



NSVS LTD

VetTIMES

Pet Reminders

- **Check diet for winter**
- **Check bedding warmth for winter**
- **Arrange annual check up**
- **Worm cats and dogs**

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NSVS LTD

June 2009

Situation Comment

Pregnancy testing results have been a little mixed for the beef guys so far. We certainly have come across some higher empty rates than normal. Bull failure has been identified in a few situations and I think we need to be looking more closely at these animals pre-mating. Final dairy empty rates have averaged about 11%. Here too bull issues have cropped up as a result of some of the In-Calf analysis that we have done. I think everybody needs to put a bit more focus on the bull teams – serving capacity tests are recommended to ensure that the bulls are capable and interested in working, also on the dairy side of things very often the bull teams are under-powered. The wet weather around dry-off time made things challenging but so far there have been very few mastitis cases. Cow condition has been generally good certainly much better than this time last year. Sheep numbers have stabilised after the dramatic fall off last year. It has made lamb prices pretty reasonable for the season – supply and demand!! There is also a new drench on the market for sheep “Zolvix”, which is a new type of anthelmintic (AAD’s). It looks like it will certainly have great potential for strategic use.

Staff News

Best of luck to Mike, Rochelle and Corissa who are all sitting exams in June. One of the ways that we try to continue to provide best quality services for our clients is through continuing education in order to have the most up to date knowledge available. Congratulations to Jenny and Bruce on their recent marriage on a beautiful day in Te Anau. We wish them every success and happiness in their lives together. We welcome vet nurse Nicola Hughes to the team at the Te Anau clinic.

Inductions

This coming spring is likely to be the last that routine inductions of cows will be permitted under current legislation. The current Code of Practice is up for review and will not be renewed. There is still some possibility that induction in some form may be permitted but is likely to have increased regulation. We will not know more for some time yet. The current Code has strict requirements to follow for routine inductions to be permitted. These have not changed for the last five years.

In essence cows to be;

- between 6 & 12 weeks prior to due calving date.
- 3 – 8 years old only.
- in good health.
- BCS between 5 and 6.

In addition to this there must be a plan in place to ensure the above conditions are met, that feed supply is sufficient to meet cow needs, magnesium supplementation is underway before the programme starts and a programme of management is in place for once the induction programme begins. If you intend to induce cows you must involve the vet in the planning process well in advance.

Morgan Greene MVB MRCVS MACVSc

Slug and Snail Bait Poisoning

Slug and snail baits are commonly used in the domestic garden situation, you may have some in your garden shed, they come in the form of liquid, pellets, flakes or granules. The most common active ingredient found in these baits is **metaldehyde**. This chemical is highly toxic to animals. Animals find the bait quite attractive and deterrents added to bait, such as bitrex, are not 100% effective. Most of these baits are coloured blue or green.

The exact mechanism by which toxicity occurs is not known, however, the drug is rapidly absorbed from the gut causing rapid and dramatic clinical signs. Clinical signs may develop within minutes to hours and it is important that if you suspect metaldehyde poisoning that you call your vet immediately. The most common clinical signs involve muscle tremors, increased drooling/salivation, inco-ordination and seizures. You may see blue/green granules in an animals vomit that help to support the diagnosis.

Seizures may develop and the animal may lose consciousness and the ability to breathe, resulting in death.

It is important that you consult with your vet immediately after identifying a possible slug bait poisoning. Remember, that there are alternatives to using baits containing metaldehyde and if you do use a product containing metaldehyde ensure that you have it stored appropriately away from animals. Quash slug and snail bait is an example of a product that has been considered safe to use around pets.

F Knighton BVSc BSc



Sick/Down Cows Pre-calving

MASTITIS

- Staph, strep, coliform.
- Black mastitis: toxic form of *Staph aureus*, progresses very quickly, initially quarter is red and hot but will become cold and clammy and may blister, milk becomes watery/bloody and cows get very sick. Injectable antibiotics needed. Not a good prognosis once cow gets sick.

ABDOMINAL CATASTROPHE

- LDA/RDA (twisted abomasum)
- Twisted caecum.
- Abomasal ulcers (may burst)

STRESS

- Cows immune systems are often compromised around the transition period leading up to calving. Poor weather can exacerbate this
- Will often see diseases such as pneumonia and Johne's disease brought on by stress.

DIARRHOEA

- Johnes
- Type 2 Ostertagia
- Salmonella/Yersinia
- Magnesium supplementation
- Grass composition

KETOSIS/UNDERFEEDING

- In late pregnancy there is decreased fat production along with a drop in food intake, however demand continues to increase. The diet is often not high enough in glucose precursors so glucose stores can be used up quickly leading to the production of ketone bodies (ketosis). Ketosis also occurs secondary to other diseases such as retained membranes and with other metabolic problems such as milk fever.
- Ketosis is more common post-calving but is occasionally seen in cows carrying twins, or a big calf and fat cows pre-calving.
- Clinical signs: weight loss, ↓ appetite, dull/glazed eyes, dry faeces, nervous signs.
- Treatment: poor prognosis, dextrose 40% IV, oral ketol twice a day for ~5 days, high energy feed

Sick/Down cows continued

LOW CALCIUM (MILK FEVER)

- Massive changes in Ca requirements around calving.
- ↓ muscle tone: weak, wobbly, recumbent; ↑ heart rate but faint; ↓ gut movement: bloat, constipation; ↓ uterine contractions which can lead to dystocia (difficult calving); hypothermia.
- Treatment: IV calcium followed by continued subcutaneous and oral administration for ~24 hrs.

LOW MAGNESIUM (GRASS STAGGERS)

- Generally worse with age, reduced feed intake due to other disease, reduced absorption (high potash, high nitrogen, high crude protein in spring grass), bad weather.
- Very little magnesium stored in body, supplementation usually needed in the late Winter and early Spring.
- Supplementation: pasture or hay dusting with Mg oxide, trough treatment with Mg chloride or sulphate
- Signs: aggressive, irritable, muscle tremors, recumbent with limbs extended, convulsions.
- Treatment: Mg oxide subcutaneous and oral, mixed Ca/Mg can be given IV, cows convulsing have a poor prognosis.

NB With the three metabolic diseases mentioned often more than one problem is going on at a time. Therefore mixed bags are often a good option for supplementation after diagnosing and treating the primary problem.

RUMEN ACIDOSIS

- See other article.

PNEUMONIA

- If aspiration pneumonia (breathing in something foreign e.g. feed, water), very poor prognosis.
- Antibiotics: excenel, marbocyl, tylosin, bivatop.

UTERINE TWIST/TORSION

- 90% of torsions occur at calving, usually present as dystocia (difficult calving)
- Degree of twist varies, may be impossible to pass your hand through the cervix.
- If not treated can quickly lead to necrosis, infection and rupture of the uterus.

FRACTURES/MUSCULOSKELETAL PROBLEMS

- Dislocated hips, limb injuries, spinal injuries
- Dislocated hip: treatment best within 6-12hrs, hips not symmetrical, outward rotation of knee, not weight-bearing on affected hip.
- Ligament rupture/nerve damage.

NURSING OF THE DOWN COW

- Nursing your sick/down cows is very important. If you do not provide suitable care you may as well not treat the cow at all. With down cows it's often all or nothing.
- Shelter: move her under some trees, into a clean shed, use a cover to keep her warm: cover her with some hay or some balage wrap, be creative. Bedding: straw/sawdust, dry pasture.
- Lifting: lift her with hiplifters and allow her to stand for short periods, move her around to a fresh patch, roll her from side to side to reduce pressure damage of the muscles in the legs every 4-6hrs.
- Food and water: access to water is very important and often missed, energy-dense feeds such as hay, silage or meal are good options. Supplement with ketol or molasses (starter-drenches e.g. Headstart).
- Poor prognostic signs: won't remain sitting up, not eating/drinking, legs straight back or straight forward. Keep reassessing!
- We understand that finding the time to care for these cows can be difficult but if you do want to treat them you need to make the time or find someone who has the time.

J Paterson BVSc BSc



There are numerous common garden and pasture plants and weeds in Northern Southland that are poisonous to livestock. Several commonly cultivated pasture and grass species such as ryegrass and Swedes can cause death through poisoning in the right conditions. This article will deal with 2 plants which have caused poisoning in the last year.

Tutu

This native plant is a less common cause of poisoning now but has been a major cause of stock losses in the past. The young shoots are more toxic than older growth and both seeds and berries are toxic. Recent cases in humans from eating poisoned honey are related to the honey dew excreted by an insect on the tutu leaves. Animals which have eaten tutu become ill within 1-2 days. Muscle twitching leads to convulsions and death. Treatment is related to alleviation of the signs, there is no antidote and death is the usual result of poisoning.



Tutu, Coriaria arborea

Yew

Yew trees are commonly grown in gardens around New Zealand. As with Tutu, Yew is potentially poisonous to people. Leaves, bark and seeds are poisonous but the fruit is not. Dried leaves are as toxic = as fresh leaves. The toxin causes sudden heart failure and death due to the heart stopping. Animal may appear "as if they have been shot" and simply drop dead. Trembling and staggering may occur but often animals are simply found dead.

M Baer BVSc



Rotavirus Vaccination

Rotaviral calf scours are costly today, and affect productivity in the future. Outbreaks of infectious calf scours seem to be more prevalent these days, and are an ever present threat to any dairy or beef farm raising calves. Bigger herds, more calves reared and more intensive rearing systems with calves kept in high-density housing can all be factors in this increase.

Rotavirus, found on about 70% of farms, is consistently the biggest cause each season. However infections are commonly of mixed origin, often a combination of rotavirus with other pathogens including Cryptosporidia and coronavirus. Viruses are shed in the faeces of healthy animals, especially at times of high stress such as at calving. This makes newborn calves especially at risk. Outbreaks often occur at the same time as calving peaks.

Infected animals shed vast amounts of virus, contaminating the environment and infecting healthy calves. One infected calf sheds enough virus particles to be able to infect 10,000 other calves!! Scours can cause high mortality. Treatment with electrolytes and labour intensive husbandry is time consuming, expensive, stressful, and not often successful. Even if you do save sick calves, those that recover may never perform as well as non-affected animals.

Long-term consequences of neonatal diarrhoea can include calves not reaching the target live weights to ensure subsequent productivity. Failure to reach target live weights at 15 and 22 months can result in reduced fertility and reduced 1st lactation production in dairy heifers.

Because calf scours will affect virtually every calf rearing unit at some time – it makes economic sense to have a simple and effective risk management plan.

Vaccination is one tool that can help to ensure peace of mind today, and optimal productivity in the future.

A one shot 2mL dose of Rotavec Corona to the pregnant cow massively boosts protective antibody levels in colostrum, which are then passed on to the newborn calf either by suckling or by being fed colostrum.

It is recommended the whole herd is vaccinated 3 weeks before planned-start-of-calving as this timing maximises the coverage of all cows calving in the first 9 weeks.

To get the best value from vaccination, good colostrum feeding is critical. Calves must get 2 – 3.5 litres of first day colostrum within 6 – 12 hours of birth while colostrum antibodies are at their highest. They then need 2.5 - 3 litres of stored or fresh colostrum daily during the first high risk 2–3 weeks, longer if possible, to provide the vital localised protection at gut level.

As with many animal health issues, vaccination is just one part of the picture, and must be supported by good hygiene and management practices. This is especially so in intensive calf rearing facilities.

Talk to one of the vets about setting up a programme that will ensure the best protection for your calves during those crucial early weeks.

M Greene MVB MRCVS MACVSc

Mismating Prevention and Management

In the past a variety of drugs have been licensed for veterinary use in the elimination of unwanted pregnancies in mismated bitches. Over the years, however, many of these products have been discontinued and are now unavailable. As of April this year **Alizin** became the only mismating drug currently available for veterinary use.

WHAT IS ALIZIN?

Alizin is an anti-progesterone injection which works by interfering with the hormone pathways essential for maintaining pregnancy, resulting in termination or abortion. A course of Alizin involves two injections under the skin exactly 24 hours apart. Abortion usually occurs within 4 to 7 days after the final injection. A follow up consult is recommended 10 days after the last injection to confirm successful termination of the pregnancy. It has been found to be 95 - 99% effective when used correctly.

WHEN CAN ALIZIN BE USED?

A course of Alizin may be started anywhere from day 0 to day 45 after a mismating incident. However, use after day 25 of mating is not recommended due to the increased stress and health risks to the bitch. If used more than 25 days after mating it may be necessary for the bitch to remain under veterinary supervision until abortion of the pregnancy has concluded.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF ALIZIN?

The likelihood of adverse side effects developing increases as the pregnancy progresses. Bitches treated after day 25 have a far greater chance of developing physiological signs such as mammary congestion or mastitis, lethargy, depression, anorexia and the stressful physical expulsion of foetuses. For these reasons it is vital to initiate Alizin injections as close to mismating as possible. An early return to heat is also frequently observed and bitches must be managed carefully to prevent any subsequent mismating incidents.

WHAT IS THE COST OF ALIZIN?

The dose of Alizin used depends on the size and weight of the bitch. For an average 25kg bitch the cost of an early course of Alizin starts at around \$300.00. Cost may vary based on the number of days since mismating, the health of the bitch and the subsequent success of the abortion. It can be seen from this analysis that termination of pregnancies in bitches has become quite expensive, and effective mismating prevention would be a far more cost-effective approach.

HOW DO I PREVENT MISMATING?

Desexing bitches is the most effective means of preventing unwanted pregnancies. A bitch spay is a routine, safe operation and unlike Alizin it is a one-off cost which guarantees prevention of unwanted pregnancies in the future. The price of a spay for an average 25kg dog starts at \$220, including anaesthetic, antibiotics, pain relief, surgery and a night's board. Desexed bitches are also protected from other serious diseases in the future, such as pyometra (uterine infection), mastitis, mamary tumours and cancer of the female reproductive tract.

Other preventative measures include observation and isolation of the bitch for several weeks when she comes on heat. While this method has undoubtedly been used successfully in the past, even a short lapse of carelessness can result in a very expensive mistake.

Castration of male dogs is also an option but obviously does not prevent the neighbours' dogs from having a go!

Should you have any further questions regarding the management or prevention of mismating in bitches please feel free to contact NSVS Riversdale for advice on (03) 2025636.

C Miller BVSc

Puppy preschool is now in Riversdale for more information contact Jayne at the clinic

On (03) 202 5636

Horse Reminders

- **Supplementary feed horses over winter**
- **Clip horses for hunting**
- **Lice treatment**
- **Check for cover sores**
- **Check for mud fever**
- **Annual dental check**

Deer Reminders:

- **TB test**
- **Pregnancy scanning**
- **Weaners-drench for lungworm**
- **Liver copper & selenium check dry hinds**

Ewes after mating

Now that the ewes are in lamb, how they are treated over winter will dictate the number of lambs born alive. Ewes carrying multiples are particularly at risk from underfeeding. The size of lambs at birth is largely governed by the size of the placenta which is dependent on nutrition over the first half of pregnancy.

Ideally the change from flushing to maintenance feeding should proceed gradually in early winter. Ewes carrying multiple foeti should not lose more than a few kgms over the first half of pregnancy. Not only will underfeeding in early pregnancy decrease the size of the placenta and thus decrease the size of the lambs born but also underfeeding can suppress blood progesterone levels which will threaten the pregnancy per se.

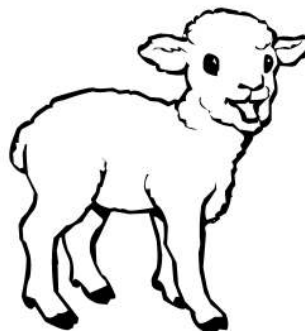
When planning a winter grazing programme you should ensure that the paddock necessary for early lambing should be grazed first so that they have about 4cm of grass (1800 kgs Dm/ha) at the start of lambing. The condition of ewes should be monitored monthly and those losing weight should be drafted out and put with the two tooth's or hogget's. Because two tooth's do not reach their mature body weight until their third summer, they should be run separately from the mixed age ewe mob.

After scanning multiple bearing ewes must be separated out for preferential feeding. Feeding concentrates and using mating harness information may be required to ensure that early multiple lambers do not get into a negative energy state.

As long as you are not trying to lift ewe condition they can be fed maintenance rations well into pregnancy. In most flocks the multiple bearing ewes are taken out at scanning to ensure they do not get underfed. Single bearing ewes can be carried on crop until much closer to lambing. Late in pregnancy twin bearing ewes can be grazed to 1200 kgs Dm/ha (residual feed). Ewes should not lose condition over the last six weeks of pregnancy. If you achieve this you are feeding adequately.

The two trace elements that are most important for foeti and lamb survival are iodine and selenium. If iodine has not been administered pre-tup in the form of flexidine I/M depot injection it should be drenched orally at the third month of pregnancy and at the fourth month of pregnancy. If selenium has not been top dressed on in the form of prills the ewes will need a pre-tup and pre-lamb administration of this essential element.

Two common infectious causes of early embryonic loss are Toxoplasmosis and Campylobacter fetus infection. It is an absolute necessity that these two organisms are vaccinated against to prevent early embryonic loss and late pregnancy abortion on intensive sheep farms.



Sheep Reminders

- **Re-evaluate winter feed budget**
- **Introduce winter feeding**
- **FEC ewe lambs**
- **Vaccinate 2 tooth 2nd shot Salmonella Brandenburg**
- **Vaccinate mixed aged ewes Salmonella Brandenburg**
- **Condition score hoggets & ewes**
- **Scan ewes for pregnancy**
- **Order pre-lamb drench and vaccine**
- **Blood test rams B Ovis**
- **Vitamin E, selenium to brassica fed hoggets**
- **Drench ewes iodine**
- **Run off multiples from singles**

Cattle Reminders

- **Lice control**
- **Milking machine annual check**
- **Calf rearers**
 - organise suitable housing
 - organise milk powder requirements
- **Rotavirus vaccination**
- **Salmonella vaccination**
- **InCalf fertility report**
- **Preferentially feed light cows**
- **Magnesium supplementation**
- **Pre-calving trace element testing**
- **Transition cow management**
- **Dairy—plan inductions**
- **First shot BVD vaccine to heifers**

Dogs V Cats**A Dog's Diary**

7 am - Oh boy! A walk! My favourite!
 8 am - Oh boy! Dog food! My favourite!
 9 am - Oh boy! The kids! My favourite!
 Noon - Oh boy! The yard! My favourite!
 2 pm - Oh boy! A car ride! My favourite!
 3 pm - Oh boy! The kids! My favourite!
 4 pm - Oh boy! Playing ball! My favourite!
 6 pm - Oh boy! Welcome home Mum! My favourite!
 7 pm - Oh boy! Welcome home Dad! My favourite!
 8 pm - Oh boy! Dog food! My favourite!
 9 pm - Oh boy! Tummy rubs on the couch! My favourite!
 11 pm - Oh boy! Sleeping in my people's bed! My favourite!

A Cat's Diary

Day 183 of my captivity.

My captors continued to taunt me with bizarre little dangling objects. They dine lavishly on fresh meat, while I am forced to eat dry cereal. The only thing that keeps me going is the hope of escape, and the mild satisfaction I get from clawing the furniture. Tomorrow I may eat another house plant.

Today my attempt to kill my captors by weaving around their feet while they were walking almost succeeded. Maybe I should try this at the top of the stairs.

In an attempt to disgust and repulse these vile oppressors, I once again induced myself to vomit on their favorite chair. I must try this on their bed.

Decapitated a mouse and brought them the headless body in an attempt to make them aware of what I am capable of, and to try to strike fear into their hearts. They only cooed and condescended about what a good little kitty cat I was. This is not working according to plan.

There was some sort of gathering of their accomplices. I was placed in solitary confinement throughout the event. However, I could hear the noise and smell the food. More important, I overheard that my confinement was due to my powers of inducing something called "allergies." Must learn what this is and how to use it to my advantage.

I am convinced the other captives are flunkies and maybe snitches. The dog is routinely released and seems more than happy to return. He is obviously a half-wit.

The bird, on the other hand, has got to be an informant. He speaks with them regularly, and I am certain he reports my every move.

Due to his current placement in the metal room, his safety is assured. But I can wait.

It's only a matter of time...

There is true love in the way my eat



TOTALLY IGNORES ME!

Ruminal Acidosis

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INTRODUCTION Ruminal acidosis is one of the most common problems occurring in crop fed animals. It can affect just a few animals on the crop or it can affect all of the herd to some extent in more severe situations. Due to minimal grass growth in Southland, crop feeding is essential to keeping our animals maintained. As a large number of our cows and sheep are crop fed it is a noteworthy disease. The after effects of acidosis can sometimes continue to be seen well into the animal's productive life. It is a disease that occurs when the bacteria in the rumen that digest grass change to bacteria that digest swedes and other crops. Acidosis occurs when the pH in the rumen drops to 5 or below. The saliva that the cows produce when they ruminate buffers the rumen and prevents the pH dropping. Excessively rapid rumen fermentation of large amounts of carbohydrates, that they are not used to, such as when they switch to eating swedes or grain, causes a shift in the type of normal bacteria that are produced in digestion to bacteria that produce lactic acid. As lactic acid builds up, the pH drops causing the symptoms of ruminal acidosis.

Acidosis can be present in different forms, mild or subacute, and life-threatening or peracute. Mild acidosis signs are non-specific; cow goes off feed, may be a little depressed, milk production drops if the cow is in lactation, the cow may be lagging behind the others when shifting breaks. Often signs aren't observed by the farmer.

Life-threatening acidosis can present as a down cow and may look very similar to milk fever. They have watery faeces and a sloshing sound can be heard in the rumen due to the acid drawing in excessive water into the rumen. In outbreaks you may have several cows that look drunk, as well as a few down.

MANAGEMENT Acidosis is a disease that is potentially always going to be a problem when cows are grazing crops. Prevention starts from when you first think about putting your cows or sheep onto the crop for the winter. The rumen needs to adjust to the change of diet so a plan needs to be worked out for introducing the animals to the crop. A little to start off with and increasing the amount each day is the best way for their rumens to adjust. One regime that some farmers use is a third to half a day on the crop for a few days then, a whole day with a day off, then every day, then eventually full time.

Feeding hay or straw is essential while animals are on crop. Eating hay causes them to chew more and in turn when they chew more they produce more saliva. This buffers the acidic environment in the rumen decreasing the effects of acidosis. Ideally hay should be fed out before being shifted as this fills them up and stops them being too greedy when they get to the new break.

Eating too fast can also cause an outbreak of acidosis, commonly seen when the cows have broken out during the night and there are down cows in the morning. Ensure that all cows have access to the hay with enough hay feeders, two feeders is not enough as only some cows can fit round them, leaving the other cows to be bullied and possibly not get any hay at all. Feed enough hay so there is some left over when they are finished. This indicates that they are getting their fill of fibre. Feeding good quality hay means they are getting correct energy requirements.

It also has better palatability ensuring the cows will eat it.

The best method for acidosis prevention is to dust hay or crops with magnesium oxide. This can be timely and costly for the farmer but may be worth it in the end. It needs to be dusted at 30-45g/head/day. **DIAGNOSIS** Diagnosis of acidosis is difficult due to there being no definitive test. Clinical signs are not eating, depression, loose faeces, all of which are very vague

TREATMENT Individual cows - Magnesium oxide in a drench form is the best choice because it neutralises the acid and brings the pH back to a normal range. The dosage is 1g/kg or about 500g per cow. If scales are not available, approx two large handfuls should be sufficient. Mix this with enough water, 5-10L is recommended but sometimes it is hard to get this much down a cow, so less is ok. An easy-drencher (available from the clinic) or another appropriate type bottle may be used to drench the cow with it.

Rest of the herd - Acidosis is often a 'tip of the iceberg' disease which means if one cow is showing the disease several others probably have mild cases of it. If you have an animal diagnosed with acidosis or an outbreak of down cows, remove all animals from the crop as soon as possible. Dust hay with mag oxide and feed it to them. If acidosis occurs it may be necessary to dust for a few weeks until their rumens adjust again. Ideally dusting should continue during the time they are on the crop.

AFTER EFFECTS There is also a condition called subacute ruminal acidosis when cows in the herd may get a touch of acidosis but don't show any signs. Acidosis can cause liver and lung abscesses that can go unnoticed until later on in the milking season when a cow becomes sick. To reduce the chance of this happening feeding management is an important constant.

M Reidie BVSc

It wasn't me,
the dog did it!

