



Tararua Vets Client

# XMAS BBQ

Tararua Vets would like to thank our clients and unwind for Xmas.

**Pongaroa**      **Pahiatua**  
Thurs 8th Dec      Fri 16th Dec  
BBQ from 5.30pm      BBQ 4.30 - 7.30pm

**Dannevirke**  
Look out for a date in February

## Holiday hours

	Pahiatua	Dannevirke
Sat 24 Dec	Closed	10-12
Sun 25 Dec - Tues 27 Dec	Closed	Closed
Wed 28 Dec - Fri 30 Dec	8-5	8-5
Sat 31 Jan	Closed	10-12
Sun 01 Jan - Tues 3 Jan	Closed	Closed
Wed 4 Jan - Fri 06 Jan	8-5	8-5

Please note we have a 24-hour emergency service if required:

06 376 8046 Pahiatua  
06 374 6062 Dannevirke

## Don't forget the weaners!

**Greg Smith**

After weaning it is easy to overlook your replacements as they are no longer on the daily radar, but don't make the mistake of out-of-sight being out-of-mind!

Weaners face multiple challenges and the potential impact of them on health and growth are significant. Just relying on casting your eye over them whilst moving them to a new paddock is not enough – daily, or at the least every other day, paddock checks are recommended.

### MONITOR WEIGHTS

Weight gain is the most sensitive indicator of health and performance. A reduced gain is a prompt to investigate. If feed has not been limiting then check stock more closely for signs of disease. If there are no overt signs testing can be used to detect the underlying cause before losses are more significant.

### CAUSES OF POOR PERFORMANCE

- Weaners are very sensitive to feed quality and should have access to the best that is available. Move them regularly so they are able to selectively graze the pasture on offer and use other stock classes to clean up the less palatable parts.
- Parasitism is the most common problem and should not be underestimated. Areas

that are used every year for replacements can carry high levels of the infective L3 larvae. Seasonal factors (regular rainfall and mild temperatures) also contribute to a high parasite challenge. Ensure regular monthly drenching using a combination oral product for best results.

- Don't assume that diarrhoea is always worms. Outbreaks of disease such as Bovine Virus Diarrhoea (BVD), Coccidiosis and Yersinia can occur. Diarrhoea that persists after a drench and poor weight gains may be the only indication that you have a problem.
- Trace element deficiencies can also affect this age group with similar symptoms and/or be a contributing factor to the problems already described.

Other diseases to be aware of include facial eczema (risk period normally January to April) and polioencephalomalacia (more common over summer months) which causes sporadic cases of nervous symptoms or sudden death.

### VACCINATION

Vaccination against Clostridial diseases (to prevent sudden deaths) and Leptospirosis (to help mitigate serious risk to human health) with Ultravac® 7-in-1 is wise and, additionally, also give serious consideration to BVD vaccination.

**Contact your vet to discuss the best options for your heifer replacements and ensure you have a solid animal health plan in place for your young stock.**



# Looking ahead

Potential animal health issues, tasks to consider and reminders for **December** and **January**...

## Dairy

- Book in for early pregnancy scanning, ideally six weeks after end of artificial insemination - **article P3**.
- Clinical mastitis - monitor cows and be aware of rising bulk milk somatic cell count

particularly if using relief milkers over the holiday period.

- Continue with excellent weaner management - drench regularly, weigh to monitor growth rates, consider the need for trace mineral supplementation and ensure adequate nutrition - **article P1**.
- Facial eczema season may begin early so, weather depending, plan to start preventative zinc treatment in January - **article P4**.
- Once we actually get some summer sun lameness may become an issue as ground

## Tararua Vets jumps aboard social media train!

**Moana Paewai**

Well, we've finally done it! Tararua Vets has moved into the 21st century and opened our own Facebook page!

Visit our page at [www.facebook.com/TararuaVets](https://www.facebook.com/TararuaVets) and take a look... 'Like' and 'Share' our page and be in the draw to win three Seresto collars from Bayer Animal Health and a ham on the bone.

Our aim is to keep you up-to-date with posts on current animal health issues/outbreaks, promotions, competitions, articles, interesting cases that our vets have seen and will also include a light-hearted look at the general shenanigans our crew occasionally get up to!

**Your feedback is always valuable to us and we look forward to hearing from you!**

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## Managing sore feet

**Joao Dib**

On the whole spring calving was fairly smooth for most however we have seen our fair share of lameness in the past few months.

Wet spells, coupled with delayed track maintenance, have created the conditions leading to a high incidence of injuries and lameness. On some properties the problems have been severe.

**Animal effects** include slowness of movement, depressed feed intake, decreased milk production, weight loss and decreased fertility.

Additionally there are **farm-wide effects** such as increased labour requirement, potential job dissatisfaction (dealing with lame cows is a difficult task), increased financial costs to the farm (such as for treatment), decreased income to the farm (such as losses in milk solids), increased culling and replacement costs, and increased concern in regard to animal welfare.

As part of a daily routine it is important to:

- **Perfect the identification of lame cows** - the sooner they are drafted and

treated the better. Early detection is the key to rapid recovery and prevention of irreversible damage. If treated early it is rare to have more than 10% of animals needing antibiotic treatment.

- **Have good treatment facilities** – the ability to restrain cows safely is essential (for both animal and operator) and some protection from the weather is desirable if at all possible. The better the facilities, the better and faster the job can and will be done which is beneficial to all parties!
- **Hand tools**. No short cuts here; the cheaper the meaner! Invest in top quality knives, trimmers etc and keep them sharp at all times. Additionally wrist protectors and gloves are a wise investment (use them on the hand that supports the foot) into injury prevention.
- **Monitor** the condition of your races and yard entry/exit, identify any sharp turns along the raceway leading to congestion points and control herd movement (bringing cows to the shed at correct speed and pressure).

**As a final note, consider cow nutrition and the impact it can have on hoof health and remember we are always here and happy to help – whether it be treating lame cows, advising on race/yard design or running on-farm training sessions – don't hesitate to talk to your vet!**



hardens so monitor cows daily - **article P2**. Additionally hot, dry, dusty weather can increase the incidence of some diseases such as pink eye - monitor for early signs of discharge from, or white spots on, eye(s) and act quickly to separate from the mob and treat.

## Sheep and Beef

- Weaning management - monitor ewe body condition and check udders, ensure adequate parasite and fly strike control (**article P7**) and consider vitamin B12 testing in lambs.

- Barbers pole - monitor for signs of disease (pale gums, depressed, exercise intolerant, increased breathing) and drench appropriately.
- Ram preparations - plan and book in ram palpations, Brucellosis testing and organise teasers - **article P6**.

## Deer

- Monitor hinds regularly during fawning.
- Stag preparations - ensure palpations are done and feet checked in good time prior to mating.

## Equine

- Maintain sport horses on joint supplements such as NV Halo Injection or Equinate™ injection if the ground is hard.
- Consider use of electrolytes for horses in heavy work particularly in hot weather and know the early signs of tying up so a full blown episode can hopefully be avoided.

**Lastly, we wish you a fantastic holiday period... have a safe, enjoyable, very well-earned break with family and friends!**

# Early pregnancy testing – knowledge is the key!

**Craig Dickson**

Benjamin Franklin once said “An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest” ... such a famous quote rings true when you relate it to pregnancy testing your herd early.

Achieving a successful mating relies as much on decisions made before the start of mating as the important activities of heat detection and bull management during mating. Additionally most would also acknowledge that body condition is a very important factor in this equation. In no small way, body condition at mating relates back to the animals' body condition at dry-off relative to the length of the dry period. Drying-off decisions should therefore be based around calving date and body condition, to make the most of feed that is available without compromising body condition before calving.

So, as well as the management benefits of early pregnancy testing, the ability to accurately measure key performance indicators is essential for monitoring and improving herd reproductive performance. The six week in-calf rate (ICR) is a key driver of reproductive performance. Early pregnancy testing will provide the most accurate calving dates with the greatest consistency. Pregnancies are best aged between six to 12 weeks after conception. So, for most, this would mean doing your first test around six weeks after the end of artificial breeding (AB). Cows not pregnant, or if the pregnancy is not advanced enough to be detected, are then typically rechecked six weeks after the bull has been removed. Armed with this reliable data you will have the ability to:

- Accurately calculate your six week ICR
- Cull empty cows early if a feed pinch arises
- Decide on earlier dry-off of thin and/or early calving cows
- Decide to milk later calving cows on for longer

- Send the right animals off to grazing and know when to bring them home
- Accurately allocate cows to the springer mob
- Accurately assess foetal losses which may be an alert for an underlying problem such as Bovine Virus Diarrhoea

For those of you who have not yet signed up for Infovet I urge you to consider it. Talk to a neighbour who uses it, I'm sure they will convince you of the merits of simplifying the pregnancy testing recording process. Your veterinarian will be equipped with a toughbook touch screen computer and clients enrolled with Infovet will be able to enter pregnancy testing results directly into MINDA on farm. Infovet allows us to bring up the mating dates of each cow at the time of pregnancy testing. We can produce a pregnancy rate graph and fertility focus report to look at reproductive statistics quickly and easily.

**Book your herd in today!**





# Planning ahead for facial eczema season

Barry Askin

Last year was a horrific season for facial eczema (FE) with numerous clinically and sub-clinically affected animals seen during the season and, even now, we are still seeing its effects coming through.

Fortunately FE is a relatively predictable disease with risk increasing as certain conditions prevail. The fungus responsible for producing the toxin that causes FE associated liver damage thrives in dead leaf matter and a combination of warmth (night time temperatures above 12°C), moisture and humidity will lead to an exponential rise in the number of spores and consequentially pose a high risk to animal health.

There are a number of viable approaches to managing FE but some key points are:

- Begin prevention strategy based on **environmental conditions**.
- Start **monitoring** your paddocks, via spore counting, sooner rather than later (we recommend from mid January onwards) and/or keep an eye on local trends. However there can be enormous variation between, and even within, paddocks on the same farm. Start prevention strategies once counts start to creep up around 10-15,000 spores per gram.
- **Fungicide spraying** of paddocks costs around \$10 to \$15 per hectare. Be aware that it's no good once spore counts are already high, it may need repeated application(s) and it is important to continue to monitor treated areas.
- Consider putting in **alternative forage species**, such as chicory or plantain, to feed during high risk periods as many crops do not create an environment that allows growth of the fungus.

- **Zinc (Zn) supplementation** is the main preventative strategy for FE control and there are many different supplementation methods each with its own pro's and cons. Oral drenching, water treatment at whole farm level, water treatment at trough level (Peta dispenser), in feed, on pasture and the application of slow release boluses.
- In more extensive systems, heifer grazing blocks, or in areas where there are different sources of water for animals to drink from, the most reliable form of supplementation is usually a **slow release Zn bolus**. This is especially true in the case of sheep. These deliver a guaranteed daily dose of Zn and have a defined pay out period, however their application can be repeated in a prolonged FE season.
- Given that the effect of exposure to the fungal **toxin is cumulative** year on year be aware that groups of animals hit hard with FE last year will benefit from aggressive prevention this year, such as last years hoggets that have been kept as two-tooths.
- Whatever strategy you plan to use this season it is important that you continue to **check it is working** – do a spore count a defined period after fungicide spraying and/or utilise blood testing to check for liver damage.

**Knowing the risk factors for FE, having a strategy in place for monitoring the challenge and for preventing it's effects is well worth while. For further information, or if you would like a hand planning your approach to FE this season, don't hesitate to give your vet a call.**

# Working dogs and summertime

Helen Sheard

Summertime is cause for celebration for most of us but for some of our four-legged companions it can bring challenges...

**Barley grass awns** can be a problem especially for hairy types such as beardies. Any sore ears, inflamed eyes or small weeping wounds (often between the toes) should be investigated immediately. These troublesome

seeds can cause a lot of damage and have been found to migrate into the chest, abdomen and even the spine!

Cold winters tend to knock flea numbers for outdoor dogs however, with the changing climate, we have been seeing a lot of **flea infestation and flea allergies** in last few years. Plagues of fleas can cause anaemia in young pups and can contribute to irritation and ill-thrift in adult dogs. Treatment can be challenging if your dogs get in and out of



# Poisonous plants – what not to eat!

Leisa Norris

From purpose planted attractive garden features to feral paddock weeds many plants in our midst can be very dangerous if eaten. Plant poisoning of animals, particularly lambs and goats, is a fairly regular and often fatal occurrence.

Several of the most common potential problem plants are:

## RAGWORT

This is an annual herb generally found on the roadside or in paddocks in higher rainfall areas. It has erect stems up to one meter tall with light green leaves with yellow flowers of about two centimetres diameter. It contains toxic alkaloid compounds that

cause liver damage. All parts of the plant are poisonous, in both the fresh and dried state, with toxicity peaking at flowering. Poisoning can be sudden or chronically over a longer period of weeks. Clinical signs include depression, diarrhoea, unsteadiness, irritability, dark coloured urine and yellow mucous membranes.

## RHODODENDRON

This is an evergreen garden shrub with flowers of varying colours. It contains the toxic compound andromedotoxin. The most common scenario we see with this is animals eating prunings thrown into paddocks near the garden or curious lambs nibbling at these shrubs through the fence. Clinical signs include increased salivation, abdominal pain, decreased breathing, weakness, staggering, convulsions and potentially death from respiratory failure.

## FOXGLOVE

This is a biennial herb with an erect stem up to one meter or more tall with purple or white flowers. It contains the toxic compound digitalis purpurea which has profound effects on the heart. All parts of the plant are toxic with the leaves being the most toxic at start of flowering. It is not commonly eaten by animals unless they are very hungry and without the option of other feed. Clinical signs include gastrointestinal irritation and diarrhoea, anorexia, nausea, a slow but strong pulse and contracted pupils. Other potential problem plants are many and varied but include Tutu, Ngaio, Poroporo, Goat's Rue, Oleander, Macrocarpa, Oak (acorns) and Hemlock.

**If you suspect that your animal/s may have eaten a potentially toxic plant then take immediate action to quickly and quietly remove them from the dangerous paddock (or, if easier, remove offending plant/s!). Then call your vet immediately as any time delay in seeking treatment will decrease the likelihood of successful treatment and a positive outcome.**



troughs and waterways a lot! The topical flea products tend to lose efficacy, even those that claim to be water fast. Seresto® collars last eight months and although seemingly pricey, when compared on a per month basis, are a similar cost to topical products. Bravecto® and Nexgard® are oral flea treatments that last 12 and four weeks respectively and aren't affected by the dog getting wet. Finally, **DO NOT** be tempted to use a spot of cattle pour-on as these can be toxic to dogs, especially collies.

Keep an eye out for **sunburn** in white nosed dogs. FiltaClear and FiltaBac® are two sunblock options that are safe for use in animals, but keeping it on with the tongue in close proximity can be difficult! Repeated sunburn can predispose to cancers and other skin diseases so is best prevented.

If you suspect your dog has **heatstroke** (general signs are wobbliness or collapse while working on a hot day or having been

left inside a hot vehicle) then try to cool them immediately. If available, pack ice wrapped in towels (NEVER directly onto skin) in their groin and armpits as this is where blood vessels are close to the surface of the skin. Alternatively immerse them in cold water or run cold water from a hose over them. They may lose consciousness so avoid getting their head wet, don't try to get them to drink unless they are fully aware and get them to your vet as soon as you can.



# Brucellosis

Rachael Fouhy

Brucellosis is a bacterial disease caused by members of the genus *Brucella*. It is an important zoonosis and is a significant cause of reproductive losses in animals.



Left - normal testicle; Right - affected testicle showing obvious enlargement of the head of the epididymis

The disease is most commonly thought of and identified in sheep flocks. The pathogen is *Brucella ovis* and is naturally transmitted from ram to ram and/or ewe to ram by sexual activity. It multiplies in blood and localises most commonly in the testicle which results in inflamed/blocked tubules and as a consequence low sperm counts, no sperm or abnormal sperm. As such the ram becomes permanently infected.

Over the years we have had to deal with numerous outbreaks of Brucellosis, some of which have resulted in entire ram flocks being culled because of a very high infection rate. Others take longer to get under control because of a lower level of infection within the ram flock and a slower rate of spread. Such cases often require multiple blood tests several weeks apart before the disease can be eradicated from the ram flock.

Consequently, one of the keys to avoiding an outbreak is to have your rams checked prior to mating. Traditionally these checks have been carried out just prior to mating however the problem with this is that, if an issue is identified, there is often insufficient time to test and cull rams and ensure a *Brucella ovis*-free flock prior to mating. The disease can then spread like wildfire during

tupping, which can have dramatic effects on scanning percentages.

Your rams can be checked at any time and any infection that spreads during the previous mating season should be then be detectable. Outside the breeding season, when rams are sexually inactive, it can be much easier to eradicate the disease with minimal blood tests.

The important things to remember are:

- Always purchase rams from a *Brucella ovis*-free source (rams purchased should at least have been palpated).
- Avoid sharing or borrowing rams.
- A community approach works best for preventing spread of disease within an area – talk to your neighbours and have a plan.
- The disease is not carried from season to season in the ewe flock.
- **There is no treatment!**

**So, make sure you have your rams palpated in good time before they're needed... Call the clinic and book in for your vet to come sooner rather than later and, if your dogs are also due for their vaccinations, we can book in to do this at the same time.**

## Bella's project - How does grass make milk

Bella Barrie

Hi, my name is Bella Barrie and I am in year six at Opiki School.

In term three Opiki School had a science fair. Students did lots of different projects from candy experiments to how cow/deer teeth rot away in coke, and some of the junior kids got to learn about and make giant bubbles – it was cool!

My project partner, Samantha, and I set a goal to focus on and present a topic on something we'd like to know more about. We decided to research and learn lots on how exactly grass

turns into milk. I emailed my family vet Allie Quinn for information and she gave us a great website with a lot of information. I also spoke to my Dad and Grandad because they are expert farmers which helped us a lot with our studies.

We had the choice of presenting our topic on a television screen, on a board or on a big poster. Samantha and I decided to present our topic on a science board.



# Fly and lice uncovered

Mark Eames

Fly and lice are both external parasites that can affect sheep (and most other species too!) and their treatment and control is ongoing and challenging.

The first step is to understand their lifecycles and habits, then identify and target their weaknesses:

## FLY LIFECYCLE AND HABITS

Adult females lay eggs on warm smelly parts of the fleece and lay around 2000 eggs in a six week lifespan. They are attracted to odour from wool grease, dags, scours, urine, infected cuts and feet. The eggs hatch in 12 hours and first stage maggots feed on the surface of the skin. A day later, they moult and become second stage maggots – these are the damaging ones. A day later, the maggots moult again into third stage maggots which feed and then drop off and seek shelter. Meanwhile, more flies are attracted to the open wound by the smells created by the first maggots, so a cycle is set up meaning death is inevitable if left untreated. Juvenile fly will remain as maggots or pupae depending on the conditions under the carcass or several centimetres below the soil surface. The whole life cycle is completed in as little as four weeks in mid-summer, however it can take much longer in cooler months.

## LICE LIFECYCLE AND HABITS

Unlike flies, the entire lice lifecycle is spent on the sheep and, in ideal conditions, they generally don't live for more than four or five days once separated from sheep. Lice cannot fly or jump and they move very slowly over the animal's body surface. They live at the base of the fibre and need close contact such as yarding, trucking, camps, mother/daughter, sire/dam interaction to spread from sheep to sheep. Each female louse lays between 10 and 30 eggs over her lifetime of about 30 days. Populations usually build up over autumn, reach a peak in winter and then decline in spring and summer.

With the life cycles and habits in mind, we can look at ways of inhibiting the development and reproduction of the parasites. As the two parasites are quite different in their cycles and habits, it is best to consider their control separately. Having said that, the fact that many of the chemicals available for treatment kill both, it is tempting to attempt control with a one hit wonder!

To reduce the need for chemicals, and preserve the effectiveness of the available chemical products, firstly consider **management techniques**. For flystrike, timing your shearing, crutching and/or dagging to coincide with the fly season is the most effective control as it reduces the factors that flies are attracted to. Good parasite control and appropriate tail docking length can also reduce dagginess, as can selection for dag free stock. Some areas of a farm may have increased fly challenge and, if known, these areas can be avoided during the high risk period. For lice, it is important

to avoid introducing lousy sheep by ensuring all bought in animals are lice free, ensuring boundary fences are secure, and if possible getting neighbours to dip their flocks at the same time.

In many cases a **chemical treatment** will be required alongside the management practices. There are a wide range of chemicals with different actions available and the choice of product will depend on a range of factors, including:

- Species to be controlled (lice, fly or both)
- Length of protection
- Equipment available (jetting wand, spray race, shower or plunge dip, pour-on)
- Cost
- Wool length
- Resistance status

Timing of chemical application is critical, with each product and method of application having an optimum wool length and period of effectiveness. Moral of the story is **always read the label and use as directed!**

We read or hear this so often in our daily lives, but the application of insecticides to sheep is probably the most complex animal health procedure a farmer can undertake - not reading the label and using as directed is by far the main reason for disappointing results.

**Treatment products need to be treated with respect and it is important to take responsibility for animals, people and the environment under our care seriously.**

We found out that a cow has a cool way of turning grass into milk... To start, a cow has four stomachs each with a special job! A cow chews on grass, swallows it into the first stomach (rumen) and tosses and turns and mixes it with water that it drinks. Then in the second stomach (reticulum) it forms into small clumps that then go back up into it's mouth for about one minute to be chewed again -

called "chewing it's cud"! It then swallows it again into the third stomach (omasum) and then the fourth (abomasum) and then finally into the intestines where all the goodness is taken out – grass has turned into milk!

The cows are milked each day in the cowshed. The tanker then collects the milk and takes it to the milk factory.

We really enjoyed doing this project and finding out about this topic because we are very passionate about farming. Our challenges were that we had to think outside the box and use our minds creatively! We also discovered that science doesn't have to be scary and it's not that complicated.

**We think we achieved our goal and we had fun!**



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References: 1. Levot, G. & Sales, N. Proc. Australian Sheep Veterinarians Gold Coast Conference, May 2005. pp144-149. 2. Extinosad Jetting Fluid / Flystrike Dressing for Sheep in Long Wool Technical Manual Version 1 30/11/00. Elanco Animal Health (For internal use only). Cyrex Liquid contains 12.5 g/L spinosad and 500 g/L cyromazine. Registered pursuant to the ACVM Act 1997 (No. A09917). Registered to Elanco Animal Health, Division of Eli Lilly and Company (NZ) Ltd., Level 1, 123 Ormiston Road, Botany Junction, Auckland 2016. LEATHERMAN™ and REV™ are trademarks of Leatherman Tool Group, Inc. Elanco, Cyrex™, and the diagonal bar are trademarks owned or licensed by Eli Lilly and Company, its subsidiaries or affiliates. ©2016 Elanco Animal Health, a division of Eli Lilly and Company. EAH16165HPC NZSHPEXE00017



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