

Bloat in hand-reared lambs

For all of you that raise pet lambs for your kids, abomasal bloat is a relatively common health issue in young orphan lambs. It is caused by an overgrowth of gas-producing bacteria in the abomasum. It is thought this happens when lambs are allowed to drink too much, too quickly. Early intervention is critical, as once it starts, the process is very rapid. Signs include a swollen belly and a dull lamb. Often they will be reluctant to drink. The pressure of the bloated abomasum can cause heart/lung failure and, if not caught in time, the abomasum ruptures causing the lamb to die.

Tips for preventing bloat in lambs:

- Feed the milk and yoghurt mixture **cold**. Warm milk entering the stomach provides bacteria with an ideal environment for growth and fermentation. Warm milk with yoghurt will not effectively prevent abomasal bloat.
- Add one tablespoon of plain natural acidophilus yoghurt per 100ml of milk and mix well.
- Start the lamb on soft teats then, once feeding well, move to harder teats to control milk flow – old, corroded teats or teats that are overly soft can allow the milk to flow too quickly.
- Use a compartment feeder if feeding multiple lambs together.
- Adjust feed volumes slowly.

Treating abomasal bloat:

- Dissolve as much baking soda as you can in 10ml of water and feed orally.
- Dosing with cooking oil may help.
- Administer antibiotics – give 3ml of procaine penicillin orally.
- Our vets can attempt to deflate and de-rotate the abomasum by piercing the abomasum with a needle under local anaesthetic.
- Prevention is the best medicine!!



Drenching Weaners

Weaner cattle have a number of different internal parasites. The most important ones are ostertagia, cooperia and T axei. The problem with these worms is that they are not all killed by one drench family therefore using single active drenches (e.g. abamectin) is not appropriate in cattle less than a year old. Ostertagia is easily killed by MLs (the mectin family), but are very resistant to levamisole (clear drench). The exact opposite is true for cooperia—it is very easily killed by levamisole but resistant to MLs. The BZ family is average at best at killing them. There is NZ data available that shows that cooperia is a growth limiting parasite. If your cattle have a cooperia burden they will have poorer growth rates. Once cattle are over 15 months they build an immune response to cooperia and it is no longer an issue therefore single actives can be used in older cattle.

For these reasons it is very important to make sure that when you are drenching your weaner cattle (up to 1 year old) you use at least a double combination drench (or a triple). Single actives will not do the job. Options of drenches that we stock are:

Orals: Scanda®, Corporal®, Converge®, Oxfen C Plus®, Arrest® C, or Matrix® C (triple)

Injection: Boss®

Pour on: Boss®, Eclipse®



JULY 2017



SUNDAY ROAST

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Once again lambing and calving are on our front doorstep. With lambs and calves on the ground already, make sure you are prepared for any situation to occur. With the excellent season we had early on, ewe condition has been well up from previous years, resulting in good scanning rates and in turn good lambing percentages.

Beef scanning has finished and results have been excellent throughout the district. These results reflect the great condition cows have been in this year. One herd had an empty rate of 2.5%, with an overall average of cows pregnancy tested at 6% empty. These results are a huge improvement over the last few years with the average being 8.2%, 10% and 12.7% for the previous 3 years.

Earlier you will have received a pre-lamb order form , so please ensure you fill it in and return it to Marieke as soon as practical. We have completed plenty of animal health plans throughout the year, so if you were interested in getting one done or were wanting to find out more about them please get in touch with us so we can get on to it.

This year we have seen and heard of many cases of lambs and weaners with high worm burdens. A common mistake still being made is drenching young cattle (under 12 months of age) with a single active abamectin pour-on—this is a recipe for disaster! These cattle require at least a double combination drench that contains levamisole. Ideally they will receive a double or triple action drench every 28 days through the high risk periods (particularly autumn).

Interesting facts:

- The salivary glands of cattle, located beneath the tongue, produce up to 50-60L per day
- The average cow moves its jaw roughly 40,000 times every day.

Sheep Metabolics

Prevention is crucial when it comes to metabolic disease. 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**. This usually occurs in multiple bearing ewes in late pregnancy and is initiated by a stressful event or poor nutrition. Stressors can include a combination of pre-lamb shearing, inadequate shelter, or a falling plane of nutrition in the last two months of pregnancy. These stressors reduce feed intake of the ewe but will increase the energy demand.

Signs to look for:

- Separation from the mob
- Depression
- Loss of appetite
- ‘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).

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
- When down they will often have their head positioned around towards their flank

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.



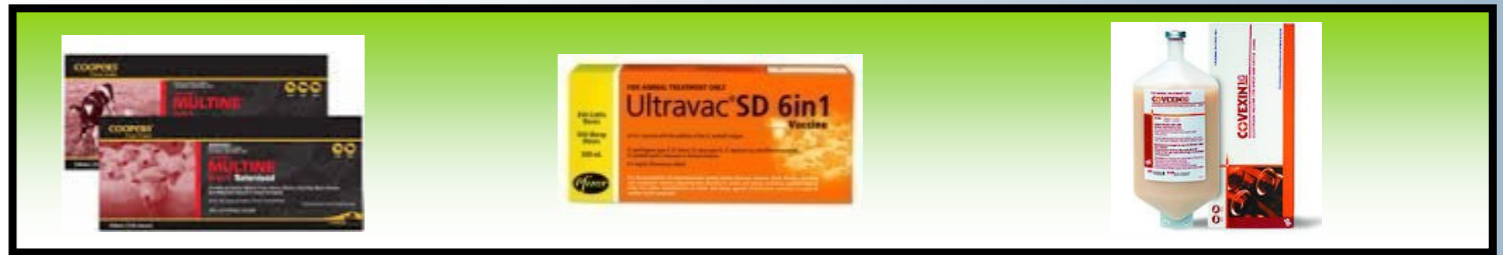
Clostridial Vaccination Pre-lamb

These days it is very common practice to give a 5 in 1 vaccine to ewes prior to lambing. This enriches their colostrum with clostridial antibodies which the lamb drinks. These provide the lamb with protection against clostridial disease until they have a functioning immune system, after they themselves are old enough to be vaccinated.

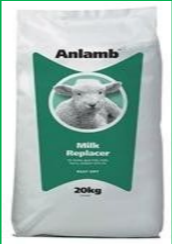
5 in 1 provides antibodies against the 5 major clostridial diseases such as pulpy kidney, tetanus, black leg, black disease and malignant oedema.

Increasingly however, farmers are finding that sudden deaths are occurring on their farm despite the use of 5 in 1 vaccine. The main reason for this is that other clostridial diseases can still occur—there are many more than 5 in 1 does not provide any protection for. The most common is *Clostridium sordellii* which is the pathogen implicated in causes of ‘sudden death syndrome’.

Ultravac® 6 in 1 and Covexin 10 in 1 are premium clostridial vaccines that provide protection against the standard 5 in 1 pathogens, as well as *Cl. Sordellii* and other less common clostridial diseases. These vaccines are a great option for farms that already have a very good 5 in 1 vaccination programme but are still losing stock due to sudden deaths.



Anlamb Milk Replacer



Anlamb

5kg—\$49.20

10kg—\$69.90



Ancalf

20kg—\$98.18



Jumpstart Colostrum

600gm—\$25.70

Newborn Colostrum

Please note prices are exclusive of GST

Lamb cover woolovers

Perfect to keep your pet lambs warm this winter

\$5.50 each



Rumetrace—Magnesium Bolus

Grass Staggers (hypomagnesaemia) is a metabolic disease that primarily affects adult lactating cows. Grass Staggers is caused by a deficiency in magnesium. Unlike calcium, body stores of magnesium cannot be mobilised in times of high demand or in response to low blood levels. This means that cattle are dependent on an adequate daily intake of magnesium to meet metabolic requirements.

Grass Staggers can be rapidly fatal. In extreme circumstances the first sign can be up to 20 – 30% of the cow herd found dead. More commonly, initial signs of restlessness, increased alertness, and suddenly running for no apparent reason are observed. When disturbed, cows may bellow and walk with an unusual gait. These signs can rapidly lead to uncoordinated staggers and convulsions, often leading to death unless immediate treatment is provided.

Many factors can contribute to Grass Staggers. During lactation the magnesium demands of the cow are sharply increased, as magnesium is an integral component in the production of each litre of milk. Cows over 4 years are most at risk as their milk production is higher than younger cows, as are higher producing cows, or those with twin calves at foot. Grass Staggers most often occurs when lactating cows are grazing lush, rapidly growing pasture with low dry matter (DM) and low magnesium content. The risk is further increased if potash or nitrogen fertilisers have been used on the pasture, as the resultant grass is often lush with lower DM content, and also potassium can interfere with magnesium absorption from the diet. Cases of Grass Staggers or deaths are frequently preceded by a period of reduced feed intake; perhaps caused by inclement weather, yarding or transport.

For some herds, the best option for magnesium supplementation is Rumetrace® Magnesium Capsules. This is especially the case in situations where dusting the pasture or hay with magnesium oxide is difficult or impractical water reticulation infrastructure does not allow water trough treatment, access to free water means cows will not drink water from treated troughs daily observation and/or supplementary feeding of cows is not undertaken.

Rumetrace® Magnesium Capsules are made from a specific magnesium alloy. The specially designed rubber hinge closes into a cylindrical bolus for administration into the rumen. Once in the rumen the capsule opens out to a flat shape with two semi-cylindrical magnesium portions adhered, minimising likelihood of regurgitation.

The rubber hinge of the Capsule also acts as a conductor. The interaction between this conducting rubber (cathode) and the magnesium alloy (anodes) drives the release of magnesium from the Capsule. The magnesium released from the Capsule is fully available for absorption by the cow. Also important is that magnesium (in this Mg^{++} form) is only absorbed in the rumen of cows. In contrast, magnesium in feed and other supplements must first be extracted and solubilised in the rumen, before becoming available as Mg^{++} and hence only a relatively low proportion of magnesium from these sources is absorbed before passing from the rumen.

Rumetrace Magnesium Capsules release magnesium at a constant rate over a 9 – 12 week period. They must be administered a few days ahead of when they are required, to allow time for the electrolytic reaction to get underway. The capsules provide around 2 grams of available magnesium per day. This compares to the daily available magnesium requirement of 1.5g for a beef cow producing 10L of milk per day. These figures do not take into account the antagonistic interference in the rumen by minerals such as potassium. Magnesium Capsules are a supplement to augment dietary magnesium intake, and can be considered ‘insurance’ to minimise the seasonal risk and impact of Grass Staggers.



Arthritis in the Working Dog

Winter has arrived and now is the time that our working dogs start to feel any aches and pains just that little bit more. Our dogs are often the most valuable members of the team and one of the main reasons for having to retire them as they get older is the onset of debilitating arthritis. The pain and stiffness in their joints, often their hips, reduces their ability and eagerness to work.

The mainstay of arthritis treatment has been providing pain relief through the use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. There are a couple of options for these – tablets such as Previcox or Rimadyl can be given daily or there is a drug called Trocoxil which only needs to be given monthly. These are prescription medicines so a consultation with one of our small animal vets is required if you think any of your dogs might benefit from pain relief.



4cyte Canine is a joint supplement for dogs which contains Epitalis, a plant oil extract patented for its ability to aid in cartilage regeneration when treating mild to moderate arthritis. It also includes green lipped mussel, abalone and marine cartilage. 4cyte Canine is suitable for long term use with no known side effects and they offer guaranteed palatability or your money back.

Soft dry bedding in kennels prevents pressure sores and helps to prevent arthritis. Early onset arthritis is often associated with hard, cold or wet beds. This can easily be prevented by providing a well insulated bed of dry straw or a sack mat/ other dog bed in their kennel. Some farmers have even bought their working dogs toasty warm Weatherbeeta dog covers to keep their team warm at night! Check the kennels for any little holes and gaps which let in rain and cold air – trying to keep warm in winter is wasted energy which you need to replace with food.

BVD and the PI animal

BVD is a complex disease and can present as many different disease syndromes. The most important form both a disease impact, and for disease control, is the PI (Persistently Infected) animal. This results when a pregnant animal is infected for the first time when she is between 45 and 120 days pregnant. At this critical time the virus can infect the foetus and effectively become “part” of the developing calf—so that the calf’s immune system doesn’t then recognise the virus as being “foreign”.

So these PI calves when born effectively are virus factories—excreting masses of the virus and potentially exposing all the cattle they come in contact with to BVD. They are, however, prone to other infections and so usually die between 6 and 18 months of age. They commonly present as poor doers—animals that always look like they need a drench etc. Blood tests and/or post mortems are needed to accurately diagnose the condition. Accurate diagnosis of the condition is important to a) rule out other causes and b) decide on the best control options in your herd.

Primary vaccinations should be given as close as possible to 4 weeks before start of mating.

Pre-lamb Drenching - yes or no?

At this time of year farmers are bombarded by marketing campaigns designed to convince them to use a range of long acting pre-lamb drench treatments—all you need to do is watch a rugby game at prime to see what we mean! Unsurprisingly it has become the perception of many farmers that these treatments always produce bigger ewes, bigger lambs and less daggs all round. But with the risk of accelerated drench resistance being evident, are they really a return on investment?

Many farmers are very aware of the justification behind using drench products in their ewes pre-lamb. That is due to the peri-parturient relaxation in immunity of the ewes, leading to a rise in worm burden and faecal egg output around lambing time. In many situations drenching at this time is not only beneficial for the ewes but also for their lambs. However, the products available are not made equal.

For many obvious reasons it is not advisable to yard ewes any later than 2-3 weeks prior to lambing. This means short acting products, such as oral drenches, will simply not be persistent enough to have much of an effect on the peri-parturient rise. They do however have a place in treating existing infections. So if you have a problem with high winter worm burdens they may be beneficial at this time.

One option is long acting (LA) moxidectin based injections (e.g. Exodus LA®, Eweguard®). They can have a beneficial effect on the peri-parturient rise, are quite cheap on a per head basis and are easy to administer. However, they also pose the greatest risk to the development of drench resistance; being a single active and also having a ‘tail’ like effect of decreasing product levels in the animal. If you wish to use these products it is pertinent you know your farms drench resistance status so you can properly assess whether the product will actually work and that you follow our guidelines for the safe use of pre-lamb anthelmintics.

The other option is controlled release capsules (CRC’s). These are specially designed to deliver a constant rate of product at therapeutic levels over a 100 day period. They are far superior to oral drenches and LA injections when it comes to pre-lamb drench treatments. They have been proven to deliver results and aren’t as risky when it comes to drench resistance if compared with LA injections. There are many products available on the market with most being single actives, thus knowing your drench resistance status again is essential for these to be useful. If drench status is somewhat unknown the only option is the double active Bionic capsule which contains abamectin and albendazole.

A few guidelines for the safe use of pre-lamb anthelmintics:

Good conditioned ewes and good pasture covers at lambing time are far superior to any pre-lamb drench treatments.

If you can get this right then there is often no benefit in using pre-lamb drenches.

Never drench all ewes in a mob. Even though trials have shown that no matter the body condition of the ewes all are affected equally by parasites, and thus all show a positive response to treatment; this benefit is probably more economical when applied to only the tail enders in the mob. For this reason we recommend targeted treatment, selecting only those ewes that require the extra help e.g. low BCS ewes (1’s and 2’s), in lamb hoggets, twinning 2-tooths and triplet bearing ewes.

Maintain refugia! This goes hand in hand with number 2, a proportion of every mob should be left un-drenched so the worms they produce have never been exposed to the pre-lamb drench. This will help preserve your drenches and slow the overall development of drench resistance on your farm.

Exit drenches should be used especially after using single active and long acting products.

Monitor FEC’s during treatment to assess whether the product is working. This means doing FEC’s at roughly 60-80 days post capsule administration and roughly 30 days post LA injection.

Consider whether trace element supplementation is actually all you need. Recent trial data has shown that on some farms a proportion of the production benefits seen from the pre-lamb drench treatments can simply be put down to the trace elements they contain. Supplementation could be a much cheaper way to increase the performance of your ewes this spring.

New look clinic and website

If you have visited us in the last week or so we have changed just a little bit. The Bulls clinic is freshly painted, with the Marton clinic being completed at the moment, so it’s hard to miss us now. Another new change is our website. Jump on and have a look at www.srvs.co.nz and also check out our resource centre for information on almost anything animal health.



Staff Profile - MICHELLE SIMPSON

Michelle is our Production Department Manager and has been at SRVS for 6 years. She has been in the animal health industry for a long time, having worked at both pathology laboratories in Palmerston North and then as a Territory Manager. She is currently studying towards a Diploma in Agribusiness Management and really enjoying it.

Michelle, her husband and 2 children live on Potaka Station where her husband manages. The family love getting out and about over the farm on the weekends and their 5 year old is well-trained to open the gates!

Michelle is enjoying her first season (for a long time!) of netball and although her horse is no longer able to be ridden, she likes looking at him in the paddock.

Michelle loves balancing work and family life and really loves working with the team here at SRVS.

