

Sheep & Beef Talk

February 2018



Beware of the Rain

As this article is being written much of the North Island is getting a good dollop of rain providing relief from a dry start to summer. While summer rain is good for pasture growth it also provides the ideal environment for many animal health issues.

Worms

Worm larvae in a dung pat or pellets cannot develop without moisture. They also develop faster when it is warm. Under ideal conditions a Barbers Pole worm can develop from an egg to the infective L3 in just 4 days! Larvae survival on pasture is also improved with moist conditions. Expect high levels of larval challenge especially if pasture covers are low. A higher larval challenge increases the need for drenching. If you are not doing a drench test this year, collect 10 dung samples 10 days after drenching for egg counting to check if your drench is working or not. The more we test, the more farms we are finding where moxidectin and triple combination drenches are struggling to kill all worms.

Managing worms using tools other

than drench such as grazing management, cropping and stock policy is becoming more important.



Fly Strike

Summer rain increases the risk of fly strike for two reasons:

1. Rainfall increases fly survival so fly pressure will be higher. More flies means a bigger challenge is placed on application technique and dip chemicals to prevent strike.

2. Rainfall washes dip chemicals out of the fleece. Expect shorter protection periods from your dip. During the very wet 2017 autumn we had reports of a range of different products only lasting 3-4 weeks before sheep were getting struck.

Facial Eczema

Rainfall and humidity drive both fungal growth and spore production which can rapidly increase spore counts, even if some spores are washed down in heavy rain. The summer storms can be localised so we see different spore counts between farms and between paddocks. A key part of managing facial eczema is knowing your risk by monitoring the spore count trends across your farm.

Rainfall also reduces stock water intake so if you are using trough treatment to provide zinc be sure to get some blood samples done to check your stock are getting enough zinc to be protected.

At the end of January monitor farm spore counts were trending upwards towards 30,000 - 40,000 in Waipa. Counts on the East Coast were low.

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Havelock North
P 06 877 8050

Gisborne
P 06 868 5151

Wairoa
P 06 838 6099

Te Awamutu
P: 07 872 0240

Otorohanga
P: 07 873 8275

Te Kuiti
P: 07 878 0020

King Country
P: 07 895 7585

Turangi
P: 07 386 0220

www.vetent.co.nz
info@vetent.co.nz

Coughing Lambs

Snotty noses and coughing in groups of lambs after mustering is commonly seen in the summer and autumn. Some of these lambs may lie down when mustered, and if severely affected will die. Post mortem of affected lambs usually gives a diagnosis of pneumonia.

Pneumonia in lambs is a complex disease involving the interaction of environmental conditions, bacteria, viruses and the lamb's immune system. Affected lambs will struggle to gain weight, are slow to muster and are down-graded at the works or even condemned.

While we can't completely avoid shearing, drenching and dipping, there are a few things that can help reduce the risk of lambs developing pneumonia. Several studies involving lambs at the freezing works and live shipments from New Zealand found that the most important risk factor was heat stress, recognised in lambs as open-mouthed breathing and panting. Holding lambs in yards did not cause disease on its own, but required a stressor such as shearing, weaning or dehydration.

These findings mean that anything that reduces heat stress will help reduce pneumonia. Hot weather, mustering over long distances, holding in yards for long times, dust and lack of shade all contribute to heat stress. Reducing stress by weaning and shearing at separate times has been found to greatly reduce the risk of disease.

The number of lambs with pneumonia found at slaughter increases throughout the season so sending lambs, including cull ewe lambs earlier reduces the number of lambs with pneumonia.



February Reminders

- Keep an eye on our monitor farm spore count results at www.vetent.co.nz. Contact your local clinic if you are having trouble logging in.
- Check your lamb drench is working if you are not doing a drench test this year. Collect 10 dung samples 10 days after drenching and bring them in to your local clinic.
- Order Toxovax if you haven't already. We need 3-4 weeks notice as Toxovax is made to order.
- Plan pre-tup animal health treatments to avoid yarding ewes close to tupping.
- Liver biopsy lambs to check B12 and selenium levels
- 5in1 for weaned lambs.
- Give the ram team a spruce up before tupping – drench, dip, zinc capsule, trim feet.
- Book in cattle pregnancy scanning from 6 weeks after the end of mating.

Correction

The December Sheep and Beef newsletter contained an error regarding Time Capsule protection. VetEnt would like to retract the sentence: "The Time Capsule® allows a consistent daily dose of zinc to be released into the rumen to protect animals against Facial Eczema for 5 weeks in cattle." As stated on the Time Capsule promotion in the December 2017 Newsletter.

The correct length of protection given by the Time Capsule is 4 weeks.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused.