

BARBER'S POLE WORM

Sadly we have already seen and heard of multiple sheep and goats affected by Barbers Pole Worm on lifestyle blocks this year. These worms can be rapidly fatal, particularly to lambs and kids, and are not an issue when the correct drench is used.

- Barbers Pole Worms favour similar conditions to facial eczema spores—warm and moist. We often see cases of it in mid/late summer and autumn when the nights start to get dewy or the ground becomes wet after rain, but this is not a hard and fast rule! Even when the weather seems hot and dry, often when we put our hands down at ground level it feels very humid—perfect for worm larvae (and don't forget facial eczema spores!)
- Adult worms attach to the lining of the stomach and feed on the animal's blood.
- Affected animal's don't 'look wormy' or have a scour.
- Sheep and goats can die quickly before you even have a chance to save them. They become severely anaemic—the main signs are **lethargy** and **pale gums/eyelids**, which can quickly progress to **death**.
- The only drench active that has persistent activity against Barbers Pole Worm is **moxidectin**—other drenches will kill the Barbers Pole Worms inside the animal at the time of drenching but there is no persistent activity, so as soon as the animal eats pasture again the Barbers Pole Worms will begin multiplying inside of them once more.
- The drench of choice at this time of year for sheep and goats is **Trimox** (a triple combination containing moxidectin, only available in 5L or larger, dose rate is 1ml/5kg liveweight) or **Exodus** (a moxidectin drench) which is sold in 250ml dispense packs (dose rate is 1ml/5kg liveweight). This drench prevents against reinfection with Barbers Pole Worm for 35 days.



Did you know...?

They get their name from their red and white striped appearance—the red is from the blood in their gut system and the white is from eggs in their uterus!



Microscopic view of Barbers Pole Worm eggs—a single adult worm in the stomach can produce 10,000 eggs per day. These eggs are then excreted in the host animal's faeces, hatch while on the pasture and can be ingested again by an animal grazing the grass.. At which point each of those worm ingested can lay 10,000 more eggs each, and so on!!



Left: The gum colour of a normal sheep

Right: A sheep with severe anaemia (note how pale the gums are!) due to Barbers Pole Worm.

If you find any sheep or goats at this time of year with gums like the picture on the right, you must drench them ASAP with a product that contains moxidectin or closantel! Severe anaemia is rapidly fatal.



ewe MAIL

FEBRUARY 2019

What's Inside

Facial Eczema season	2
Urolithiasis in goats	3
Blackhead in Turkeys	4
Trace elements	5
Flystrike	5
Barber's Pole Worm	6

233 State Highway 1, Bulls
48 Tutaenui Road, Marton
Email: team@srvs.co.nz
www.srvs.co.nz
Tel (06) 3222 333
Find us on Facebook

SERVICE • RESPECT • VALUE • SCIENCE

It's difficult to believe we are already a couple of months into 2019 - the days are getting shorter and the nights are getting longer! Our large animal vets are busy doing a lot of pregnancy testing of cows at the moment, as well as attending to a few sick animals along the way.

This summer has been very different to last year, with a huge difference in rainfall and subsequently grass growth has been very slow. The dry conditions have meant that facial eczema spore counts have generally been low around the district, however there were still a couple of sites near Marton above the trigger level a few weeks ago. Spore counts can skyrocket very quickly if we get some rain or even as the nights get more dewy, so **we recommend zinc bolusing sheep and lambs now** to give protection as we go into autumn.

We have been seeing a lot of fatal cases of barbers pole worm in sheep and goats on lifestyle properties this year. We can't stress enough that **at this time of year for sheep and goats you must be using a drench that contains moxidectin** eg. Exodus, Cydectin Oral for sheep, Trimox or Vetdectin drench. Drenches such as Scanda/Matrix/Evolve/Alliance/Panacur/Ivomec on their own are not appropriate drenches to use in sheep and goats over the next couple of months.

The best way to tackle these diseases is to prevent them before they become a problem! If you are unsure whether your current animal health program is suitable, please contact us at the clinic to discuss.



FACIAL ECZEMA SEASON

Facial eczema is a severe disease, in which we always describe the visible damage of facial eczema as the tip of the iceberg—once you can see the skin lesions on your livestock, serious damage has already been done to the liver.

We typically see the spore counts rise in autumn, so the time to protect your livestock is now if you haven't already! You can always check on our website for the current status of the facial eczema spore counts for the region <http://www.srvs.co.nz/Resource-Centre>

The first sign that a sheep has clinical facial eczema is floppy, swollen ears. If not protected from sunlight this will progress to swelling around the eyes and nose as well, with the skin becoming cracked and raw—an extremely painful condition. The worst part is skin lesions are only the tip of the iceberg, but they are what everybody sees on the outside. Facial eczema studies show that, if about 3% of the herd/mob is showing skin lesions, then up to 50% can have liver damage, which is where the real impact occurs. The liver is an essential part of many metabolic processes. Animals can vary from being asymptomatic —> to having severe, painful skin lesions —> to death from liver damage. The long term effects of liver damage are sometimes not seen until times of physiological stress eg. pregnancy, lambing, feeding offspring, when the ewe can waste away or even die from the long term damage.

Minimizing the impact of facial eczema can be achieved by:

- Administering zinc, either in the form of an oral bolus or through feed/water. If you haven't started supplementation, now is the time to take action.
- Pasture spraying with fungicides to prevent fungal growth. This works best when applied to growing pastures.
- Pasture management – Ensure animals are grazing to target residuals (grazing too low increases the number of spores ingested) and avoid any paddocks that you know are 'hot' when spore counts are high (these are often sheltered, lower lying areas).



Once there the liver is damaged there is no magic fix – all we can do is provide supportive therapy to give the animal the best chance possible. Anti-inflammatories and anti-histamines help reduce the pain of skin lesions. Sheep with skin lesions must be given protection from sunlight, either by applying a sun-blocking cream daily to affected areas (eg. Filtabac®), putting on a sheep cover or giving access to a shed or trees for shade—shutting the animal in

a stable or enclosed shed during daylight hours with food and water, and letting them out at night only achieves the best results for preventing further skin damage and allowing the skin to heal. Liver-aid is a tonic that can be given orally to support liver function.

Give us a call about the options for controlling facial eczema and getting on top of this disease to protect your beloved animals.

Remember, prevention is always better than treatment.



TRACE ELEMENTS

Deficiencies in trace elements are a common cause of ill thrift in young cattle and sheep. The Rangitikei region generally has very low levels of selenium and often low levels of copper. Where animals have not received any supplementation with selenium and copper we sometimes find their reserves are very low to almost non-existent! Livestock with trace element deficiencies will have very slow growth rates and poor immune function which makes them more susceptible to a range of diseases.

Recommendations for supplementation:

- **Copper:** Cattle that are 100-200kg—10g copper bolus; Cattle that are 200kg and over—20g copper bolus every 6-12 months.
- **Selenium:** Selovin LA® injection every 6-12 months.

We generally do not recommend the use of lick blocks as the primary source of trace elements because some individuals in the mob will lick them a lot, and others won't even touch them at all, which can create a huge variation in trace element levels within a mob and means some animals miss out altogether.

Please discuss the requirements of your livestock with one of our vets, to ensure the program you are using is appropriate for your property.

PREVENT FLYSTRIKE BEFORE IT HAPPENS

The flies are out in force and we are seeing animals getting flystrike left, right and centre. Wounds and damp/dirty wool are particularly predisposed but **one type of fly will even strike clean wool**, so use of a preventative fly product is key. Most flystrike products will kill maggots but will not provide long-lasting protection—which is where a product like **Zapp Encore®** comes in. Zapp Encore® will give approximately two months protection from flystrike and can also be used to treat maggots—an ideal 2-in-1 product for small block holders!



From this...



...To this

In only a matter of days



Flystrike is an animal welfare issue

Zapp Encore is an easy to use pour-on product that prevents fly strike and can also be used to treat flystrike if necessary.

Zapp Encore packs are available for hire from both clinics if you don't wish to buy a full pack



Give your dogs a treat on a hot summer day!

Into an old ice cream container chop up a carrot, an apple, pieces of cooked beef or chicken—use your imagination—what-ever your dog loves to eat. Then make up a meaty stock with either a beef or chicken stock cube and allow it to cool. Pour the liquid over the chopped veggies and/or meat and freeze. This dog-sized ice block will keep them occupied for ages while they lick away at their treat and help to keep them cool in the meantime!

Why not get adventurous—try them with a frozen banana (with the peel removed), or freeze baby food (without onion powder) in mini muffin tins to give a small treat now and then. You can even freeze eggs as a treat—toss an egg or two into the blender (shells as well) and blitz into a paste then spoon into an ice cube container and freeze. (Do not give more than 1 per day though, to ensure proper nutrient absorption.)

Finally, why not try frozen natural yoghurt—just as good for their tummies as it is for ours! Freeze in muffin tins or in an ice cube container.



Urolithiasis in goats

Male goats, especially those castrated at a young age, are prone to an often deadly disease called Urolithiasis. This disease occurs when calculi or ‘stones’ are formed in the bladder and get stuck in the goats small urethra during urination. These stones can completely block the passage of urine leading to a life threatening uraemia and possible bladder rupture. The treatment of these cases almost always involves very specialised surgery which is most successful if performed early in the course of disease. Therefore it very important that you identify the problem early. Goats don’t always show the classic signs of straining and pain, but they will nearly always go off their food. If you have a male goat that is looking sad but otherwise doesn’t appear too uncomfortable, it is always a good idea to move it into a dry, unbedded area to assess urine production prior to calling us out. The absence of urine makes this an emergency and it is always better for us to know you have a suspicion they can’t urinate as it isn’t always easy to diagnose on farm without this information. We also might prefer that you bring them to the clinic for further tests rather than us coming out.

We have improved our in house parasite diagnostic tools!!

We can now perform faecal floats on cat, dog and bird faeces in house. This means we can assess the presence of internal parasites (nematodes and coccidia) in poultry flocks prior to deworming to evaluate if there is an actual need for treatment. For this test we require fresh faecal samples collected from a number of your birds (different age ranges) brought into the clinic for examination. In house means faster turn around times and less cost than sending samples to the lab!



Blackhead (Histomoniasis) a deadly Turkey disease

Did you know that chickens and turkeys shouldn’t be kept together? This isn’t because of differing nutritional or social needs, it is quite simply due to one single protozoan parasite: *Histomonas meleagridis*. Infection with this parasite is called Histomoniasis or Blackhead disease, it is almost always deadly to turkeys and will only occasionally cause disease in chickens.



This single celled parasite is primarily transferred between birds by its intermediate host, the common poultry caecal worm, *Heterakis gallinarium*. When infection is picked up by a chicken the parasite enters this nematode in the caecum (if present) and is then passed out inside the eggs and larvae of this worm. *H.gallinarium* larvae can also be consumed by earth worms which can then themselves become infective to birds. If turkeys (especially young turkeys) happen to eat these infected eggs, larvae, or earthworms, the protozoa leaves its intermediate nematode host in the ceca replicates and causes damage through necrosis of the caecum and liver. Signs of Histomoniasis are apparent in turkeys 7-12 days after infection and include listlessness, reduced appetite, drooping wings, unkempt feathers, yellow coloured droppings/diarrhoea and in young birds likely death within a few days.



There are no approved effective treatments for Histomoniasis, which is why prevention is always better than cure. Ideally chickens and turkeys should not be housed together and if you want to remove all risk, turkeys should not be run on pasture that has housed chickens in the last three years. This is because the Protozoa can live for a very long time in infective larvae both on pasture and in its separate earthworm host. If you do wish to keep these two species together then all birds should be wormed on a regular basis (every 2 months). Worming with a product such as Flubavet® effectively kills the intermediate host (*H.gallinarium*) removing the main source of infection. All new poultry arriving into your flock should also be quarantine drenched with this

product, and held away from the flock for the duration of treatment (7 days). The benefit of this dewormer is its addition to feed rather than water and its NIL egg withhold. Other measures to prevent the spread of parasites in poultry, such as providing hygienic feed and water stations and always keeping litter and runs clean and topped up, should always be taken.

This disease is found throughout New Zealand but not on every property, which explains why many people do manage to raise chickens and turkeys together successfully. It is however a big risk and once in your flock the mortality rate in young turkeys can near 100% so prevention measures should always be taken.

We often get clients coming in wanting us to diagnose what is killing their poultry without ever seeing an animal, this is obviously near on impossible. If you are having unexplained deaths in your flock please try and keep a freshly dead animal if you find one. Post-mortem examination is one of the best ways to get a diagnosis in poultry deaths. Fresh chilled bodies are best but if this isn’t possible a diagnosis can often been made on birds that have been frozen as well. At certain times of the year this service can sometimes be free as bodies can be sent to Massey Veterinary Necropsy for teaching purposes.