



# EWES NEWS



Jeff Spillane,  
Commercial Manager

## Productivity in a Strong Market

It has been some time since schedules and pricing for lamb have been as high as they are currently.

Getting things right in a buoyant market becomes all the more important in order to capture the returns on offer, especially as it now looks like we are in for a dry summer. This month we discuss the animal

health priorities to get lambs through to weaning in optimum shape. We also touch on some of the preparation required now, for the start of the next breeding cycle. These decisions are the ones that will affect the level of success you have this time next year.

Our final word for the year is one of thanks, to you, our clients. Thank you for choosing to do business with the Veterinary Centre. Our involvement

in the sheep and beef sector relies on our productive contribution to its producers. In 2018 we will again have our clients' objectives central to our focus. We wish all our clients and your families a safe and Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

**Merry Christmas from the Veterinary Centre administration staff . . .**



The Oamaru team

Ashleigh K, Ash T, Kirsty, Andrea H, Jayde



The Waimate team

Standing from left - Katie, Nick, Myles  
Front kneeling - Milly, Megan, Chloe, Phoebe  
Front sitting - Samantha.



The East Otago/Maniototo team

From left - Gus, Georgia, Michael, Jeremy, Peri and Renea.



The Waitaki Valley team

Lisa

Stephanie



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**Dave Robertson**  
BVSc, BSc

# Managing Lambs on Rocket Fuel Feed

It is hard to knock sheep farming at the moment and in times like these I do start to have more conversations about those niggly deaths of ewes and lambs. Probably the biggest cause of lambs deaths is not being organized to get clostridial vaccine into lambs. I understand that lambs drafted off mothers are not around long enough to benefit from vaccinating, but after that there is value in preventing pulpy kidney. For

every dead lamb is the profit gone on another 4 live ones.

There are other causes of sudden death such as red gut and pneumonia, but we must never over-look the obvious and the basic. There is no chemical resistance to 5 in 1 vaccines (just effort resistance) and they are the most effective option for eliminating pulpy kidney - the major cause of sudden deaths. It just needs to be **DONE TWICE 4 WEEKS APART** to be effective.

The look-a-like syndrome to pulpy kidney is red gut. This occurs in

lambs that are on a Lucerne or clover dominant pasture. Red gut can be due to the low fibre content of high quality feed causing the rumen capacity to shrink. Also the higher levels of protein fermented in the large bowel cause it to expand and prone to twisting. Not usually occurring until the lambs have been on the feed for a month or more. The disease process can be mitigated by:

- Fibre (straw/hay) available - not always practical.
- Grazing on pasture 2/7 days.
- Mowing and wilting a few rounds of your Lucerne prior to grazing.

Using 10 in 1 covexin vaccine has also been reported to be effect with stopping deaths on rocket fuel feed over and above 5 in 1. Stepping up to covexin may also be of benefit when grazing sheep on fodder beet. The high sugar content making animals more prone to clostridial growth.



**Preventing losses is important to reap the full financial benefit of the current schedule.**

*A good option for those wanting to complete 5 in 1 clostridial vaccinations and supplement B12 is Multine B12. The second batch has arrived and is now available. With most hi mineral drenches containing an oral dose of selenium, the most important minerals to support lamb growth can be administered by incorporating this convenient product into your vaccination programme.*

## Animal Health Investments in a Positive Sheep Market

**FECRT** - "You just have to do one of these things" - **Simon Laming 2012 Roadshow**. It's not new and it is actually that simple! More farmers are using this information each year to drive drench decision making, protect existing drenches in use and enhance productivity. Call the team and set yourself up to complete a drench reduction test for your farm. Remember after feed, parasites are the biggest single factor affecting lamb growth. It makes sense to have up to date

information about the drench status of your farm. **The best time to do an FECRT is on lambs at weaning - you will get one chance this year and now is the time to begin.**

**NOVEL ACTIVE DRENCH** - using a novel active drench at the end of a long acting treatment ensures all worms in the animal are removed. There is no known resistance to these new products and we currently have Startect at a 20% discount making it a very competitive option. Novel drenches are also the

recommended practice for quarantine drenching of trading lambs.

### Remember the basics to get you through to weaning -

- An effective triple combination oral drench
- Medium to longer term fly protection - either pour on or through the jetter
- Clostridial vaccination for lambs, especially on crop
- B12 to support lamb growth.



**Kevin Kearney BVSc**  
Veterinary Centre Oamaru

## Sheep Abortions

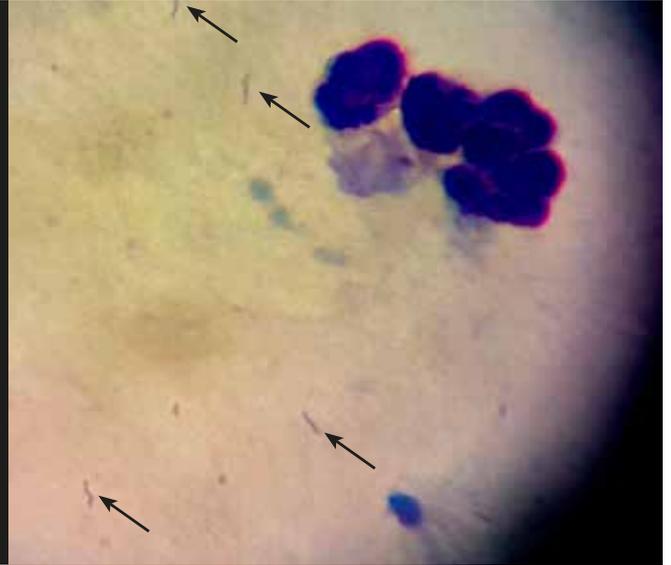
This winter/spring we have once again been involved with several sheep abortion 'storms' on properties within our practice area. It is well known that the two main causes of hogget/ewe abortion in New Zealand are Toxoplasma, and the bacteria Campylobacter.

We diagnosed *Campylobacter fetus* ss *fetus* on three properties. While all three properties were currently not vaccinating for Campylobacter, one of them was vaccinating for Toxo. Substantial losses were recorded on two of the properties. Of note, two of the properties had mixed aged ewes aborting, as well as two toothies. Hoggets and two toothies are generally

regarded as the age groups most "at risk" for Campy abortion. This once again highlights the values

of a strategic vaccination programme for your flock against the two common abortion agents in New Zealand.

**Arrows pointing at Campylobacter bacteria (seagull shaped) from a sample of stomach contents from an aborted lamb, as seen under the microscope at Veterinary Centre Oamaru. Campylobacter was subsequently grown and typed at Gribbles Veterinary Laboratory.**



**Michael Lilley BVSc**

## Brucella Ovis Mythbusters!

**It's a thing of the past in rams.**

■ **MYTH** - we have had outbreaks of brucellosis across the practice area every year. I guarantee there are plenty more undiagnosed infections.

**My scanning percentage is alright therefore I can't have a problem.**

■ **MYTH** - Rams will compensate for each other failings and initially a few more second cycle ewes may be all that is seen. Infections need to be severe and chronic before any drop in scanning percentage will be seen.

**It costs a lot to check for.**

■ **MYTH** - Palpating rams is a simple and cheap screening test, usually none or only a few need blood testing as a double check. This also doubles as a breeding soundness check to remove other causes of infertility.

**My Brucella infection came from my neighbour -**

■ **Probably true**, the best way to not be accused of this is to get your rams checked annually! Infecting your neighbours is not cool, particularly if they are stud breeders.

**The best time to check is before mating.**

■ **MYTH** - there is no reason not to get them checked from now onwards.

If issues are found it gives a chance to clear infection before mating and purchase extra rams if required.



Rams can be checked for Brucella Ovis any time from now on.

## Worm control this Summer

Every kilo counts. The thing that is going to rob your lambs of optimizing growth rate most commonly is internal parasitism. The weaning drench is the most significant drench they will ever get. Using the most effective combination drench on your lambs at this time is important. It breaks the cycle of what every burden they have picked up from their mothers and sets them up for post weaning growth

Matrix Tape is the ultimate weaning drench that will knock out tapeworm as well as being the most effective triple combination drench. If you have diagnosed drench resistance or suspect it, Zolvix Plus or Startect or the other two options for a fully effective weaning drench.



**Dave Robertson**  
BVSc, BSc

## *Managing Bulls during mating* - Caberfeidh Case Study

Most commonly cows are mob mated with multiple bulls. 3 bulls/100 cows is standard. High capacity bulls can do up to 50 cows, but the standard expectation is 1 bull covering 35 cows in a cycle. The main benefits of mob mating are the ease of managing 1 cow mob, the insurance that if one bull is sub-fertile the other bulls will compensate. However, there is the tendency for more injuries to bulls through fighting, and if one dominant bull becomes sub-fertile, cows are left un-mated. Single sire mating is less common, but when well managed 1st service conception rates can be higher and there are less risks of bull injuries. To mitigate against subfertility rotation of bulls each cycle is common practice. Caberfeidh manager Matt Smith, has recently moved down from the Hawkes Bay where he managed the Tautane Station. Up there managing beef



bulls for optimum performance on hill country was a priority. Matt said *"The key to success was making sure that bulls were fit, sound and had been well feed for 8 weeks pre mating something that is important also at Caberfeidh"*. The cow herd he has inherited has a very good track record with fertility and managing cow condition through dry periods.

Veterinary Centre bull testing service allows subfertility to be detected in a bull team prior to mating and it is better to find these out now, rather than when you're staring at a pen full of empty cows at pregnancy testing. *"This offers us an opportunity to have a good look at the bulls and make sure they are able to do the job, we test all bulls even new 2 year old bulls. We do this about 6 weeks pre-mating so it gives us time to remedy any issues that have shown up."*

Caberfeidh is also in the New Zealand beef progeny testing program, that was set up to test the progeny of a range

of bulls over a number of traits. Matt has realized from this trial the value of EBV's, as this trial has shown that they do work. *"It gives us the confidence to spend the money on the bulls that are going to improve our cow herd in the traits that we are looking for. For Matt, artificial insemination can stack up in a commercial situation, "I have been using AI for the last 4 years, it gives farmers an opportunity to get access to genetics that aren't usually available to most commercial farmers. "*

### *FREE Delivery*



**Our Territory Managers are able to deliver your animal health requirements free of charge.**

## *Mycoplasma Bovis and livestock farmers*

**Hamish Newton PhD, BVSc**

With the increasing integration of the dairy and beef sectors through dairy grazing, heifer rearing, rearing of dairy cross bulls, leasing of bulls etc. Mycoplasma bovis cannot be thought of as the dairy farmers' problem. This disease is most likely to be spread via cattle movements so it is important that all cattle movements between properties are recorded into NAIT to allow rapid assessment of where the disease may have spread to if there are further farms identified with the disease. This bacteria causes mastitis, lameness in cattle and pneumonia and ear infections in calves. The

difficulty in eradicating the disease is that many infected animals will show no obvious signs of infection and cattle require blood testing and swabs to detect if a cow has reacted to the bug or is shedding the bug respectively. As most infections are "silent" the ability of M.P.I. quickly and accurately know what cattle are where, via NAIT, is vital to them being able to start targeted surveillance of animals that could have come into contact with animals from infected or suspect herds. Apart from being NAIT compliant what else can you do?

■ Avoid nose to nose contact

between lines of cattle belonging to different owners including your neighbours.

- Get in contact with us about any lameness case, especially if there is swelling of a joint
- Arrive at other properties and sale yards free of any cattle secretions and leave clean as well. Don't take faeces/saliva etc. from one place to another.

You can keep up to date with M.P.I's response to the outbreak by signing up to receive their email updates by emailing **MBovis2017\_Liaison@mpi.govt.nz** and asking to go on their list.