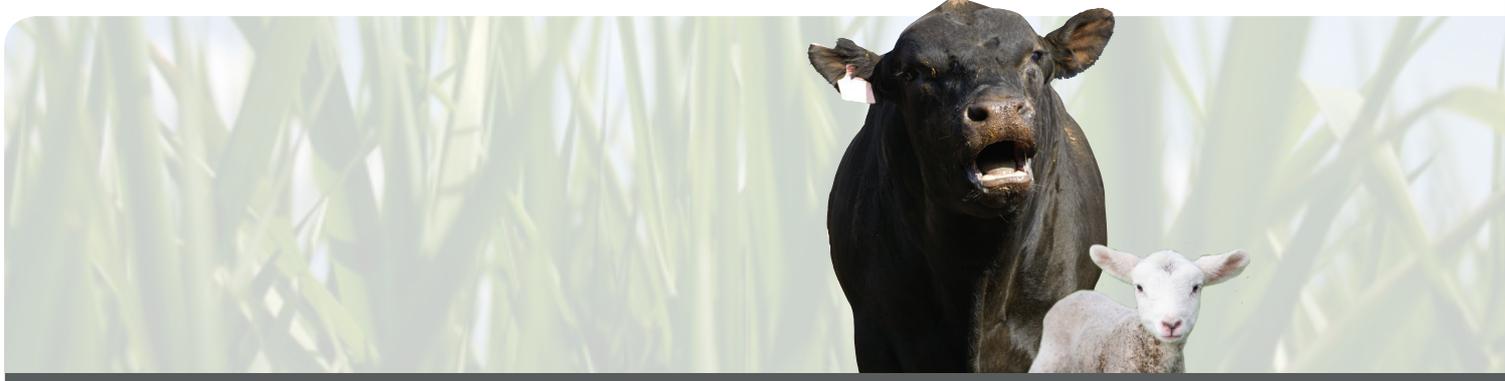
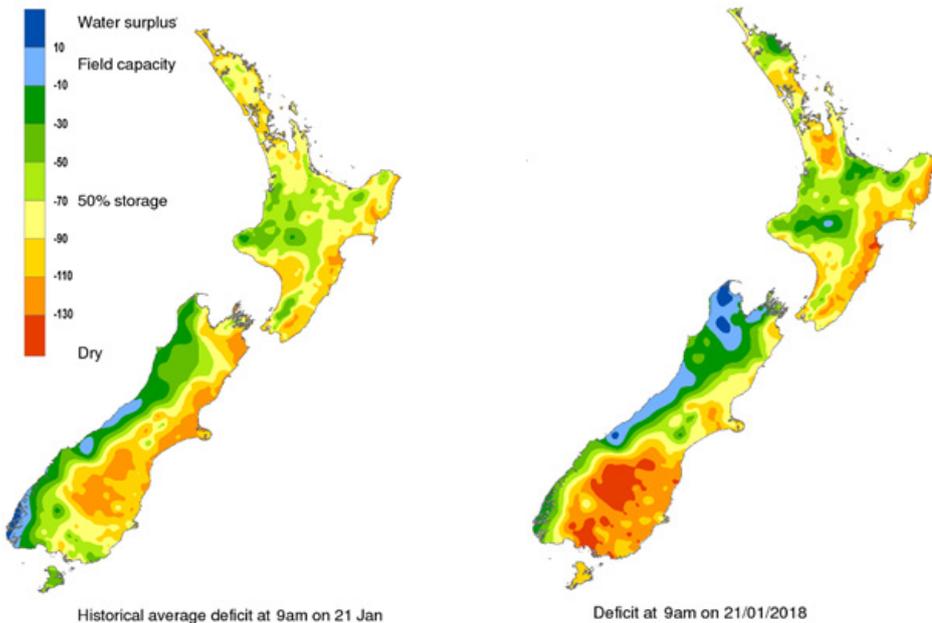


Sheep & Beef Talk

February 2018



Drought Watch



The maps above sourced from NIWA (to find it, go to www.niwa.co.nz click on “Daily climate maps” in the quick links column on the right) show the soil moisture deficit (SMD). On the website there are 3 maps; the historical average, last year and this year. The map changes at 9am each day. The map on the right shows the SMD on February 21, 2018, compared to the historical average on the left.

What do these maps mean for pasture growth?

The level of soil moisture deficit when plants stop growing depends on the soil type and the root depth of the plant. For grass pastures the root depth is about 500 mm. The table below shows the level for grass on coarse, intermediate and fine textured soils. Pasture growth will slow down at levels much lower than this and gets slower as the deficit increases.

Soil Texture	Approximate SMD at which pasture growth stops
Coarse (Sand)	30 - 60mm
Intermediate (Loam)	80 - 120mm
Fine (Clay)	110 - 130mm

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Continued...

Drought Rules

The key to drought survival is maximising farm income in the following year. Controlling costs is important, but investing into things which will generate a proven return is vital.

- Be prepared! – have supplements ready and make sure water is available
- Minimise the hit – make early decisions to reduce the impact on future production
- Monitor, monitor, monitor – feed levels, stock weight and

body-condition score including “what ifs?”. What if it doesn't rain for the next 2 weeks? Compare results to the budget and be prepared to change the plan

- Beware of the rain! – low grazing and warm, wet conditions are ideal for worms, fly, facial eczema, liver fluke and many other diseases that can affect your stock.
- It is usually better economically to sell stock rather than buy feed
- Sell stock that won't produce next year

Pink Eye in Cattle

Pink eye is a painful and highly infectious eye disease which leads to temporary blindness in many animals (one or both eyes) and can lead to permanent blindness in some animals (1-2%). It is primarily caused by infection with the bacteria, *Moraxella bovis* (not to be confused with *Mycoplasma bovis*!).

The danger period is late spring and summer. During these seasons' environmental risks such as UV light, wind, dust, flies and stalky/seedy vegetation combine with management risks such as high stocking rates, buying cattle and yarding cattle setting the scene for an outbreak of pink eye.

It occurs in cattle of all ages, sexes and types but young cattle are particularly vulnerable. Previously infected cattle can become carriers and spread the disease within a herd.

The first signs of pink eye will be weepy eyes, excessive blinking and an avoidance of strong light. As the disease progresses the eye becomes inflamed (pink) and cloudy which starts in the centre of the eye and spreads outwards. The centre of the eye becomes more yellow as the



Early Pink Eye

infection spreads. Severe cases can end up with a perforated eye and permanent blindness. Healing results in a white scar on the cornea which can affect vision.

Pink eye is an animal welfare issue causing prolonged and se-

- Depressed growth rates
- Loss or culling because of eye rupture and permanent blindness

- Disruption to seasonal grazing management
- Veterinary and labour costs to treat infected animals
- Lowered sale value of animals with eye lesions
- Long healing time (60 days) and spread through a mob

Pink eye can be prevented by vaccination with Piliguard Pinkeye-I Trivalent. It is most effective if given 2-3 weeks prior to the pink eye season. It is less effective in the face of a herd outbreak. Only a single shot is required but this means vaccine site reactions are more common than with other vaccines. An annual booster is recommended. Quick action is required to prevent the spread of pinkeye.

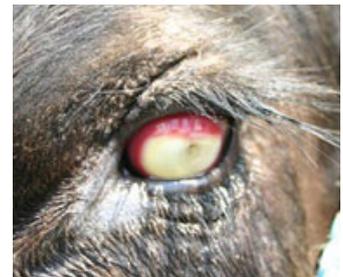
We strongly recommend a vet visit in all cases of suspected pink eye. Affected animals should be removed from the mob for treatment and separate grazing. Swabs from cattle may be taken to identify the cause of infection. Always treat both eyes, starting with the good eye. Topical and systemic antibiotic treatments can be used:

Topical treatments

- Orbenin eye ointment, repeat every 2 days
- An antibiotic spray, repeat 2-3 times per day (can be provided by your vet)

Systemic treatments

- Antibiotic injection into the subconjunctiva (veterinary procedure)
- Long-acting tetracyclines (e.g. Bivatop/Oxytetrin/Alamycin) given under the skin or into muscle depending on product used.



Late Pink Eye

Surgical treatments are required in severe cases. A third eyelid flap or sewing the eyelids together can be done to save the eye.

February Reminders

- 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.
- Liver biopsy lambs to check B12 and selenium levels.
- 5in1 for weaned lambs. We now have a combination 5in1 and B12 injection back on the market. If you are interested in using this product please contact your local clinic.
- Give the ram team a spruce up before tupping – drench, dip, trim feet – we are about to start organising clients for ram runs.
- Book in cattle pregnancy scanning from 6 weeks after the planned end of mating.