

## STAFF COMMENT

So.... what's happening??? Anything new??? Lots to report this month from Riversdale.

We have had to say farewell for now to Julia Tayles and Shbourne Cameron who have both headed to the springer paddock as they both eagerly await the arrival of number two. We wish them and family all the very best and hope for safe arrivals. Serious consideration has gone into the opening of the NSVets creche, "All Creatures Great and Small", as staff gatherings have grown exponentially!!! We might start selling the water round here as fertility treatment.

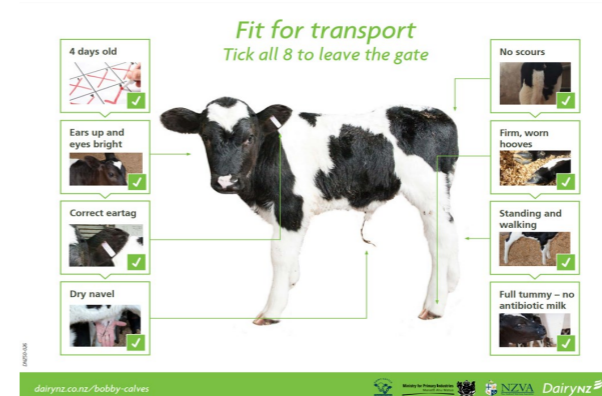
Unfortunately, we need to add Laura to the farewell for now list too, as she heads up to Canterbury. We wish both her and Luke every good wish for their married life and eagerly await their return south, once Luke completes his training.

Finally, Janeece after 16 years at NSVets is hanging up her stethoscope and has set up her own dog grooming business in Riversdale. She has been a fabulous vet nurse who has always put her patients first. Now however it is time to put family first and be more available to her grandchildren. We are sure her new venture will keep her as busy as she wants but with the flexibility to do her own thing. Thank you, JC, for your many years of hard work and dedication. You will be missed.

*Morgan Greene MVB MANZCVS*

## BOBBY CALF WELFARE

All calves, regardless of their purpose, should be treated with care and respect. Bobby calf welfare is important – the following DairyNZ poster will help you meet the welfare needs of animals in your care and to comply with the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act 1999:



Sam Lee BVSc

## Cattle Reminders

- Magnesium supplementation
- Consider drenching yearlings
- Vitamin A, D, E to milk fever prone cows
- Worm cows post calving
- Booster dose BVD vaccine to heifers
- Monitor conditions post calving

## METRICHECK EARLY FOR HIGHER IN-CALF RATES



Endometritis is inflammation of the endometrium (uterine lining) usually caused by bacterial infection at calving. Endometritis in dairy cows leads to:

- More non-cycling cows
- Lower in-calf rates
- Reduced conception rates
- Higher empty rates

Endometritis can be detected via inspection of vaginal mucous and secretions (metrichecking). The presence of any discolouration or flecks of pus in this fluid is likely a sign of infection. A large NZ study involving over 15,000 dairy cows showing metrichecking cows **8 to 28 days after calving**, and subsequently treating metricheck positive cows (those cows with endometritis) provided almost **10% higher in-calf rates** compared with delaying metrichecking until closer to mating... so it's really important to take action early.

Treatment of endometritis with intrauterine antibiotics has shown:

- Improved conception rates
- Higher in-calf rates
- Lower empty rates

Treated cows have significantly more days in milk, providing farmers with higher revenue.

Many farms in the district are now into calving. Call NSVets to organise your first round of metrichecking.

Sam Lee BVSc

## Sheep Reminders

- Order lambing requirements (complete our pre-lamb vaccine order form).
- Blood test ewes metabolic profile.
- FEC ewes and consider pre-lamb drench.
- Vaccinate ewes clostridial vaccine.
- Reassess ewe feed levels.
- Vitamin E/Selenium to brassica fed hoggets.
- Assess spring feed budget.
- Drench ewes iodine.
- Ensure PAR/RVM authorisation is current.

## NUTRITION FOR BREEDING BITCHES AND PUPPIES

Many farmers decide at one point or another to breed one of their good huntaway or heading bitches. But are you giving your bitch and her pups the best start to life? Diet goes a long way, so in this article we are going to focus on the nutrition that your pregnant and lactating bitch and pups need.

Your bitch will need to go on a different diet than usual for the last third of pregnancy. This is particularly important if she is mainly fed meat – a meat-only diet does not contain all the vitamins and minerals that a bitch will need to grow healthy puppies. You can feed her puppy food or a high-quality working dog food. This diet should be continued throughout lactation. Your dog will be expending a huge amount of energy to produce milk for her pups (especially if she has a big litter), so will need a larger amount of food than usual. Make sure she has plenty of water as well – she will need to replace all that liquid she is losing through the milk.

Newborn pups will be fed every few hours by their mother. Make sure they have a quiet, warm, enclosed box where the bitch can feed the pups in peace. The mother will also clean the pups after each feeding to make sure they defecate and urinate. It can be easy to leave the bitch to deal with the pups herself, but you should be checking on them daily. You can weigh the pups on small kitchen scales every couple days to make sure they are gaining weight.

Puppies will start eating solid foods from 3.5 to 4.5 weeks. You will slowly need to introduce more solid foods into their diet. Ideally this is in the form of puppy biscuits soaked in bitch milk replacer (specifically formulated for puppies – cow’s milk may cause stomach issues and diarrhoea). Initially start with more milk compared to biscuits, then gradually increase the amount of biscuits and soak them less. Alternatively mix in a tinned food designed for puppies. From 8 weeks of age pups can be fed on a commercial puppy food.

Huntaway and heading dog pups need to get the best nutrition possible in their first year of life, so that they grow

well and are less likely to get injuries when they start working for you. Believe it or not, puppies should be on puppy food until they are at least 12 to 15 months old! Feeding puppies meat will not provide all the nutrients they need to grow. This means a specific large breed puppy diet for huntaways. Each food is designed to make the pup gain the appropriate amount of weight at the right speed. If a pup grows too quickly, they can develop joint issues that may not be able to be corrected. This is why even excellent working dog foods, like Royal Canin 4800, aren’t appropriate for young pups. Finally, there is no point feeding a good diet if a pup is riddled with worms. Pups infected with worms will develop diarrhoea and vomiting and will lose weight. Deworm your pups every two weeks from 2 weeks until 12 weeks (3 months) of age. Then deworm monthly until 6 months old. Then start on the 3 month program that your other working dogs are on.



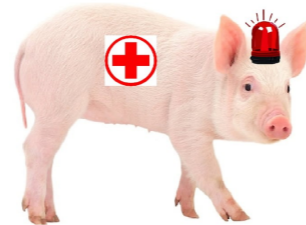
Nuria Holzleg BVM BVS

## Pet Reminders

- Check teeth and clip nails
- Check feeding nutrition of cats and dogs
- Check warmth of bedding

## BIT OF A LAUGH

*How did the pig get to the hospital? In a hambulance.*



## Deer Reminders

- Copper as required
- TB test
- Supplementary feed stags
- Weaners—check parasite levels
- Sort stags into velveting mobs

## SMCO TOXICITY – RED URINE IN CATTLE

As we have all experienced, feeding brassicas to your cattle has its benefits and risks. One of those risks to be aware of is SMCO toxicity, “Red Water”.

SMCO (S-methyl L cysteine sulphoxide) is a metabolite in brassicas (kale, swedes, turnips) that spikes in concentration when the plants mature/flower, are under stress, are infected, or in regrowth.

Cattle eat high SMCO brassica plants, and their rumen bacteria convert SMCO to dimethyl disulphide. This compound causes the red blood cells to burst open, releasing haemoglobin (the pigment that makes blood red). When a lot of haemoglobin is free in the blood, it overwhelms the kidneys, who would usually be able to filter and recycle it back into the body to make new red blood cells. In this case, there is so much haemoglobin that it overflows through the kidneys’ filter system, to be released into the urine. This causes haemoglobinuria, AKA red urine!

Commonly, cattle have been on crop for at least 5 weeks, and risk increases after frosts, in flowering crop or regrowth. Also found in onions which some people have been known to feed cows!

Signs	Treatment
- Red urine	- None
- Pale &/or yellow gums/vulva (anaemia & jaundice)	- Remove herd from crop (may not be safe to feed again especially if flowering/regrowth)
- Lethargic	- Give B vitamins
- High heart and respiratory rate	- Preferentially feed
- Sudden death	



Laura Gardyne BVSc

## Horse Reminders

- Hoof care reminder
- Check for lice
- Boost pregnant mares diet

## PAIN RELIEF FOR TAILING TIME

New Zealand Merino growers have been informed they will need to use ‘pain relief’ for painful procedures by 2025 in order to maintain the Responsible Wool Standard (RWS)/ZQ for supplying wool. The most common painful procedures being castration and tailing.

I think we can agree to assume tailing, and castration is painful. It would be ideal to alleviate this, but there is no simple fix (except don’t tail).

There are two types of pain, acute and chronic. The current available products may reduce one or the other unlikely both.

Local anaesthetic works quickly but does not last long. The alternative meloxicam takes at least 20 minutes to work, well after the acute phase. It lasts for a long time which is significant for surgical tailing, but less relevant for ring or iron where behaviour and cortisol levels were normal within 4 hours.



While research so far has seen positive response to local anaesthetic for castration (which was 2-4 x more painful than tailing, which graded similar to handling alone) the same cannot be said for tailing with little to no response visually or to cortisol levels. Improved results were seen with two injections front and back of the scrotum for castration, or a full ring block around the tail (a single injection was not very effective). Toxicity, however, is a risk. The main current options include :

### Anaesthetics – Rapid onset.

- Lignocaine 2% local anaesthetic
- Numicaine (Numnuts)
- Trisolfen topical gel - only for open wounds. Effective for surgical removal, less clear for hot iron.

### Analgesics - Around 30 minutes to work, can last days.

- Meloxicam (Metacam/Rheumocam) injection under the skin 1 ml/20kg
- Buccalgesic – meloxicam dosed onto the gum

I am hugely in favour of providing pain relief during painful procedures. The practicalities around effective, timely administration require more thought. Financial cost is not an argument against using pain relief. However, whether the application of current licenced pharmaceutical options will make significant and meaningful improvements in the welfare outcomes of lambs is debated.

Note ‘Provide pain relief’ is currently in the recommended best practice of the NZ Animal welfare code for tailing and castration but it is not a minimum standard. With the code under review this could change.

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