES ALL OF THIS MEAN FOR US IN HAWKE'S BAY?

- Sheep, beef and deer farmers look like they are in for a couple of good years. With less volatility and continued drops of rain it's hard to imagine why you wouldn't have a smile on your face next time you are in the clinic
- The dairy industry in a similar way to sheep and beef is showing signs of less volatility which should make dealing with banks and setting budgets a bit easier.
- Your farm working expenses including interest should be relatively stable. Investment in environmental planning and compliance is the only potential on-going unknown.

2018 has all the hallmarks of being a successful and productive year for all of us. We are here to help - making the right decisions at the right times is critical to maximising production, no matter what species or combination thereof that you farm. Animal health is a big part of your business and we have the personnel to help you maximise your business' performance. Please talk to any of our staff about how you can make 2018 the best it can possibly be.

If you're into winter sport, 2018 has the Winter Olympics and Football World Cup to keep you entertained, I'm sure the Blackcaps will continue on their winning ways and when the French rugby team is here in June we know anything can happen.....

# SEASONAL UPDATE

## HASTINGS/NAPIER

There has been a continuation of variable weather patterns throughout the region this month. Some areas are starting to dry up and others are flourishing with an abundance of rain and feed. There is a large amount of dead matter in the base of many pastures which sends out the alarm bells re facial eczema. We have started spore counting and already getting counts around the 30,000 mark in some areas. It would be a good idea to keep an eye on our web site and check the progression. Early planning is the key to prevention.

We have seen a couple of cases of Barbers Pole worm already this summer. Both were in lambs that did not have any drenching history. Also this worm has dominated the one larval culture we have done this summer as well. Our advice would be to ensure you keep lambs on a strict 28 day drench program and there should not be too many problems. Dropping in a longer acting product containing Moxidectin is also a possibility at this time of

## WAIPUKURAU

January has brought us some pretty varied conditions across CHB – with some areas receiving good thunderstorms, and others getting nothing. Certainly, as a whole we are looking greener than normal! A trip to Porangahau this morning cemented how humid it currently is – warm and moist conditions, with a

## DANNEVIRKE

Happy New Year to everyone, hopefully you all managed a little bit of time to relax and enjoy the festive season. It's been a warm summer so far, great for the holiday period but it's been good to have some decent rainfall in recent weeks too, although it does seem to be skipping over some areas that could really benefit from the wet.

Pregnancy testing is just starting to get underway in dairy and beef herds, it will be interesting to see what numbers are like this

## WAIRARAPA

Thank you Santa Claus for bringing the rain in December and January! This rain was a game changer, getting crops moving and animals fed. It will be interesting to see how the summer progresses, and whether February and March stay wet. By the time you read this, summer will be almost over and the ram about to go out. We know it is hard to predict how many hoggets will get up to weight for mating, but do have a guess and order your Toxovax in advance. This vaccine is made to order, so if you wait to the last minute you may miss out. Sara has been busy with her "ram run" palpating rams for brucellosis and vaccinating dogs for parvo – if you haven't been contacted yet, ring the clinic and make sure you get booked in. We find brucellosis in the Wairarapa most years, and there's no point putting out infertile

**MARK MATTHEWS**

year. It would also be a good idea to FEC ewes pre-tup to ensure they are not infected as well.

Cattle are generally doing well with no major problems presenting except the Mycoplasma bovis problem in Patoka. It was good to see a great turnout of farmers at the recent meeting on this issue held in Napier.

The velvet season is starting to wind down. We are seeing some good heads at regrowth which is a nice way to end a successful velvet harvest.

The orchardists do not like the variable weather patterns we are experiencing. Extra sprays have been used to control various diseases and fruit ripening has been a little slow. Regardless of that there is still plenty of fruit available for sale around the Hastings district. Hopefully the weather will settle as the grapes ripen to produce once again some high-quality HB wines.

**MIKE FITZGERALD**

fair amount of dead litter around, is shaping up to be a perfect breeding ground for facial eczema and ryegrass staggers – something to be very vigilant about from now on. Internal parasites and fly are also favoured – worth being proactive about. Hopefully all the new year's resolutions are being adhered to.

**CORINNA MINKO**

season, most were pretty happy with submission rates, hopefully that will translate into some positive results.

It's been a busy time for those weaning lambs, shearing and squeezing in ram palpations. We've been doing some FECs on the rams this year and it's been interesting to see a range of results when it comes to egg counts, a reminder not to forget about this group of stock.

**SARA SUTHERLAND**

rams. While you are looking at your rams, make sure they are able to walk. Any with footrot or flystrike need to be treated well in advance of mating so their sperm counts have time to come up. Also keep an eye out for cases of Salmonella this time of year. If you find a couple of dead ewes, get us to check them out rather than assume that Salmonella is the issue. The early summer was good for growing grass, but that means it was also good for flystrike and worms. If you are thinking of doing a faecal egg count reduction test (FECRT) get in touch as soon as possible - don't leave it until autumn or key worm species may no longer be around in sufficient numbers to make the test worthwhile. Enjoy summer, it will be over before you know it

## 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:**

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.

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