

Special points of interest:

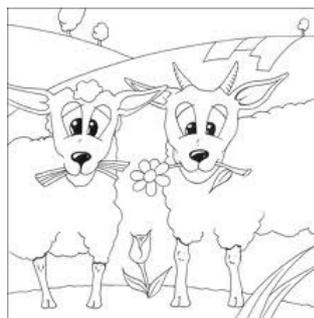
- Ram runs will be organized soon. If you have not sent back your form and wish your rams tested, please ring the clinic as soon as possible.
- If you want to use Bopriva testosterone vaccine to manage your bulls this winter, please speak to one of the vets to organize a schedule of vaccinations
- We hope you have all had a great summer holiday!

Clostridial Diseases

It is common practice on sheep farms to vaccinate ewes pre-lamb to protect the new born and growing lamb against tetanus and pulpy kidney (among other clostridial infections).

For this to be effective, the vaccination given to the ewe must result in high antibody production in the ewe herself in order to reach sufficient levels in the colostrum. Therefore, the ewe must have received a primary dose and a booster as a hogget, so that she is “primed” to produce antibodies with this single pre-lamb shot. The new born lamb must then receive sufficient quality and quantity of colostrum in order to absorb these protective antibodies across their gut and into their blood stream.

A suitable protocol would be to vaccinate lambs at weaning, followed by a booster 4-6 weeks later. Ewe replacements can



then be boosted at 20 months of age pre-lamb as two-tooths, along with the mixed age ewes (or pre-lamb as hoggets if hogget lambing is part of the farming practice).

The timing in relation to the pre-lamb vaccination is important to consider too. If done too early, the antibody levels will peak in the ewe before the optimal time of colostrum transfer to the lamb. The most commonly used pre-lamb vaccines are Eweguard, Nilvax and Multine 5-in-1. Depending on the brand there are various label claims on the opti-

mal timing of the vaccination. Nilvax is licensed to be given 2-6 weeks prior to lambing. Multine 5-in-1 to be given 2-4 weeks prior to lambing and Eweguard to be given 2-3 weeks prior to lambing. There are variable claims with these products on the length of protection this colostrum transfer of antibodies provides to the lamb. Regardless of these claims, antibody levels in the lamb are dwindling by the time they are weaned.

With dwindling antibody levels at weaning the lambs then move into a period of increased risk for pulpy kidney infection, especially when high growth rates are being achieved on high protein feed. The take home message is that lambs should get their first vaccination at weaning followed by a booster a month later. This can coincide with drenching to avoid extra yarding.

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Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis is a bacterial disease which is spread by urine. There are many different types, or serovars, and like worms, they are species specific. Cattle, sheep, deer, hedgehogs, rats, and pigs all have their own serovars. Humans do not, but can be infected by any serovar.

Lepto infection rates are increasing, and more than 50% of those

infected in 2009 were farmers. Dairy farmers are at highest risk, due to more urine exposure, but sheep and deer farmers can contract lepto from handing home-kill, especially kidneys and bladders, or urine getting into cuts or eyes in the yards.

Animals infected with lepto will generally show no symptoms but may have subclinical production

losses and will spread lepto in their urine. Most animals are infected in the winter period as the bacteria survives well in the cold and animals drink out of puddles more often.

Lepto in humans begins with flu like symptoms and leads to kidney failure and death. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to one of our vets.

Mating Management



Insomniac Sheep

Mating management is the key to optimising next years lambing percentage. The most important timing factor of mating is working out when you are going to put the ram out. This obviously needs to correspond with having the lambs arrive when you have the feed available in the spring ie matching supply and demand.

But there are still other management issues that affect lambing. Below are a few tips for helping get the most out of your mating.

Vaccinations

Every year there is a substantial decrease in lambing percentage due to abortions. Abortions are most commonly seen about one month before lambing. It is frustrating at the time but there is something that can be done for the following year. Some of the common causes such as *Campylobacter* (*Vibrio*), *Toxoplasma* (*Toxo*) and *Salmonella* Brandenburg are prevented or reduced through a good vaccination program. If hoggets are mated, it is important to make sure they get all the vaccinations that are usually given to the two tooth.

If you have any questions regard-

ing abortion vaccinations, please contact us as these vaccines are classed as PAR's (prescription animal remedies).

Ram Soundness

Good healthy rams are essential for fertilisation rates especially when ewe/ram ratios are high (>100:1) Reasons for lower than expected lambing percentages can be the fault of the ram. One cause of ram infertility is *Brucella Ovis*. This causes abscesses in the male genital tract, causing inflammation and reduced fertility. The disease spreads from ram to ram and can have disastrous effects on lambing percentages. Getting your vet to palpate your rams means that many, if not all, the affected rams can be detected, and any other abnormalities, such as mange and abscesses are also noted.

Teasers

The main aim of using teasers (vasectomised rams) is to encourage ewes or hogget's to start cycling earlier than they normally would. The vasectomised rams are put with the ewes at least 20 days (but ideally

a month or so) before the ram is put out, which stimulates them to start cycling (the ram effect). Teasers have all the same smells as rams, and look and act like rams, but are unable to leave lambs. Their presence stimulates the ewes to start cycling. By increasing the number of cycles that ewes have before tupping, there is a greater number of eggs that will be produced each cycle and there is an increase in success of fertilization. This means by the time the rams mate the ewes, there is a greater chance of twins and also earlier lambs. Teasers can also be used with hoggets. Any age ram can be made into a teaser, and they generally work for about 4-5 years. The operation is basically a 'quick snip' but the rams need to be operated on about 4-6 weeks before they are needed and put with a few ewes to empty their 'tubes' out before putting them with your main mob. Identifying them well is extremely important.

The approximate number recommended is 1 teaser to 100-200 ewes.

Faecal Egg Count Reduction Tests

Lamb drenching is well under way this season, and if you have asked yourself the question - 'how well is this drench working?' - then it is the time to start addressing it.



This snake ate an entire pregnant sheep.....

A basic faecal egg check can be undertaken 10- 14 days post drenching. This should return a zero result and if it doesn't, it poses more questions than it answers. Which drug isn't working? How much resistance is there? Is more than one type of worm resistant? Etc etc. Some farmers at this point decide to change drench and repeat the procedure. Another option is to perform a faecal egg count reduction test which would determine the extent (if any) of drench resistance on the farm and which drench family/ies are involved.

Preparation for a faecal egg count reduction test: To make this test as useful as possible the timing is important – all worm species must be present to give accurate information. In this part of the country the window is from January to early April. As well as timing it is crucial that the lambs have a moderate worm burden – averaging around 700 epg. In a drier season it will take longer to achieve this level of burden than during a wet one. About 100 - 115 lambs should be marked or set aside for the test and the occasional egg count should be done starting 6-8 weeks after their last drench to see when they reach the target.

The mob is then divided into several groups, weighed and accurately drenched with 4 differ-

ent drench families. Pre and post treatment faecal egg counts and larval cultures are performed to determine which worms are not being killed by which drench family.

Worm resistance to drench is an ever evolving situation—it may not exist, it might be going undetected, it could be increasing rapidly or it can be reducing due to careful management strategies. And of course the environment ensures no two seasons are the same. Contact us at the clinic to discuss worm and drench options specific to your farms needs.

Goats and Gorse

Goats thrive on New Zealand pastures. They are naturally browsers and foragers, rather than close grazers like sheep. Goats can do well on vegetation that is unsuitable for sheep, and can help control weeds. Most goats on New Zealand farms, especially on hill country, are used for weed control.

Early settlers used goats to combat weeds in newly developed pastures. These goats were usually feral animals, rounded up as a herd and fenced onto a problem area. For large bushes of blackberry or gorse there may be 20–30 animals per hectare.

Weeds such as blackberry, thistle and gorse can be controlled and eliminated if goats are tethered or fenced onto areas containing these plants. Goats have been used to control blackberry, gorse, sweet briar, thistles, broom, manuka, bracken-fern, ragwort, rushes, sedges, tut, tauhinu, matagouri, and woolly nightshade. The success of weed control using goats can be dependent on species, as to graze some don the goats must be forced into the area at a high stocking rate, where other species they will graze

preferentially. Studies by Meat and Wool have shown that goats can lead to a significant reduction in Scotch thistle and gorse when grazing intensively. Fencing can be a challenge, as goats can squeeze between the wires on standard fences. Angora and milking goats are generally less troublesome than other breeds in this respect. Modern electric fences and other fencing techniques can protect areas such as new tree plantations and home gardens. Yard fences should be higher than in traditional sheep yards.

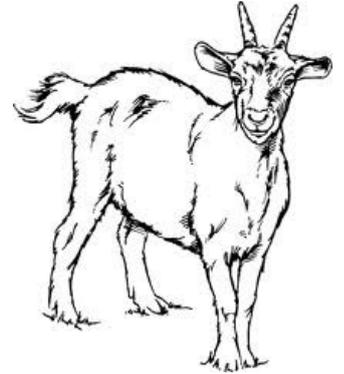
Goats prefer rough pasture and other plants to high-quality clovers. However, if they are expected to produce quality milk or fibre, then a pasture of both grass and clover should be provided. In time goats can manicure pasture into a clover-dominant sward, helping to improve the profitability of sheep or cattle farms.

Goats prefer a varied diet and tend to be browsers rather than grazers. Additionally they can eat up to two metres, standing and climbing. Due to their mobile upper lip, they can penetrate into the sward

and browse more effectively than sheep. They also have a high tolerance of bitter tastes, much more than other grazing stock.

Of course, the major issue with goats on sheep farms is worms. Goats do not develop resistance to worms as adults, so drenching can be a lifetime proposition. This means that goat farms often have a huge problem with drench resistance. If you decide to buy some goats for weed control, please speak to us about quarantine drenching and management. Careful management including grazing plants with a higher sward height (such as gorse) will hopefully reduce the amount of drenching required for adult goats.

If buying goats for weed control, wethers are preferred, as they can handle variation in feeding and liveweight. Choosing animals which have previously been eating the required species, and which have reaching their adult target liveweight is important. Ensure the goats have access to a varied diet, to allow proper nutrition and access to water at all times.



“Fencing (goats) can be a challenge...”

Sheep and Beef Cattle Welfare Code Minimum Standards

The new sheep and beef cattle welfare code of practice was passed by Parliament in June 2010. These are **some** of the relevant minimum standards which anyone owning or in charge of stock must meet. For the full code of welfare, please go to www.biosecurity.govt.nz

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2. Animal Handling

- (b) Sheep and beef cattle must not be prodded in the most sensitive areas, including the udder, eyes, nose, anus, vulva or testicles.
- (c) Only the minimum force required must be used when moving sheep or beef cattle.
- (d) Electric prodders must not be used to drive sheep or calves.

3. Mustering and Droving

Sheep and beef cattle being moved on foot must not be forced to proceed at a pace that will cause exhaustion, heat stress or injury.

4. Facilities

(a) All facilities, including fences, yards, sheds, and housing, must be constructed, maintained and operated in a manner that minimises the likelihood of distress or injury to animals.

(c) Animals that are physically restrained must be kept under supervision.

(d) Electroimmobilisation devices must be used only in a manner that allows animals to breathe normally, demonstrate normal responses to pain and must not be used in place of pain relief when undertaking painful husbandry procedures.

5. Food and Water

(a) All animals must receive sufficient quantities of food and nutrients to enable them to:

- (i) maintain good health;
- (ii) meet their physiological requirements; and
- (iii) minimise metabolic and nutritional disorders.

(b) All sheep and beef cattle must have access to water, sufficient for their daily needs and that is not harmful to their health.

(c) If any beef animal or sheep shows signs of being very thin, or if the body condition score of any individual beef animal falls to 1 (on a scale of 0-5), urgent remedial action must be taken to improve condition or the animal must be destroyed humanely.

6. Shelter

(a) All sheep and beef cattle

must have access to shelter to reduce the risk to their health and welfare caused by exposure to cold.

(b) Sheep and beef cattle giving birth must be provided with an environment affording the newborn protection from any reasonably expected climatic conditions likely to compromise their welfare and survival.

(c) Sheep and beef cattle must be provided with means to minimise the effects of heat stress.

(d) Where animals develop health problems associated with exposure to adverse weather conditions, priority must be given to remedial action that will minimise the consequences of such exposure.

7. Injury and Disease

(a) Signs of ill-health or injury must result in timely preventative or remedial action, as appropriate.

(b) Medication must only be used in accordance with registration conditions and manufacturer's instructions or professional advice.

8. Reproductive Technology

(a) Electroejaculation, and laparoscopic artificial insemination must be carried out only by veterinarians, or by trained and competent operators under veterinary supervision, using appropriate pain relief, sedatives or anaesthesia.

(b) Cervical artificial insemination and pregnancy diagnosis must only be carried out by persons trained and competent with the techniques

9. Lambing and Calving

(a) Mechanical devices to assist in lambing or calving must only be used if necessary and then by a trained and experienced operator.

(b) A moving vehicle must not be used to provide traction to assist lambing or calving.

10. Colostrum

Artificially reared lambs and calves must receive sufficient colostrum or good quality commercial colostrum substitute to ensure their welfare

11. Artificial Rearing

(a) Where restraint is used to help a ewe or cow to adopt a foster lamb or calf, the animals must be inspected frequently to ensure the dam is not becoming distressed and the lamb or calf is sucking.

(b) Where young are rejected by the foster dam the lamb or calf must be removed and provided with adequate nourishment, or killed humanely.

12. Identification

(a) All identification procedures must be applied by a competent operator.

(b) Hot branding must only be used with pain relief.

13. Shearing, Dagging and Crutching

(a) Sheep must have access to food and water as soon as possible after shearing.

(b) All severe cuts or injuries must be treated immediately.

15. Feeding pads

(a) All animals must be able to lie down and rest comfortably for sufficient periods to meet their behavioural needs.

(b) Sufficient space must be provided to prevent undue competition for feed and water

19. Transport

(a) The person in charge must examine the selected sheep or beef cattle prior to transport, to ensure that all animals are fit and healthy for transportation.

(b) Animals must be able to stand and be able to bear weight on all four limbs and be fit enough to withstand the journey without suffering unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.

20. Humane Destruction

(a) Sheep and beef cattle must be handled, restrained and killed in such a manner as to minimise unnecessary pain and distress prior to death.

(b) Persons undertaking destruction must be competent in the handling and killing of sheep and/or beef cattle.

(c) Beef cattle must be rapidly rendered insensible and remain in that state, until death.

(d) The spinal cord must not be severed or broken in any animal, until after death.

(e) Animals rendered insensible