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Rural roundup

Unprecedented weather, and unprecedented stock values.

Certainly the best year in the last 30 for livestock farming, but our cropping colleagues are having a tough time of it.

The recent spell of cool temperatures and overcast weather has seen some interesting Disease patterns emerge.. Parasitism in lambs really wasn't an issue pre -Christmas but it sure is now! Cool conditions have resulted in a very late significant **Nematodirus** infection. This parasite enjoys cooler temperatures and is Pathogenic at very low numbers. We were actually looking for affected sheep pre Christmas for a drench trial but couldn't find any!

No problem now! Infact all the significant gut parasites that cause disease in our stock are thriving! We are seeing some very high faecal egg counts in newly weaned lambs We have carried out a number of drench reduction tests to date. Clients are urged to have their drench performance checked regularly.

Any queries please contact the clinic for advice.

Fly and lice control

In the last two weeks we have seen a dramatic increase in fly strike. **Prevention is the key.** Management using good shearing practices combined with appropriate chemical application will control this severe animal wastage and welfare problem.

We now have available a new combination fly prevention, combined with active treatment of fly strike **Cyrazin KO** which in addition to the regular insect larvae inhibitor, contains ivermectin for the treatment of Struck Sheep

See the Vets in Clinic for advice using this product.

Pregnancy Testing of Cattle

It's that time again....

Pregnancy testing cattle is no longer a simple matter of identifying which cows are in calf. There is a wealth of information that can be gained from

this procedure, which can be used to make vital decisions throughout the year.

Some farmers want to know exact calving dates while others only need to know which cows are going to be early or late calvers. Either way, it is great to have this information when trying to decide which cows to cull or sell, which bull is most likely the sire and when deciding on grazing management. Pregnancy in cattle can be palpated from six weeks after conception (and possibly five weeks if using a scanner) right up until calving. But to age a foetus and give an accurate calving date the cows must be palpated/scanned before they are twelve weeks pregnant. Up until this time, all foetuses of the same age are relatively the same size. By measuring the size of the foetus (whether it be of Jersey or Simmental breeding) we can age the pregnancy. After twelve weeks the size of the foetus is affected by individual characteristics and therefore ageing is not as accurate.

Early pregnancy testing makes a big difference to the quality and quantity of information we can give you. We need to scan your cows no more than twelve weeks after start of mating and no less than six weeks after the bull was removed (end of mating) to be able to age the pregnancy accurately. This is a relatively small window of opportunity and even a week can affect the results.

For some farmers this will mean pregnancy testing a portion of their herd twice. This also applies to farmers wanting to know early and late calving cows (rather than accurate ageing) because as it gets closer to twelve weeks after bull removal it gets harder to differentiate foetal ages. So tell us before starting what information you would like from pregnancy testing.

Percentages so far range from 5 to 10 % empty, very good for our district! We are however, seeing some early abortions occurring. We have also seen a number of bull failures in untested Sire Bulls!

Grain Poisoning

We have seen an upsurge in the number of cases of grain poisoning recently due in most part to storm Damage in grain crops. There would appear to be a lot more grain on the ground this year post harvest. Cases usually commence within the first 48 hours of sheep being put onto the paddock. Affected stock are very reluctant to move can be bloated and have a brown to green scour.

Grain may be visible in the scour. Rumen contents are almost solely grain or digested grain husks. The rumen lining is easily sloughed when scraped with a Knife edge.

Treatment involves removing the sheep from the grain source .Oral buffering of the rumen with bicarbonate and antibiotics to counter toxicity and gut damage.

Brucellosis in Rams

This is a common disease of rams caused mainly by the Brucella bacteria and resulting in a swelling of the epididymis, a structure lying alongside the testicle.

The disease passes from ram to ram either by them serving the same ewe or mounting each other. The fertility of affected rams is often reduced and some become sterile. Most farmers control the disease by using a voluntary accreditation scheme and maintain a Brucella free flock by purchasing rams only from accredited free sources.

There have been a few breakdowns over the last year with Brucellosis being diagnosed in ram flocks that were previously clear. The cause of the breakdowns have either been due to the introduction of infected rams from neighbouring properties or bought in. The worst affected flock has had over 50% of the flock infected and culled.

You should take the following steps to Ensure that this does not happen to your flock:

- Any outside rams entering your property should be isolated for six Weeks and then blood tested.

- Ensure all purchased rams are from an officially accredited Brucellosis free flock. Sight the accreditation certificate!
- Get your rams checked well before tupping if they haven't been vet inspected in the last three years.

Bull Soundness and Libido Testing of Bulls

There has been a dramatic upturn in the number of clients requesting this service. The procedure is very simple and the information generated can have a positive impact on your subsequent calving. This examination also is a very good opportunity to acquaint farm staff with what normal mating looks like and what abnormal mating behaviour looks like. A large number of studs now regularly test rising two year old bulls as a warranty for their clients. Run bulls should be tested at least every third season and definitely be regularly checked during the mating season. Bull rotation is a sound practice to carry out with farmers changing bulls over every 8-10 days with a replacement bull.

Remember abstinence makes the heart grow fonder!!!!

Cow Somatic Cells

White blood cells in milk are known as somatic cells, and the number per ml is called the somatic cell count or SCC. White blood cells are important for fighting bacteria.

The three main types of white blood cells are the macrophages, neutrophils and lymphocytes. These cells are important for the immune response.

Macrophages are always present in milk and are responsible for the 20-40,000/ml SCC of healthy cows. Neutrophils and lymphocytes are responsible for the massive increase in SCC associated with infection.

High bulk milk SCC's mean that high numbers of cows are infected within the herd. (At >300,000 cells per ml approximately 40% of cows will have an infection). Individual cow SCC's are an indicator of which cows are infected in the herd. SCC's can be used to make day to day management decisions; whether to dry off low yielding and high SCC cows early; assist with decisions on dry cow treatment strategy.

Repeat Mastitis

It is a common problem in mid lactation to get some cows with a stubborn case of mastitis that won't clear up despite repeat treatments with whatever antibiotic the farmer has in his drug cabinet. Success of treatment depends on a number of factors: - The bacteria cause the infection. Staph aureus is usually much more difficult to cure than a Strep infection. - The age of the cow.

Old cows with big udders and hard lumps in the quarter are very difficult to cure. - The previous mastitis history of the cow. The earlier you can treat an infection the greater the chance of success. - The length of time of the treatment. A course of three tubes of intramammary antibiotic is the minimum recommended dose for most products. - The effectiveness of the antibiotic against the bacteria you are trying to eliminate. Many strains of Staph aureus, for example, are resistant to penicillin. In most cases all you can realistically achieve by treating a persistent case is to make the infection sub-clinical i.e. reduce the swelling in the quarter and drop the SCC slightly. If you're really serious about a cure, take a milk sample (in an approved manner) before you treat the cow and put the sample in the freezer. You can then get the sample tested later if you need to.

It is also advisable to use an antibiotic in mid-lactation that is effective against both Staph and Streps. Don't be afraid to use more than 3 tubes. Also assess the cow in terms of age, production, and speed of milking, pregnancy status and other health problems. It may be more beneficial to dry her off and cull her rather than treat her and wind up with a sub-clinical source of infection for other cows in the herd.

Dog Worming

Don't forget we offer a working dog worming programme, sent direct on farm monthly or six weekly. We can also include flea control for your working dogs. Shortly we will have available multidose working dog flea control Packs which will be both convenient and Cheaper!

Ashburton Clinic

The Ashburton Clinic has proven to be a significant advance in the care we can offer both companion animals and working dogs.

Thank you to all of you who have supported the service we offer!!! We have a very modern surgery with both soft tissue and Orthopaedic capabilities. We have seen an upsurge in Working dog cruciate operations in the last month. Persistent hind limb lameness should always be checked out!! Dr Sandra Henke and her staff look forward to helping you with your Canine Problems!

Lepto Vaccination

Its that time of the year again when this very important part of your Animal Health plan needs to be completed. Replacement heifers and potential service bull calves need to be vaccinated twice four to six weeks apart. Thereafter annual vaccination is needed including any service bulls retained or in contact beef animals. Vaccine supply is likely to be under pressure due to the rise in Cattle numbers. Order early .

Kennel Cough

As many of you may have heard there has been an outbreak of kennel cough locally. This debilitating disease is not routinely vaccinated for in most working dogs except perhaps those competing in Dog Trials on a regular basis. Symptoms include a dry hacking cough, lethargy and respiratory signs. Treatment is available but we do recommend vaccination as a preventative. This is a very contagious disease and we would ask that you contact the clinic before presenting affected dogs for treatment.

Androvax

We have had a lot of enquiry regarding using this product With clients reducing sheep numbers in favour of just about everything maximizing fertility the remaining ewe flock is an important option. This vaccine results in on average a 20% increase in lambing. We don't recommend it's use in very high lambing percentage Flocks due to the increase in triplets and lowered survivability.

Contact the clinic for treatment programme and price if you are considering **Androvax** treatment needs to commence well before the start of tupping

Contacting the clinic after hours

After 5.30pm and before 8.00am all calls will be diverted to the Duty Vet. If the Duty vet is unable to answer please leave a detailed message with your phone number so we can get back to you ASAP. We aim to get back to you within 20minutes!