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# ewe MAIL

## JULY 2019

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A rather dry autumn came to a frosty end this year, with not all that much grass grown between February and June. I hope most of you are prepared with plenty of supplementary feed stored up for winter and spring!

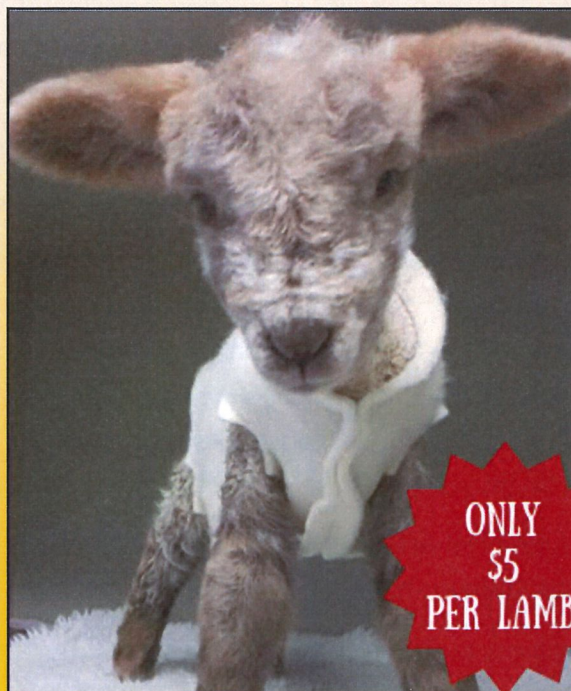
We have seen a range of lifestyle block ailments over the past couple of months with the most memorable being severe trauma to a pet Kunekunese ears after a dog attack, requiring extensive surgery, footrot in both goats and sheep, vomiting in a kunekune pig and countless cases of internal parasite burdens in all ruminant species. The coming months our work will largely be dominated by all things birth related!

We have a couple of changes this winter and spring. Charlotte one of our lovely large animal vets is now on maternity leave after giving birth to her beautiful little boy Hunter in May. She is temporarily replaced by Chris our wonderful ring in from the equine department. Chris is originally from Ireland, but studied in Scotland and worked in Wales before joining us in New Zealand. Chris will be giving us a hand over the calving season before he takes up a permanent position with our Equivets team in Masterton.

We have made a few changes to our lifestyle block dispense products this year; adding in a novel sheep (goat) and cattle drench called **Zolvix®**.

This is essential as a quarantine drench when animals are being brought onto your property. Scanda® the double active oral drench is now replaced by **Corporal®** which is essentially the same drench but twice the concentration, and we have also added a multi-species Lice and mite deterrent product called **VetMax Louse Powder**.

Ask us about our dispense products.



#### BOOK YOUR PET LAMBS IN TODAY FOR DOCKING AND CASTRATING

As this is a painful procedure we provide long-acting pain relief to all lambs.

All castrations are performed using local anaesthetic.

Lamb Vaccine is given to provide temporary protection against Tetanus and Pulp Kidney.

ASK US ABOUT FURTHER VACCINATIONS AT YOUR APPOINTMENT.

ONLY  
\$5  
PER LAMB!

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# Sheep/Doe Metabolics

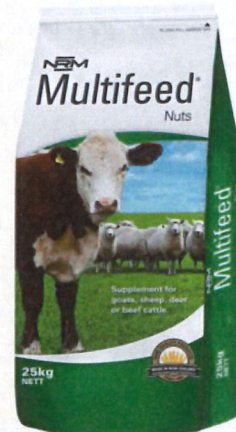
Prevention is crucial when it comes to metabolic disease, compared to dairy cows sheep and goats are more commonly at risk of metabolic diseases prior to lambing/kidding when their energy demands are the highest. Providing enough feed and reducing stressors can significantly reduce metabolic problems in late pregnancy and lactation.

## Pregnancy Toxaemia

This is more commonly known as **sleepy sickness**. It usually occurs in multiple bearing well conditioned ewes and does in late pregnancy and is generally initiated by a stressful event or poor nutrition. Stressors can include poor weather, inadequate shelter, poorly managed shearing/yarding practices in late pregnancy etc. These stressors reduce feed intake of the ewe/doe but will increase the energy demand.

Signs to look for:

- ⇒ Separation from the mob
- ⇒ Depression
- ⇒ Loss of appetite
- ⇒ Sitting down a lot/reluctance to rise
- ⇒ 'Wool pull', where the wool can be plucked easily from the fleece



Treatment of affected ewes includes removing the stressors as practical and providing energy.

This is more often as an oral energy supplement like Keto-Aid®, provided twice a day for a few days. Providing calcium borogluconate under the skin also helps with recovery (e.g. Glucalpos®). Sleepy sickness in valuable animals should always be seen by a vet (we can provide slightly different more drastic treatment protocols), but be aware that prognosis is always poor in advanced cases.

Prevention includes providing adequate nutrition and supplementary feed in late pregnancy (daily multifeed nuts are a great idea).

## Hypocalcaemia

This is more commonly known as **milk fever** and refers to a low blood calcium level. Heavily pregnant ewes require calcium for many functions, including muscle contraction, development of the foetal skeleton and milk production. Ewes are reliant on receiving calcium either through their diet or mobilising calcium from their skeleton. Milk fever will commonly occur in the couple of weeks leading up to lambing, but can occur post-lambing during lactation.

Signs to look for:

- ⇒ Ewes will stagger and progress to becoming cast
- ⇒ Depression
- ⇒ Loss of appetite

Treatment of affected ewes involves giving calcium borogluconate under the skin. The 100ml packs are no longer available but it is just as simple to buy a 500ml pack which is able to treat up to 5 ewes. The response is usually rapid, with the ewe showing signs of being bright and alert within about 30 minutes.

It is often advised to treat sleepy sickness and milk fever as the same as they can be difficult to distinguish from each other.

If you have multiple animals showing signs then please call and have a chat to one of our large animal veterinarians.





# Post Mortem Examination to Find Answers

Have you had sudden deaths in your cattle, abortions of unknown origin or persistently skinny sheep, despite vigilant worming programmes? We at SRVS would like to remind our clients that we do offer post mortem services at competitive prices. These procedures can be performed on farm or at our clinic in Bulls, however any carcasses brought to the clinic would incur an additional charge for handling and disposal.

Life and death is a part of the livestock farming cycle. In some cases the cause of death may be obvious, but in others it may not be clear. In these instances livestock keepers can be left worried or frustrated not knowing if further losses can be prevented.

Farm animal post mortem exams have become somewhat of an underused resource despite the many potential benefits for investigating disease outbreaks, abortions or sudden death amongst others.

- They can be an invaluable tool in investigating a flock or herd health issue by giving us valuable visible clues as to what the real problem is. This allows us to target subsequent treatment and management plans in the most effective manner.
- Many diseases can result in similar or vague signs of illness, so post mortem examinations may be the only way to differentiate between them.
- For diseases that result in sudden death, Post Mortem Examination may be the only reliable means of confirming the cause of death.
- In some cases the samples obtained during a Post Mortem Examination can be highly valuable in yielding information for the surviving members of a herd or group of animals.
- Post Mortem allows us to determine if a death is a one off occurrence or the first of an outbreak, without having to just wait and see if further deaths occur
- This type of surveillance enables any new or emerging diseases to be identified, thereby protecting your animals and the national herd.

Many livestock keepers have concerns that the price they pay for a Post Mortem exam will be wasting money if a diagnosis is not reached. This can be mitigated by ensuring any carcass presented for Post Mortem are as fresh as possible (within 24 hours of death) and as much of its history, as possible, is on hand. Although a diagnosis can never be guaranteed, there is always a value in knowing that certain diseases have been ruled out.

There is undoubtedly a cost associated with having a Post Mortem undertaken, but in the grand scheme of things, the benefit in terms of understanding the health status and disease profile of your flock or herd are likely to outweigh the costs.

If you would like any further information on the Post Mortem services we offer or the benefits that these services could be to your farm, please do not hesitate to contact our production animal team.



**WE HAVE YOUR Calf Care NEEDS COVERED**

MILK POWDER \* COLOSTRUM \* PROBIOTICS \* CALF COVERS \* TRUSTI-TUBERS & FEEDERS

The advertisement features a central image of three calves in a field. Surrounding this central image are various calf care products: a blue and white milk powder container, a blue and white colostrum container, a blue and white probiotic container, a blue calf cover, a blue Trusti-Tuber, and a blue feeder. The text 'WE HAVE YOUR Calf Care NEEDS COVERED' is prominently displayed in the center, and the list of products is at the bottom.



# Pre-Lambing/Kidding Checklist

## Shear ewes mid pregnancy ☐

- \* It seems almost cruel taking off a sheep's woolly fleece in the middle of winter but there is actually a very important reason for this and it is almost more important in healthy fat pregnant ewes on lifestyle blocks. As we discussed in the previous article pregnant ewes are at risk of developing Sleepy Sickness in late gestation. This disease develops when the amount of energy required to maintain fetal and bodily demands exceeds the energy being consumed and the ewe or doe starts to break down her own large fat reserves at an alarming rate. Therefore prevention is all about keeping the animal eating.
- \* A fully woolled fat ewe won't feel that much cold, this means her drive to eat is often less than an equivalent sized shorn animal (especially when it's raining and windy). Shearing in mid-pregnancy will increase energy demands and appetite, in turn increasing lamb birth weight and decreasing metabolic conditions in late pregnancy (if managed correctly).
- \* Ideally pre-lamb shear at least **6 weeks out** from lambing
- \* Only shear **healthy fat ewes** (skinny ewes won't gain any benefits)
- \* Keep off feed for as **short a time as possible**, otherwise you can increase the chance of metabolic disease!
- \* Provide access to **shelter** (e.g. tree sheltered paddock, barn, woolshed) for 2-3 weeks after shearing, especially if the weather turns bad.
- \* Provide lots of feed, lots of grass and supplementary sheep pellets after shearing.
- \* If it's too close to lambing or you don't want to shear your ewes, at least **crutch and belly** them pre-lamb to allow better cleaner access to the udder.

## Vaccinate ewes and does pre-lamb/kid ☐

- \* Unlike human babies, ruminant species are not born with any sort of a functioning immune system. For the first 8-12 weeks of life: calves, lambs and goat kids are only protected by the colostrum they received in the first 12-24 hours of life. Because we often dock and castrate lambs during this time they need added protection against the clostridial bugs, especially tetanus. To make sure this happens we booster vaccinate the ewes themselves prior to lambing to increase the number of antibodies in the colostrum.
- \* Booster vaccinate pregnant ewes and does with **Multine 5 in 1**® 2-4 weeks prior to lambing/kidding.
- \* If you miss the window and the ewe lambs less than 2 weeks after vaccination or you don't manage to get a vaccine into them at all, the lambs themselves can be given **Lamb Vaccine**® for temporary protection against tetanus and pulpy kidney at the time of docking/castration.



## Provide good quality high energy feed ☐

- \* As ewes and does get closer to lambing/kidding the babies start to take up more and more room in their abdomen (especially if they are carrying twins or triplets!). This means they can fit less and less feed into their rumen. If feeding bulky low quality feeds such as hay, poor quality silage and over mature grass, the ewe or doe simply cannot fit enough in her tummy per day to consume the energy she needs.
- \* Assess the pasture levels in your paddocks. Quality and quantity play a part here, very long mature pastures are often of low quality and obviously very short pastures don't have enough quantity of feed. We want lush green pasture of at least 1400-1600 Kg DM/Ha (4-5cm sward length).
- \* If your pasture quality and quantity don't appear to be adequate for lambing time then consider feeding a hard feed supplement such as **NRM multifeed nuts**.
- \* If you would like advice on whether you have enough feed to make it through the winter and lambing, talk to one of our production animal vets and they can work through a feed budget with you.





# Lambing/Kidding Tips

## How do I know when my ewe is starting to lamb?

Their udder will be 'bagged up' tightly with milk in the week prior to lambing/kidding.

Ewes and does getting close to lambing will often separate themselves from the flock and they will appear restless and uncomfortable.

Usually the first sign that lambing/kidding is underway is the appearance of the waterbag.

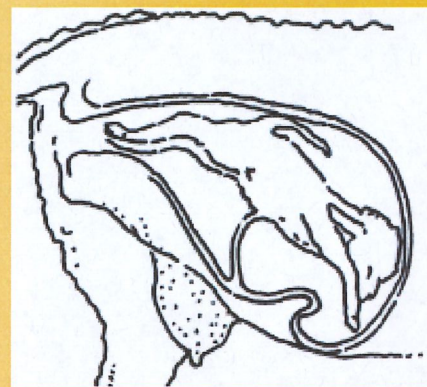
Under normal circumstances the lamb/kid is delivered head and front feet first, the whole process taking about half an hour.



## What are the signs my ewe/doe needs assistance lambing?

They need help if:

- Only one leg is visible.
- Only a head is visible.
- Only a tail is visible.
- The water bag has burst but no progress has been made for about an hour.
- There is persistent straining without progress for more than 30 minutes.



## If you decide to lend a hand here are a few golden rules...

- Be as clean as possible – wash hands and arms with a non-irritant disinfectant soap.
- Ensure you don't have long nails and remove your watch!
- Use plenty of lubricant.
- To correct a malpresentation it is usually necessary to push the lamb back in between the ewes straining.
- BE GENTLE – the uterus tears very easily!! When moving a head or leg inside the ewe it should be cupped in the hand to prevent damage to the uterus.
- Be sure that the legs belong to the same lamb.
- Do not pull a lamb if you have front feet but no head – it will not come.
- If you have removed one lamb always check for a second, and a third and a fourth!

Finally it is worth remembering that if a lamb has had a difficult birth it may not be on its feet and able to suckle for a few hours. In such cases it is worth milking some colostrum from the ewe and feeding it to the lamb via a stomach tube. Alternatively if the ewe has multiple lambs you may need to use frozen colostrum.

### Lambing kit essentials:

- Obstetrical lube
- Disinfectant
- Clean bucket for water
- Soft rope
- Towel



Great Product!

**Anatahi Trusti**

**Tuber** —get one instore

Many of these principles apply to calving a cow or kidding a goat too!

If they look uncomfortable, or have been straining or had a foot or head sticking out for more than 30 minutes to an hour, then they need assistance.



# Spring reminders

## Disbudding calves

Book in de-budding as soon as you can - spaces fill up fast! The ideal time to disbud calves is at 3 weeks of age, when they are small enough to handle easily and their horn buds are still quite small, but we can still do them up until 8 weeks of age. They must be a minimum of 2 weeks old. All calves get local anaesthetic before de-budding and we highly recommend giving them a long-acting anti-inflammatory for pain relief following the procedure.

If you don't plan on using us for this service then please be aware that the laws are changing as of the 1<sup>st</sup> of October this year. After this date all calves require the use of an appropriately placed local anaesthetic by a trained person before disbudding/horn bud removal is performed, regardless of method. Therefore caustic pastes such as **Hornex** will no longer be acceptable.



## BIOSUPPORT

For those of you that have been 'yoghurtising' milk replacer to reduce abomasal bloat in lambs, this is a product for you! Biosupport is a dairy based animal supplement that contains powerful probiotic suspended in dry milk powder. It contains a patented probiotic that can aid in enhancing the immune system and help promote the gut health of young animals. Biosupport is suitable to add to liquid milk or milk replacer from newborn age. Being a powder, the good bacteria lie dormant until introduced to liquid, meaning no bacteria degradation.

Contains patented Fonterra manufactured probiotic *Bifi do bacterium Animalis* WO 99/10476 Bacterial count of one billion good bacteria per gram

- Good solubility and flow properties
- 100% dairy milk powder
- Readily digestible
- 18-month shelf life from time of opening



Mixing rate is 1g/litre of warm milk – approx. 38°C, then feed cooled. 1kg Biosupport treats 1000L milk which is roughly enough to rear 20 lambs. We will stock 1kg tubs.



## Lamb Supplies

**IN STORE NOW**

- Anlamb milk powder 5, 10 & 20kg
- Woolover lamb covers
- Jumpstart colostrum
- Bottles & teats
- Biosupport Probiotics

**NEW**

## Castration & Tail Docking

These are painful procedures and should ideally be done as young as possible. If performing these procedures yourself make sure you include both testicles in the ring (it can be difficult in very young lambs) and dock the tail so it is long enough to cover the vulva of a female lamb and the equivalent length in a male.

Make sure your lambs received colostrum from ewes that were booster vaccinated with a 5 in 1 type vaccine pre-lamb. Or alternatively give **Lamb Vaccine®** at the time of docking.

We provide these services at clinic with gold standard pain relief (refer to advert on front page).

Legally these procedures must be carried out before the lamb is 6 months old but ideally they should be done before 1 month of age.

## Vaccinations

Lambs, goat kids and calves all benefit from vaccination against the most common sudden death syndromes (i.e. clostridial diseases) provided with **Multine® 5 in 1** vaccine.

Vaccination programs can commence at docking time.