



NSVS LTD

VetTIMES

Pet Reminders

- **Vaccinate pets prior to boarding at kennels**
- **Get pets Xmas presents**
- **Check for barley grass**

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Riversdale, 105 Berwick Street, Ph 03 202 5636, Fax 03 202 5333
 Te Anau, 133 Govan Drive, Ph 03 249 7039, Fax 03 249 7034
 Lumsden, Flora Road, Ph/Fax 03 248 7199
 Mossburn, Devon Street, Ph/Fax 03 248 6053

NSVS LTD

December 2006

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Welcome to our second ever newsletter for NSVS Ltd.

We wish you a happy, safe and successful Christmas and New Year.

We will trade as normal only closing for the statutory holidays. An emergency vet can be contacted at anytime by phoning your closest clinic. The Lumsden depot will be operating with reduced hours however on December 27th, 28th and 29th and January the 3rd, 4th and 5th, by shutting at 1pm. We hope this will not inconvenience anyone too much for picking up necessary supplies, and please phone another depot outside of these hours if you need to.

We had a successful day at our tent at the Balfour races on

Sunday the 10th of December and it was great to see many of you there. We hope this could become an annual thing for us as a way of saying thanks to all of you for your support over the year. Special congratulations to Stu Roy who won the \$1000 Laker House of Travel voucher, that was up for grabs. Anna and Jeff Clearwater came in 2nd winning a \$300 voucher and Greg Davis was lucky 3rd winning a \$200 voucher. We are sure you can put these to some good use! And all these people had to do was be a member and bring along their NSVS invitation to the races to go into the draw! Balfour put on a fabulous sunny day, and special thanks to the Northern

Southland Trotting Club, the

Balfour Tavern and the Balfour Lions club for helping our day be a success.

Also special thanks to our sponsors for the Balfour race day, Schering Plough, Ancare, Decotomax, Merial, Fort Dodge and Intervet.

We are once again giving away miniature roses for Christmas this year so if you haven't already called in to collect one then make sure you call in and grab one soon. After a promising start to the spring, weather patterns have made life very difficult for everybody. Currently grass quality is a problem with grass going to seed and poor clover growth. Schedules are good in all sectors at present but getting stock away early has been difficult, therefore with a glut of stock to arrive on the market that is likely to change.

New Additions to the team!

Our latest vet to join the team is Michelle Dicken. (Right) Michelle is English but comes from mid Wales. Graduated from vet school 7 1/2 years ago, Michelle worked in both Wales and England before coming to NZ.

She has been in NZ for three years.

The first two years spent working in Gisborne, Michelle has spent the past few months being a locum for

The Southern Veterinary Centre, in Invercargill. Interests include horse riding and netball.



Our other new team player may be a familiar face to many of you.

Fiona Hayward (Left) joins us as a retail assistant in Riversdale. Fiona had been working at The Moth Restaurant in Mandeville, and her and husband Peter used to run the Balfour store.

Fiona and Peter have two sons, Ben and Nathan.

Fiona is a keen gardener, sewer and enjoys floral art.



Treatment against tetanus is time consuming, expensive, and often unrewarding. Prevention is by far and away the best way to attack tetanus in horses.

Tetanus cases in horses

We have seen some cases of tetanus in horses lately and urge people to be vigilant in preventing this extremely difficult disease to treat.

Horses are the most susceptible domestic animal to the tetanus bacteria toxin. The bacteria *Clostridium Tetani* is a common inhabitant of the intestinal tract of animals, especially horses, and the spores of the organism can persist in the soil for many years.

Horses are frequently exposed to the infective form of the bacteria due to their predilection for acquiring wounds and hoof injuries. Spores enter a deep penetrating wound in which devitalised tissue provides a suitable (anaerobic) environment for growth of the organism and release of its toxin. The toxin migrates along peripheral nerve trunks to reach the central nervous system. Here it causes the exaggerated nervous responses resulting in spasms of muscle groups.

There is no gender, age, or breed predisposition, and usually no history of vaccination. History of puncture wounds to the lower limb or

hoof up to 3 weeks prior to the disease may not necessarily be the case as spores may remain dormant in the tissue for months and become activated by trauma or other pathological processes such which produce conditions suitable for an anaerobic environment.

Signs usually start as stiffness, head and ears become extended, the tail slightly raised, sweating, flared nostrils, inability to swallow and breathing difficulty may develop within 24—48 hours of disease onset. The horse may fall over and once recumbent be unable to get up. Death occurs in these cases due to exhaustion, circulation failure and pneumonia.

Treatment against tetanus is time consuming, expensive, and often unrewarding. Prevention is by far and away the best way to attack tetanus in horses, and tetanus toxoid provides protection in horses over 3 months of age. After the initial dose of tetanus toxoid a period of 9-14 days is required for the development of effective immunity. A second dose four weeks later will ensure a high level of immunity. A third (booster) dose a year later will ensure long lasting immunity. It is advisable in most cases to

booster every 5 years thereafter.

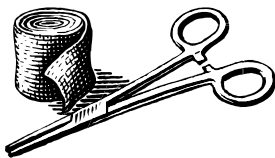
The use of Antitoxin:

If immediate short term protection against tetanus is required, tetanus antitoxin should be used. It is not a vaccine but a ready made sterile solution containing antibodies against the *Clostridium Tetani* bacteria. It's period of protection is for 3 weeks only and is the method often used to protect newborn foals from tetanus infection via the umbilical cord. It will not act as a sensitizing vaccine, for launching a vaccine programme .

Tetanus Antitoxin should be administered within 3 days of the foals birth, but ideally as soon as is practical.

A vaccination programme can begin in a foal as soon as it is 3 months of age, when any passive maternal antibody passed onto the foal in the mares colostrum will be long gone.

Paul Langford BVSC



Horses and First Aid

The horse show and season is upon us. A lot of time has gone into preparing your horses and yourselves to get ready to compete but are you prepared if things go wrong?

In this article I will discuss preparing a first aid kit for your horse and go through some basic first aid procedures. Please remember if you are not sure of anything to call us at the clinic.

Horse First Aid Kit

It is an excellent idea to assemble a first aid kit for your horse and to take one with you when you travel. I shall look first at what

should be in a basic first aid kit then afterwards mention some useful extras which can be added to the basic kit.

Basic Kit

Dressing and/or Poultice e.g. Animal lintex, Melolin, Telfa pad - bandaged directly on a wound after it has been cleaned. A poultice like Animal lintex is very good as can be used in several ways. It can be used on a wound to draw out any dirt and infection; it can be used on the soles of the feet to draw out pus and also used to take down swelling in lower limbs.

Bandages A selection of different bandages. Coflex/Vetwrap and Elastoplast are very useful

others would be crepe bandages and softban. **Padding** Gamgee or cotton wool to go under the bandages. These provide padding to allow the bandage to go on fairly tightly which will reduce bleeding and swelling, they also absorb any bleeding or discharge from a wound.

Scissors To cut the dressing and bandages makes the job a lot easier! Make sure these are kept in the first aid kit and not taken to be used else where.

Iodine If wounds are not serious enough to need to be seen by the vet then dilute iodine is very good to clean the wound.

Vets Phone Number This could be stuck inside the lid so it is handy when you may need it.

Cool Packs Probably not vital in every case but would be useful for example for eventers. There are several different products designed for horses or can use packs from a chilli bin or even frozen peas can always be used as a substitute!

Bucket (and if travelling water). You don't want to have to go searching for these things in an emergency!

Latex Gloves

Useful Extras

Torch

Wire cutters

Thermometer (if you know how to use one and can do safely)

Tweezers

Stethoscope (again if you know how to use one)

Clippers

Different creams and lotions e.g. Vaseline, White Healer, Aloe Vera Gel, Manuka honey ointment etc.

First Aid Procedures

The basic principles of first aid in horses are the same as in humans in that the first thing is to make sure you are not putting yourself in danger. Horses are quite capable of causing serious damage to themselves and humans when they are distressed so be very aware of this.

The next thing therefore is to try and keep the horse calm and also warm. This means not panicking! Behave calmly and reassure your horse and place a cover over the horse if practical.

More specific first aid for different conditions is listed below but always remember if you are in any doubt CALL THE VET!!!

Bleeding/Cuts. Call the vet if the wound is:

- Deep or long
- Bleeding continuously
- Near the eye, near other vital areas or near a joint

While you are waiting for the vet if there is

continuous bleeding hold a pad over with some pressure for 10 minutes, if the blood soaks through this do not remove it just place another over the top and hold it there. Removing the pad will tear away any clots that are forming. If you have called the vet to look at the wound please don't put any powders or sprays on the wound before the vet arrives

Once you have assessed the wound and it doesn't need veterinary attention then you will need to clean it. Use lots and lots of water to really flush out any contamination as soon as possible, a hose is very good. Then you can apply some dilute iodine and dress the wound. If the wound was very dirty then animal lintex is good to draw out dirt that hasn't been removed by flushing. Next use an absorbent layer like gamgee. This is held in place with coflex or elastoplast. If the wound is on the lower leg it is a good idea to bandage down to the hoof to minimise swelling.

Swellings. Hosing and cold packs are first aid for swelling but it is important to find out what is causing the swelling. The area should be hosed or cold packs applied for no longer than 30 minutes 3-4 times a day for the first 48 hours.

Colic. Colic just means pain in the abdomen and can have many different causes. Signs of colic can vary from being restless, kicking and looking at its belly to heavy sweating, throwing themselves down and rolling violently. CALL THE VET. Try to make the area safe for the horse so it doesn't injure itself if rolling. It used to be thought that you had to stop horse from rolling with colic otherwise it would get a twisted gut but this has been found not to be true so don't worry too much just prevent it injuring itself.

Choke. This is when food gets stuck in the oesophagus (food pipe) anywhere along the neck. The horse gets very distressed and fluid pores out of its nostrils when its head is down. REMOVE THE REST OF THE FOOD AND CALL THE VET.

Try and keep your horses head down if possible while you are waiting.

Eye Injury. The vet should be called for any eye or eyelid injury. If you can, put your horse in a dark place where they will be more comfortable.

Fractures. CALL THE VET. Keep your horse calm, still and warm until the vet arrives,

Severe pain. Again call the vet. Don't force your horse to move unless they are in danger where they are. Keep them calm and warm.

If you are not sure ring the vet and ask.

Michelle Dicken MA vetMB MRCVS



Horse Reminders

- **November best month for breeding in Southland**
- **Show time!**
- **Keep bot eggs off legs**
- **Hoof Care**





The better that lambs are fed the better they will be able to withstand the challenge of worms.



FECRT= Faecal Egg Count Reduction Test

Lamb Growth after Weaning

Obviously the earlier that lambs can be sent to the works the more feed that is available on the farm for growing out young stock, hoggets or yearling cattle, or for fattening more bought in lambs, and or getting better tugging weights for breeding ewes. The end result should be increased returns. Of course in years of summer drought sending lambs to the works early is desirable.

The three main essentials in post weaning lamb growth are:

- Feed quality and quantity
- Parasite control
- Trace element adequacy

We will leave aside discussions on the merits of specialized lamb fattening crops such as rape, pasja, chicory, plantain, lucerne, lotus, and red clover, and focus on optimising lamb growth on permanent ryegrass, and white clover pasture.

Because weaned lambs have only partially developed rumens, feed quality (that is protein and metabolisable energy, ME) is extremely important. Consequently lamb growth is maximized when they graze short leafy pasture with a high clover content, (making up about 50% of the available feed on a dry matter basis). Therefore the available pasture should be 4-6cm in height, (about 2000kg DM/Ha) and growing. However even on these lush pastures, there

will be variable leaves and stems. The lambs will eat out the best quality leaves first, which will provide optimum weight gains, but then if left on this pasture they will be forced to eat the older leaves and stems, and consequently weight gains will be reduced, due to lower quality feed. As a rule of thumb in green pasture, once one third of the available sword has been eaten, the quality of the remainder will be somewhat lower, (in protein content and ME). The longer that lambs are left on a paddock, the lower the quality of the residual pasture will be. Therefore for optimum growth lambs should be shifted sooner rather than later. Through the summer, pasture quality tends to reduce and thus the proportion of high quality leaves in the sword also reduces. So as we go further through the summer the speed of the rotation should increase. Residual poorer quality pasture can be grazed off by adult sheep or cattle, who due to having fully developed rumens are more dependant on quantity rather than quality. Of course unless absolutely necessary, it does not pay to graze pasture too close to the ground. Pastures at 900kg DM/Ha grow at about 60% of their potential compared to 80% in pastures with cover of 1200-1500kg DM/Ha. At 500kg DM/Ha, regrowth occurs substantially slower. As dairy farmers say "grass grows grass".

Internal parasite control is also related to nutrition. The better that lambs are fed, the

better they will be able to withstand the challenge of worms. Also when parasite eggs from dung pats develop into infective larvae, these larvae subsequently migrate up the leaf. 99% of the infective larvae are found below 4 cm of pasture height with the majority in the bottom 2cm of the sword. Therefore the closer to the ground that lambs are forced to graze the more likely that they will pick up infective worm larvae.

In regards to trace elements, there are only two which have been shown to have a significant effect on lamb growth rates in Northern Southland. They are selenium and cobalt. Provided annual application of selenium prills is carried out, there should not be a problem with selenium deficiency in lambs. In respect to cobalt, which is required for vitamin B12 production in the lamb, a diet which has a high clover content will almost always ensure adequate B12 levels. Legumes are much better in extracting cobalt from the soil than are grasses or brassicas. So B12 deficiency is only likely to occur when the clover content of pastures is reduced.

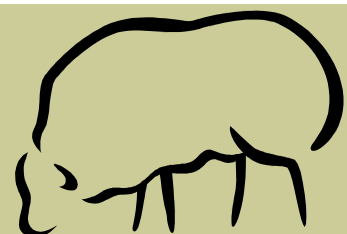
In summary, lamb growth after weaning depends a great deal on the quality of feed offered.

So the primary focus of fattening lambs should be on grazing management, with some attention paid to the monitoring worm burdens and selenium and B12 levels.

Hamish Mavor BVSc

Sheep Reminders

- **FEC lambs, and carry out drench check tests**
- **Flystrike prevention**
- **Wean lambs**
- **Have FECRT carried out on lambs**
- **Palpate ewes udders-cull hard or lumpy udders**





Sarcoptes mite as seen under a microscope

Sarcoptic Mange

Sarcoptic mange, also known as scabies, is an infectious skin condition caused by a mite, *Sarcoptes scabiei var canis*.

Scabies causes dogs to be very itchy. Usually the ears armpits and legs are the worst affected areas. Dogs with scabies lose hair over these areas and the skin becomes flaky. This will spread to cover most of the body in some animals.

Scratching can be almost constant and can lead to bacterial infections of damaged skin.

The bacterial infection may cause oozing and a nasty

smell. Severely affected animals may lose weight and deaths have been reported.

At the other end of the spectrum are animals that have good coats and no signs other than scratching. In these animals response to treatment is often the only way scabies can be diagnosed.

The signs of scabies are similar to a number of other allergic skin conditions. The mite will spread rapidly from dog to dog, and will survive on bedding for a number of days .

Scabies will also cause an itchy

skin condition in people and in other household animals including cats. (An outbreak in lions in South Africa resulted in the deaths of a large number of animals).

Treatment is either by injection, spot on or repeated washing in toxic chemicals. Treatment is usually successful and dogs make a complete recovery, provided reinfection does not occur.

Michael Baer BVSc

It is necessary that an autopsy be carried out within 24 hours of death to obtain meaningful information.

Post Velvetting Stag Deaths

The Massey University Deer Research (MUDR) group is undertaking a research study into post velvetting stag deaths. A post velvetting stag death is defined as a death within 7 days of the velvetting episode regardless of the method used. (Xylazine or local anaesthetic only or chemical block).

The MUDR group is requesting cooperation for stag owners to notify their veterinarian ASAP after such a death oc-

curs. It is necessary that an autopsy be carried out within 24 hours of death to obtain meaningful information.

They also have funding to cover the cost of laboratory examination and a contribution to the autopsy costs. All information collected will be treated in strict confidence and will not be used for purposes other than research.

From information gathered from the study, the group

hopes to draw up recommendations to minimize or avoid stag mortality post velvetting in the future.

Hamish Mavor BVSc

Deer Reminders:

- **Fawning**
- **Develvetting**

Grant me one wish:

A man walking along a California beach was deep in prayer.

All of a sudden he said out loud, "Lord, grant me one wish." Suddenly the sky clouded above his head and in a booming voice the Lord said, "Because you have had the faith to ask, I will grant you one wish." The man said, "Build a bridge to Hawaii, so I can drive over anytime I want to." The Lord said, "Your request is very materialistic. Think of the logistics of that kind of undertaking. The supports required to

reach the bottom of the Pacific! The concrete and steel it would take! I can do it, but it is hard for me to justify your desire for worldly things. Take a little more time and think of another wish, a wish you think would honour and glorify me."

The man thought about it for a long time. Finally he said, "Lord, I have been married and divorced four times. All of my wives said that I am uncaring and insensitive. I wish that I could understand women. I want to know how they feel inside, what they are thinking when they give me the silent treatment, why they cry, what they mean when

they say "nothing" and how I can make a woman truly happy?"

After a few minutes God said, "You want two lanes or four on that bridge?"





Plan to Manage Sheep Abortion Losses

Now is the time to plan for lamb loss prevention in the coming year. Tailing time will give you an idea of the gaps in lambing percentage since scanning. There is now an opportunity to examine the likely causes of the lamb losses. Usually if there has been overt abortion at lambing time the submission of good foetal and membrane samples to us will result in a diagnosis of that abortion.

However in some cases when lamb losses have been more subtle or diagnosis is not achieved, retrospective comparative serology on ewes that are wet dries compared to ewes having lambed successfully can be carried out.

As well as retrospective examination of flocks who have had an abortion problem Intervet laboratories will also examine serology from farms wanting to undergo a flockcheck test (screening serology). Intervet will offer for free the investigative serology testing, so the cost of this exercise will be only the veterinary costs.

While Toxoplasma and campylobacter can inflict severe abortion storms sometimes the losses can be more insidious. Ewes contracting either infection early in gestation can experience foetal death and re-absorption which is often mistaken for ewe infertility and can result in unnecessary culling of otherwise fecund ewes.

Ewe hogget's and two tooth's are most at risk and any ewe that contracts Toxoplasma or Campylobacter for the first time during pregnancy is likely to lose her lambs.

Because Toxovax is a live vaccine and is made to order you need to let us know your vaccine requirements at least 3-4 weeks before you intend to vaccinate. Campylobacter vaccine is a killed vaccine and both Campyvox4 and Campylovexin can be bought off the shelf, following PAR consultation.

Toxovax Vaccine in Hoggets

Today over 70% of New Zealand's replacement female sheep receive toxoplasma vaccine. In year 2000 Agvax (the previous owner of the Toxovax label) conducted trials in hogget's on 6 farms. In the trial the hogget's did show a normal antibody response to vaccination. Agvax did issue a precautionary message at the time recommending to vaccinate again with Toxovax as two tooth's if it is believed that some of the hogget's in the previous year were not capable of responding to vaccination. This statement created some confusion, as in most cases it is impossible to determine whether a hogget did mount an appropriate immune response.

Having said that it is noteworthy that almost all of the investigations into 'Toxovax breakdown' have been in hogget's.

A factor one must consider is that a higher percentage of Toxovax vaccine doses are going into hogget's. The expectations from hogget mating are also changing. The lambs born to hogget's are no longer considered a 'bonus' but are now a bona-fide part of the on farm productivity.

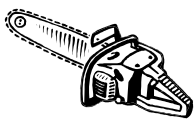
Toxoplasma gondia is ubiquitous. In survey it has been found that 80% of New Zealand's unvaccinated mixed age ewes are sero-positive to Toxoplasma gondia. This means that some two tooth's will be naturally sero-positive prior to vaccination, but most hogget's will not be. Hence hogget's rely almost exclusively on vaccination for their protection.

The immune response of an animal will be affected by its health, nutrition, and external factors such as weather and stocking densities. When vaccine complaints are investigated these complicating and perhaps contributing factors are sometimes discovered and may play an important role in in the hogget's response to vaccination or in response at the time of a challenge.

Paul Langford BVSc

The expectations from hogget mating are changing. The lambs born to hoggets are no longer considered a "bonus" but are now a bona-fide part of the on farm productivity.

Thank you to everyone who returned a Campylobacter abortion questionnaire.



Congratulations to Don, Graham and Bob Hume who won the chainsaw.

Campylobacter Vaccine Questionnaire

As a result of our prescription authorisation renewal process we came across reports of much lower than normal scanning percentages in two tooth's this year. We wanted to ascertain whether there was link with campylobacter abortion or whether there was some other conclusion.

A big thank you to all that replied—56 different farming enterprises from all areas of Northern Southland. A special thank you to the Bennett's of TeAnau who provided a comprehensive list of information going back over a number of years.

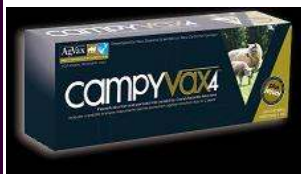
22 farms who vaccinated with Campylobacter vaccine experienced a drop in two tooth scanning percentage. 22 farms which vaccinated with Campylobacter vaccine experienced either no change or had an increase in two tooth scanning percentage.

1 farm who did not vaccinate had a scanning drop. 2 farms who did not vaccinate had either no change or had an increase in 2 tooth scanning percentage. The rest of the farms either did not scan or had not separated two tooth's out of their overall scanning results.



Vaccinated Farms

	Decreased	Not Decreased	
Campyvac 4	16	12	28
Campylovexin	6	10	16
	22	22	44



This gives a relative risk of 1.5 for Campyvac 4 vaccination over Campylovexin vaccination. i.e. one and a half more times likely to have experienced a decreased scanning percentage. However reports from elsewhere in the South Island suggest that there is no difference between either vaccine with scanning performance in two tooth's.

We also focussed on the timing between booster and start of mating. There was nothing significant found there. This then leads to the question—what has caused the problem?

The drop in scanning percentage mainly appears to be attributable to an increase in dry rate.

We certainly do not have the answers to this years event however I think it does point out the need for adequate and proper consultation on pre tup vaccination use. Some factors that certainly contributed on some farms were lighter mating weights, (carryover from hogget lambing?) lack of flush for the two tooth's, and poorer conditioned sheep.

One option that people have is to do comparative blood tests on 10 wet and 10 dry ewes. One of the vaccine manufacturers is offering this service whereby they perform the laboratory testing at no charge to the farmer. Talk to one of the vets about this option.

Morgan Greene MVB MRCVS

Scanning Dairy Cows

One of the major improvements made to reproductive management over the last few years has been the advent of early pregnancy diagnosis using ultrasound scanning techniques. Advances in technology and skills now means that early season pregnancy testing is both fast and accurate. Scanning can be used essentially for three main reasons;

To find cows pregnant to AB-

This is straightforward-scan the herd at least 6 weeks from when AB stopped. Eg. If AB stopped on 1st of December scan about the 12th of January-Cows which are not detectably pregnant at this time will either be in calf to the bull or will be empty. One of the major benefits of early scanning is the indication that pregnancy rates to AB may be lower than anticipated. In these cases a management decision can be made to leave the bulls running with the cows for 2-3 weeks longer than usual and hence to have more late calving cows or more inductions. In most circumstances it is better to have more late calving cows than to have a higher empty rate.

To find late calving cows/inductions-

Work out the date when you want everything calved by, e.g., 1st October. That means that all cows in calf before the 22nd of December will be calved before this cut off date. Therefore, if we scan 6 weeks later, cows at least 6 weeks pregnant will calve in the time frame we require them to. Cows less than 6 weeks pregnant would be calving after the 1st of October-these cows would therefore possibly be inductions. An additional benefit of finding late calving cows is the more efficient grazing management of pasture-late calving cows can be held off the milking platform and can be fed differently over winter. (They would thus be more likely to meet the condition score requirements for induction cows of between 4.5 & 6.5).

To find empty cows-

The later this scan the better, as with most 'normal' pregnancies there is a chance that the pregnancy will not go full term (due to embryonic loss or abortion). Therefore, if all you want to do

with scanning is to find your empty cows, the testing is best done later in the season. We recommend rescanning all cows as a way of detecting any slips that have occurred in natural calving cows. The cost of scanning these animals a second time is recouped by not needing to winter feed empty cows. With the introduction of the 'Induction Code' it is now vital that farmers have accurate pregnancy testing data before contemplating inducing any cows-cows can only be induced if they are between 6 and 12 weeks from their predicted calving date, provided they fit all other criteria. Due to the introduction of this legislation we are only able to induce cows from herds which have this accurate pregnancy testing data on hand. Furthermore farms need to have evidence of the existence of a plan to manage and minimise inductions-early scanning and identification will go along way towards this. Now is the time to contact us at the clinic to sort out scanning for the coming season, to determine the best times to pregnancy test your herd to achieve the specific outcomes which are most relevant to you. Remember we have fixed, and back pack scanners, and can scan in rotary sheds, herringbones and up races.

Morgan Greene MVB MRCVS

Cattle Reminders

- **Dairy calves, copper**
- **Dairy calves, worm control**
- **Bulls watch for unsoundness**
- **Cows monitor submission rate and non return rate**

Working at Wellington Zoo

NSVS

Primary Business Address
105 Berwick Street
Riversdale
Southland

Phone: 03 2025 636
Fax: 03 2025 333
Email: nsvs@xtra.co.nz

www.nsvs.co.nz

Our very own Vet Nurse, Kelly Samuel, from TeAnau has been lucky enough to work at the Wellington Zoo. The following is a small account of her time there.

My work at Wellington Zoo began in February 2000 as a volunteer once a week but quickly progressed to 7 days a week because I enjoyed my time there so much; I was supposed to be on holiday! My full time paid work didn't begin until January 2001; the paperwork to allow me to work was a little more complicated than I initially thought. However, because I had 'worked' there before I had an idea of what to expect of the day-to-day regime, a lot of hard smelly yakka! I was positioned on the Hoofed Stock section of the

staff which meant I along with 3 others had the responsibility of caring day to day for the hoofed animals within the zoo, such as the giraffe, zebra and sitatunga. As well as these our section also ended up with a few 'left overs' from other sections such as meerkats, sunbears and kangaroos. It was our job to make sure these animals had a clean, fun environment to live in as well as making sure they were healthy and fed the correct diet. The daily contact with the animals meant I got to know all their personalities and odd quirks. For example 'Cairo' the camel who just loved to wait for unsuspecting visitors to come too close before spitting! I had some amazing experiences while working there, not least having the responsibility of looking after a young giraffe calf, born in September 2001. She now happens to be one of the stars of the TV show



"The Zoo" and recently had one of her own babies. I think the most rewarding part of the job was inventing new ways to enrich the animal's environment and actually watching those ideas reach fruition. There were of course the down sides to the job as well; losing animals was always difficult, especially when we had been looking after them from a very young age. I enjoyed my time at the zoo immensely and took away some lasting memories and friends.

Kelly Samuel

NSVS TeAnau Kiwi rescue!

"A Tokoeka's Turnaround"

NSVS Te Anau Helps To Return A Kiwi To His Fiordland Rainforest Home.

His kind must be a contender for the most 'endearing - if not amongst the most eccentric - of the world's kingdom of animals. The Tokoeka is the local Fiordland representative of New Zealand's kiwi clans.

Recently, the NSVS team in Te Anau played a major part in returning a kiwi to his home in Deep Cove, after he was caught in a gin-trap that was laid for the stoat control programme there. One of his toes had been crushed, and he was self-tethered to the device by the remaining extensor tendons.

For veterinary practitioners whose workload is more accustomed to handling the likes of dogs, cats, cattle and deer, it was a challenge to be presented with our little feathered friend. Without much further ado, the wee fellow received an intramuscular 'dram' of some zoletil® as the anaesthetic agent to allow us to operate. The drug worked a treat and after taking a couple of x-ray 'shots' of his damaged foot, all the damaged tissue that had resulted from the trap's tremendous crushing impact was carefully cut away. The digit was fully amputated and painstakingly sown up. Post-operatively, the challenge was to provide balanced and collectively delivered rehabilitative care, minimising the amount of human exposure that he would have to be subjected to. The Department of Conservation's kiwi team did an absolutely sterling job in this regard.

Despite the best of efforts, no amount of poultices and antibiotic seemed to be doing the trick. Clearly, with the possibility of a dreaded 'tenosynovitis' tracking its way slowly up the leg, the little character was deemed to need expert help.

With the benefit of hindsight, we can challenge the notion that kiwis are unable to fly. This fellow took to flight incredibly well - admittedly courtesy of the country's national carrier! He was referred to Massey

University's Wildlife Ward, where thankfully, only monitoring and further nursing was required. Without any further interventions, the leg started to come right, reputedly due in large part to the treatment that had been provided back in Te Anau.

It is a real tribute that the central character in this little tale is once again 'strutting' his stuff in the depths of the Fiordland rainforest. We will never know his eventual fate but we do know that we gave him the best prospects of survival. Our little friend - rest assured - is protected once again from the lashings of rain by that ancient canopy of podocarp trees and I'm sure he feels more at home rummaging amongst all the fallen miro fruit, than he would otherwise be if he were to be living a life of captive display.

So, the next time you're wandering out amongst all of Fiordland's Kahikatea trees, - take some time to look down for some kiwi footprints that bear the imprint of only two toes on the right hand side!

Nigel Doughery BVSc MRCVS

