



NSVS LTD

VetTIMES

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NSVS LTD

December 2007

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Situation Comment

After a very promising start to spring, cold weather through September, October and early November has meant feed is tight on many farms. Worm burdens in lambs have been quite variable, depending largely on age and feed. Non cycling dairy cow numbers are similar to previous years and early indications from further North suggest the combined Progesterone—Ovsynch programme is working well, although it is still far too early to say.

Despite a slowish start to the velvetting season the deer industry is looking forward to a good year with both velvet and venison prices solid. Hopefully the rise of commodities is the start of an upsurge in all agricultural products.

Staff:- We have welcomed Janeece Collins to our team in Riversdale as a vet nurse.

She has been with us for little over a month and is settling in well.

Jenny McKercher will join us in December as our new vet. She has completed her final year at Massey and we are looking forward to her arrival.

FLOCK CHECK

Have you found large discrepancies between your scanning and tailing percentages?

Was your scanning or lambing percentage lower than you would have liked?

Could you be experiencing unexplained losses?

We are pleased to be able to offer you Intervets FLOCK CHECK serological services for FREE.

In follow up to our last newsletter, which I am sure you all read and filed in your memory banks, we discussed Toxo and Campy abortions so you are aware of the smaller details of these diseases. Remember that Campy abortions are usually seen in the last three

months of pregnancy, but can occur anywhere from 13 to 113 days after infection. Toxo abortions can occur at any stage of pregnancy. Remember the Toxo vaccine is very sensitive to incorrect handling which may reduce its effectiveness.

We can help you to further investigate a lower than expected scanning or lambing percentage, even if you used Toxo and/or Campy vaccines. We can now offer you a blood test to retrospectively assess the effectiveness of your vaccination. Or if you didn't vaccinate we may be able to identify if vaccination may have been beneficial in your flock and might lift your results next year.

All we need is ten wet ewes and ten dry ewes to blood test and all it will cost is our time. The laboratory testing is FREE. Please contact us if you wish to talk further about this offer.

Rochelle Smith
B.V.S.c



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Thinking twice about the 'economical' pet food that is packed on the shelves

There is much truth to the adage that 'you are what you eat' and this applies as much to your pets (and the animals that we endeavour to farm) as it does to you and I. Good nutrition forms the very cornerstone for preventative health and is thus a sound investment - both for ensuring life-quality and for keeping those medical bills down!

For our beloved pets, a home-formulated and balanced diet can be made and altered to meet the changing needs of our animals - cat or dog - as they grow from the weaned to the adolescent, and the adolescent into the senior and geriatric stages of life. But in this day and age, who has the time (or inclination) to do so, especially when there really are some excellent commercial preparations around. Above all though, the take-home message is not to be kidded into thinking that many of the more 'economical' diets that are on the shelves may be doing a good job for your beloved ones. Quite to the contrary, it could turn out to be.

A great deal of investment in science has been put into the balanced nutritional formulation of reputable-brand commercial foods - notably by market leaders such as Hills, Eukanuba and Nutrience. You can be assured, just by way of example, that the Hill's range of 'Science' Diets - accommodates for the exact needs of your particular breed of pet and it's -'life stage' - that is, its place on the spectrum from juvenile to geriatric. Young large breed dogs, for example, need *particularly* exact (and not excessive) intakes of protein and calcium, lest they could develop debilitating joint disease as they grow. Cats need a steady supply of taurine - a particular amino acid that they cannot make themselves - lest they develop a heart that is irreversibly compromised. The good news is that the veterinary and support staff at NSVS Ltd are there to guide you through that oft-confusing nutritional quagmire. - To add to this, there really are readily formulated diets on our shelves that are there to match and suit the specific needs of whatever type of dog or cat you have at home.

Time, quickly to dispel a myth. Dry, pelleted foods of the aforementioned leading brands (with ad-lib water provided of course) do in fact meet *all* the needs of your animals, and there is no need to give them those additional and so-called 'meaty treats'! Just look at the beautiful lustre of coat of my cat at home - she hardly ever delves into the a la carte outside and she lives entirely on a diet of Hill's.

Specifically formulated food - in the form of specific diets which have to be prescribed by vets - actually form a key part of the medical management of many forms of diseases that our pets can get. For example, many of the itchy dogs that we see have allergies - and hypo-allergenic foods can help in specific cases to keep drug usage down. For cats with renal failure or for cats with a propensity to develop bladder stones on the 'more economical' bags of food, prescription diets form the real substance of palliative therapy and of prevention, respectively. And yes, obesity is a pathological state - but there are specific diets which both satiate, meet all nutritional needs and at the same time help your animal to gradually shave off those dangerous pounds. Once again, the vets at NSVS Ltd are there to help your animal to meet its needs, and to prescribe such foods if need be.

N Dougherty B.V.S.c , M.R.C.V.S

Pet Reminders

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



Euthanasia

“When’s the right time”

There is never a good time, only the right time. It is easy for others to suggest it’s time for your pet, and although it’s well meaning advice nobody knows your pet like you do. You will know when your pet is not well, old or not behaving/ functioning as normal. After bringing your pet in for a check up to rule out a condition that can be treated, it’s decision time for you. It is a hard decision, but loving and caring for your pet as I’m sure you do, try to look at the condition from the animal’s point of view. Would you want to be continually off colour- not able to do normal behaviours? I imagine not. This will allow you to come to terms with your decision more easily.

Now the actual procedure: You may or may not wish to be present, it is your choice. The drug used is an anaesthetic, and is administered as an overdose. The only thing the animal feels is the small prick of the needle going into the vein. From there the animal goes to sleep, becomes unconscious, then the heart stops and they are gone. It is very quick and peaceful, harder for you than your pet.

Even your working dogs have become part of your family over the years that you have had them. So when the decision for them arises this is a nice way for them to go, and an easier way for you to part with your work mate.

Nola Hall
Vet Nurse

Flea Allergy Dermatitis in Dogs (FAD)

Fleas are annoying and cause itchiness in dogs and people. Most dogs will tolerate an infestation with fleas by having a scratch. Some dogs however are allergic to flea bites and even one bite from one flea is enough to set off a severe case of skin disease. Any dog can potentially become allergic to fleas but dogs that are intermittently exposed are more likely to. The condition is seen worldwide and is more common (not surprisingly) where fleas are prevalent. The condition is not contagious but fleas are. Dogs suffering from FAD are often affected in summer when flea numbers are high, this effect is lessened in dogs kept inside. The dogs are extremely itchy, especially over the back and around the tail. More severe damage from scratching can cause other secondary skin problems and hair loss. Controlling fleas is the key to resolving the problem. All pets should be treated including cats. Bedding, carpets, rugs and furniture should be treated for flea eggs and larvae. As the allergic reaction occurs in response to a flea bite and many flea treatments will kill fleas after they bite the animal, it is not always possible to prevent a reoccurrence by treating the animal alone. Products which kill adult fleas without them needing to bite are preferred. Antibiotics and anti-inflammatories may be required in severe cases to treat a skin infection that was caused by the dog scratching.

- FAD is a very common cause of skin disease in dogs.
- FAD is not contagious.
- FAD is controlled by controlling fleas.
- FAD is more common in summer.

Fleas can lay up to 50 eggs per day and complete their lifecycle in 3-4 weeks.

M Baer B.V.S.c

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Refugia-A Tool to Delay Drench Resistance

There are three methods to achieve refugia.

1) One way to achieve refugia is by not drenching all the animals in the mob every time. Leave 5 – 10% good ones undrenched.

2) Another method is to put undrenched ewes on pasture previously grazed by drenched lambs, the susceptible worms shed by the ewes dilute the population of resistant parasites left behind by the lambs.

3) A third way is to drench the mob and return them to the same infected pasture for a week or so before they go onto clean pasture. This ensures that susceptible worms have already been deposited on that pasture.

4) While it is early days, the Worm Wise Technical Advisory Group believes there are general principals that can be followed when practicing refugia in mobs of weaned lambs or hoggets.

General Principals

1) If feed supplies are low there is a greater risk that parasites in undrenched stock will impact on production. If feed quality and quantity is good it is an ideal time to leave some lambs undrenched.

2) The benefit of leaving some lambs undrenched (and a refugia of susceptible worms) is greatest when lambs are going onto 'clean' pasture.

3) Start conservatively ie; leave only 5% undrenched initially. Leaving too many undrenched may create a problem later in the season with accumulated parasites contaminating pastures.

4) Choose the best condition animals to remain undrenched each time. If the heaviest animals take a check from being left undrenched they will slip back into the "drenched" portion of the mob next time round ie; in 28 days.

5) A drench check test should be carried out regularly to make sure the drench you are using is working. At NSVS we recommend 2 times in a particular season if you are using one particular drench on the lambs/hoggets mob in a season.

6) Even if a test shows that the worms on your farm are not resistant to any of the three main drench families, it would still be of benefit to practice refugia. This is because resistant genes are likely to be present on every farm and keeping them diluted is the best long-term option to retain the efficacy of your drenches.

7) Avoid drenching more frequently than every 28 days unless there is a special need.

8) Do a quarantine drench for introduced stock.

9) Weigh animals if necessary – make sure they are not under-dosed.

P.A Langford B.V.S.c

**WEIGH
ANIMALS,
MAKE
SURE THEY
ARE NOT
UNDER
DRENCHED**

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**

Supervisory Visit for Velvetters

There has always been a reluctance to prescribe too many de-velvetting drugs early in the season until after you have had your annual supervisory visit. There is a bit of a mixed message in this. Whereas you will want to have enough drugs to 'practice' with before the supervisory visit, we don't want you to velvet large numbers before your annual supervisory visit, supposing this visit will keep you on the straight and narrow!

Also by not supplying too many de-velvetting drugs early in the season (before your supervisory visit) we might somehow hasten your request for the visit and get it completed before December 15th. Then we can allow you the privilege of 'unlimited' PAR drugs after this time.

During your supervisory visit we will require you to velvet at least 3 consecutive stags, without assistance. If you use more than one method of velvet removal you must demonstrate competence in each method used. This will include the demonstration of reversal for xylazine sedation on at least one stag, if you are certified chemical restraint. The other 2 stags can be velvettted in a crush using local anaesthetic.

General practices that have been noticed as areas of concern in recent years are:

1. Drug record keeping and drug hygiene.
2. Testing for analgesic and ensuring analgesia is present at removal of velvet.
3. Contingency responses (what to do if something goes wrong).
4. Operator safety (eg. capped needles).
5. Shed conditions, especially flooring in the area of velvet removal.
6. Velvet removal instrument hygiene (eg. a clean saw).

Naturo Rings

The requirement of the N.V.S.B. programme with regarding Naturo Ring users is

- 1) Farmers already holding a NVSB certificate are eligible to use Naturo Rings following a veterinary consultation. This may involve a farm visit, clinic visit or a telephone consultation, at the vets discretion.
- 2) Farmers not holding any ensuing certification are required to enter a supervisory contract with a veterinarian and successfully complete the open book theory exam and facilities assessment. In this case a supervising visit is required.
- 3) In subsequent years the requirement is that the annual fee is paid and the appropriate page in the drug book is signed by the vet and the velveter either as an annual check-up or on dispensing of the Naturo Rings. In

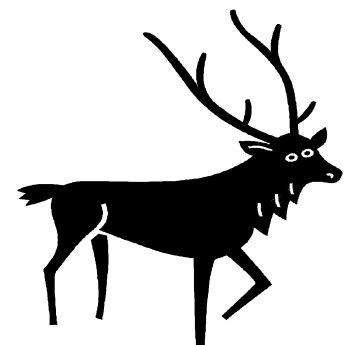
a lot of cases we will be doing a supervisory visit for the use of local anaesthetic or the use of chemical restraint and we can discuss Naturo Ring use then and sign the book.

Finally the third major requirement is to return your drug book and all unused drugs to us with all drug columns successfully added up by the 31st March each year.

P.A. Langford B.V.S.c

Deer Reminders

- **Fawning**
- **Develvetting - 2 year olds**



FOALINGS

By now we are well into the foaling season but there are still mares left to foal. We get lots of enquiries from first time breeders about the foaling process and it is an anxious time for owners. I will cover the important points in the following article but please remember if you have any concerns don't hesitate to ring and ask.

How long is a mare pregnant for?

The normal gestation length (length of pregnancy) in a mare can vary greatly. The expected foaling date is taken as 335-340 days from the last known breeding date but it can range from 320-365 days.

What are the signs that a mare is approaching readiness to foal?

These signs can be helpful but again not extremely accurate. Mares may show these signs and not foal for days and others may foal without any of these signs.

The signs that can be present are:

>320 days

Udder enlargement and containing milk/colostrum
Waxing on ends of teats (in some mares this means they will foal within 48 hours)

Relaxation of the tail head, buttocks and lips of the vulva

Foaling alarms can be bought or hired. These fit on the mare's halter and alert you when the mare is lying in the foaling position. It would certainly be worth considering getting one of these as a high percentage of foalings occur between 11pm-3am.

Consecutive milk samples can be taken and concentration of calcium, sodium and potassium measured. This can give a good indication but again variations can occur.

Sometimes water hardness test strips e.g. Softcheck Test Strips are used. Please talk to the vets if you would like more information on this.

Foaling

The actual process of foaling is divided into three stages.

Stage 1

The duration of stage 1 labour is variable but lasts on average 1-2 hours. The mare is restless and uncomfortable. She may kick at her abdomen and have patchy sweating – looking like a mild colic. She may hold her tail out and stretch and strain as if to urinate. It is important to try not to disturb her too much during this stage.

Stage 1 ends with the chorioallantois (waterbag) rupturing and discharge of the watery allantoic fluid.

Stage 2

The 2nd stage lasts on average 20-30 minutes. This is when the foal is delivered. It is very rapid. The mare produces forceful contractions and intense straining. She usually lies on her side. She will strain, sweat and often groan and grunt. The foal should appear at the birth canal. There should be two foreleg hooves the right way up (one behind the other) and above them a nose appearing. The mare will continue to strain as she delivers the foal. Often once the foal is delivered it lies with its hindlegs still in the birth canal. The mare lies still on her side for up to 30 minutes. The cord is still unbroken and it is important to try not to disturb the mare in this time.

Problems during the 2nd Stage

Most foalings occur without problems but when problems do occur they are an emergency and help is needed ASAP.

The vet should be called straight away if any of the following is seen:

- *Anything appearing at the vulva apart from the normal 2 feet and nose includes
- * HOOVES UPSIDE DOWN
- * NOSE AND ONLY ONE HOOF
- * NOSE ONLY (no hooves)
- * ONLY HOOVES

It is vital to call the vet ASAP if you have any of these signs and try and keep the mare walking around while you are waiting. The mare's contractions are so strong if she continues straining it can make the problem worse by impacting the foal in the birth canal. The mare can push so hard that if the foal is in an abnormal position it can cause damage internally to the mare.

Other signs that the mare may be experiencing difficulties and help should be called are:

- * No parts of the foal or membrane appearing at vulva within 5 minutes of rupture of the water bag
- * No evidence of strong contractions and/or no progress within 10 minutes of rupture of the water bag (Foals may be born inside a red bag this should be gently broken so that the foal is not suffocated.)

3rd Stage

This is the passing of the placenta. Normally happens within 3 hours of foaling. You may see

Horse Reminders

- **Show time!**
- **Keep bot eggs off legs**
- **Hoof Care**

some mild colicky signs as the uterus contracts to push the placenta out. It is important to check that the complete placenta has been delivered. It should be the shape of a butterfly with one side larger than the other and 'sock' like ends. If it is not delivered within 6 hours of foaling then assistance is needed and the vet should be called for assistance as soon as possible. If the placenta is left too long or if a small piece is retained then the mare can develop serious complications. A mare with a retained placenta is prone to developing laminitis (founder), blood poisoning, infection of the uterus, toxins in her system and she may even die. It is therefore very important to call the vet if the placenta is not passed after 6 hours from foaling.

Other complications post

foaling

I have already discussed the complication of a retained placenta but there are a few other things that can happen that you need to monitor for.

*Prolapse Of the Uterus- (Breeding bag pushed out) this is very rare in the mare but when it does happen veterinary assistance must be called immediately. Try and keep the mare calm to prevent her damaging the uterus.

Bleeding- External bleeding will be obvious and the vet should be called. Mares can also get internal bleeds where they will look very uncomfortable and show signs of colic. They will soon show signs of shock, sweating, pale gums, increased breathing rate and fast heart rate. The vet should be called immediately.

Tearing of the Vulva/Vagina. Minor bruising of these areas does occur quite commonly particularly if there was a problem foaling. The area should be checked and if there is damage ring and discuss it with the vet.

*Check udder-check that the mare is producing enough milk and allowing the foal to drink.

In this article I have concentrated on the issues concerning the mare. I will just mention a few points concerning the foal.

The foal should:

*breathe as soon as it is delivered,
*should be lying on its chest with head up within minutes of delivery,
*and should stand within 1 hour.

*It should drink within 2 hours of birth and it needs to drink 1.5 litres of colostrum within the first 18 hours and will do this by drinking 250-300mls every 1-2 hours.

*It needs to pass the meconium (this is the first lot of faeces) otherwise can get constipated and colic.

Prophylactic treatments

Commonly these are given to foals when they are in a closely monitored environment eg stud.

*navel treated with iodine
*enema
*tetanus antitoxin
*vitamin supplement
*antibiotic injection

Please discuss with the vets at the clinic about these treatments if you have an expectant mare.

It is a very exciting time if you have a mare expecting a foal. Most foalings (90%-96% depending on the breed) occur very quickly and without any problems at all. When they do occur however it is an emergency and the vet should be called immediately. This article has given an outline of what to expect but please don't hesitate to talk to one of the vets if you have any concerns about your mare, foal or the actual foaling itself.

M Dicken
MA Vet MB
MRCVS

Cattle Reminders

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

WEANING TIME

Weaning Weights

Weight of lamb weaned per hectare is one of the key production indices closely linked to profit. It is driven by number of lambs and weight of lambs. Better fed ewes wean heavier lambs. This is due to milk production in the ewe which essentially is determined by spring feeding and getting the balance of pasture right. Ewes need to be fed well in early lactation while lambs need access to high quality pasture in later lactation. Farmers who get good weaning weights are busy in spring adjusting grazing to ensure that suckling lambs have high quality (not just quantity) pasture to graze. This may be achieved by rotation with singles, shutting up paddocks or adding more mouths to prevent pasture becoming rank. It may be hard to increase our weaning weights much more from today's 28 kg (top carcasses at 15 kg). I believe 25 years ago 23 kg LW and 12 kg CW were considered good. This lift probably came about through better feeding and heavier ewes.

When to wean

This *should* be a highly variable decision depending on many factors. Do not be tempted to keep a set date because that is what you have always done, or that is what the neighbour or monitor farm does. The key determinants for when to wean are:

1. Ewe condition/weight

Ewes must wean in good enough condition to be able to reach acceptable mating weights next season (60 kg +). Lighter ewes will require higher MJME (MegaJoules of Metabolisable Energy) to achieve this target.

Weaning Weight (kg)	Live Weight Gain (g/d)	Requirement MJME/ewe/day	kgDM/ewe Assume 9.5 MJME/kg over 90 days
60	0	12.3	117
58	22	13.4	127
56	44	14.3	135
54	67	15.3	145
52	89	16.3	154

So for example weaning at 52 kg would require a gain of 89 grams per day. Remember single and twin bearing ewes are often different live weights by late lactation so these two groups can be weaned at different dates.

2. Feed Supply

Combined feed demand is higher when lambs are still with the ewes. Ewes in late lactation can consume nearly half again of that consumed by a dry ewes fed at maintenance. However ewes do put on weight more efficiently when lactating compared with when dry. So if ewes need to gain weight and pasture covers are high (and of adequate quality!) they can do so without being weaned. In this case a higher combined total feed demand may help prevent feed losing quality. On the flip side, if feed supply is short with ewes just holding or losing condition, early weaning can reduce total farm feed demand. When pasture is in short supply, lambs and ewes begin to compete with each other for feed. Hopefully the lambs are at least 16 kg live weight and can be weaned onto clover pastures of 1200 kgDM+.

Weaned ewes can be used to clean up paddocks, which is often done but if they have got a fair bit of weight to gain before mating this is not advised.

3. Lamb Growth

After weaning better forage quality is required to compensate for the loss of high protein milk (protein of course is required for growth). Lambs will suffer a check at weaning due to stress and the change in diet, the check being greater in lighter lambs. For this reason if feed allows (and ewe condition) it is best to leave lambs on mum until 25-30 kg live weight.

4. Other Factors

Perhaps worming, B12 requirements, or fly strike drives your decision to wean. In this case it may pay to weigh up pros and cons for doing so. Is it necessary? Perhaps treatment can be delayed or lambs may be treated while still on mum, is there a longer acting product that may be used earlier next year to avoid the problem in the future. If your weaning date is less flexible because of the need to shear perhaps this could be addressed when planning your shearing policies. Winter shearing may be an option.

Ewe udder defects

Udder defects can be a significant cause of wastage and impaired lamb growth rates. In flocks today where many ewes are having multiples, udder function is pivotal. Udders are usually checked by shearers. This may not be wise, do they not have enough to do, and what consequence is it to them if they miss the odd one or three? Farmers who do their own check often do so at weaning but many ewes at this time can still have quite full udders, and small but significant lesions may be missed. Also mastitis that occurs around weaning (the ewe still makes milk but suddenly this milk is left in the udder – combined with the stress of weaning) will be missed. The best time to examine ewes is therefore some weeks after weaning when they are coming into the yard for something else. Remember you need to palpate deep into the udder tissue. **R Smith B.V.S.c**

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