

MAXIMISING BEEF MATING PERFORMANCE

Some of you may still be calving beef cows, yet mating is just around the corner and for some it has started already. With bull sales strong it is likely you had to pay a bit more for the bull you wanted this year, or possibly had to go with your second/third choice bull, some of you may even be trying to get another year out of the old boy in the paddock. Regardless, the goal should be the same as always – to get as many cows pregnant in the shortest time frame. To achieve this goal takes a reasonable amount of planning and forethought along with monitoring to ensure that any breakdowns are noticed. Below is a quick checklist to run-through to ensure the beef mating performance on your property reaches its potential:

- ☑ Bulls have been checked for soundness
 - No signs of sickness, injury or trauma
 - Walking freely with no signs of lameness
- ☑ Bulls are BVD negative and have been given a BVD booster vaccination
 - Most bulls purchased from reputable breeders will have been tested BVD negative before sale.
 - All bulls need an annual BVD booster vacc
- ☑ Bull numbers reflect cow numbers, along with cow age and the topography/size of mating paddocks
 - More bull power is required for heifers and in large hill blocks.
 - Bulls are familiar with each other and well acquainted in advance of mating
- ☑ Cows are in reasonable body condition
- ☑ Nutrition is on a rising plane
- ☑ Trace elements have been supplemented if necessary
 - Selenium and copper are the two main considerations

Getting these things right is not always straight forward but should be the focus to ensure scanning results don't leave you disappointed. Further considerations may include:

- ☑ Bull rotation
 - This is a good safety catch to insure yourself against bull failure
- ☑ Mating length
 - Restricting mating length to avoid cows calving very late (2-3 cycles depending on age)
- ☑ Artificial insemination to speed up genetic progress without having to purchase a \$15,000 bull (we have stud and commercial farmers doing this already)
 - Can expect conception results of approx. 60% (some have been 70%)
 - Synchronisation drugs cost approx. \$37 (excl) per animal
- ☑ Breeding soundness exams
 - Getting the vet in to check the mating capability of bulls and palpate the testes for abnormalities can be cheap insurance against bull failure
- ☑ We can also perform semen tests on bulls if needed

Andrew Cochrane BVSc

Pet Reminders

- Vaccinate pets prior to boarding at kennels
- Check for barley grass
- Worm and flea cats and dogs

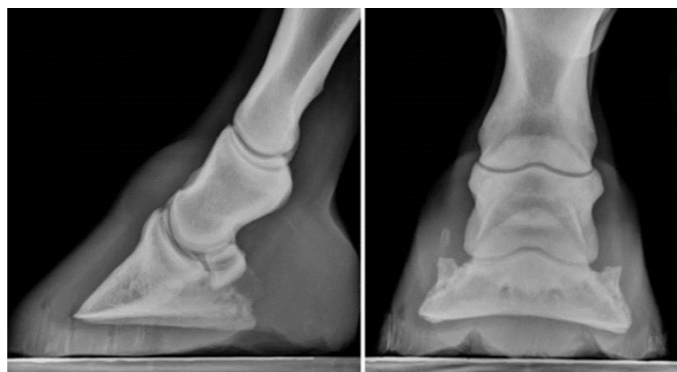
WE HAVE GONE DIGITAL!

We have a new digital x-ray system at both our Te Anau and Riversdale Clinics. The image quality and accuracy while adequate previously is now **extraordinary**.

Riversdale's system is also fully portable making horse and large animal x-rays a breeze. The image is visible on a computer screen within seconds so we know very quickly if further shots are required.

The most obvious time for a horse x-ray is for lameness workups following nerve blocks, however they are also valuable for assessing things such as hoof balance, joint changes, and dental cavities.

We look forward to extending this service to our clients!



SITUATION COMMENT

It is dry – damn dry. It was hot. There was a vote and the country turned red-green-black. It snowed in November. The country was covered in white. All of the trees broke. The broken trees broke fences. It was windy. It was dry. It was cold. It was hot and windy. It was dry. It is dry.

So that is the weather report out of the way. For the most part there has been enough feed around, albeit only just.

As dairy mating gets fully under way there are already farms contemplating once a day or 16 hours. If the trend continues it will be important to make decisions like these early, before the stress gets too significant. The same theory applies to weaning lambs and selling stores.

Otherwise the primary sector looks pretty good. Prices are solid if not record highs, particularly venison. Lambing and calving both took place for the most part in good weather. Early tailing tallies look good.

With Christmas just around the corner we would like to wish you all a safe and happy Christmas and a wonderful New Year. Thanks for your support in 2017, we look forward to serving you again in 2018.



SANTA VISIT 21ST DECEMBER

Bring your kids and / or pets to get a photo with Santa at our Riversdale clinic on the 21st Dec between 10.00am –12.30pm.

Phone Riversdale clinic to book your time (03) 202 5636

Donations to St Johns

Horse Reminders

- Keep bot eggs off legs
- Hoof care
- January - worming treatment for foals

The team at NSVets would like to thank all of you for your support throughout the year and we wish you a very merry Christmas. Enjoy the holidays and have a productive and prosperous 2018.

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TETANUS – THE FULLY PREVENTABLE DISEASE

Horses are highly susceptible to the potentially fatal disease tetanus, a disease caused by the bacteria Clostridium tetani which is found in the soil.

Tetanus can be prevented by vaccination which is very effective. We recommend all horses are vaccinated for tetanus. A complete vaccination programme for tetanus consists of two initial shots 4-6 weeks apart, an annual booster, then every two years after that.

The bacterium enters through wounds on the horse. When the horse is vaccinated it is covered for prevention of tetanus, this also covers those wounds you don't see. The size and severity of the wound does not predict the likelihood of whether or not the horse will get tetanus. This is why it is so important to have your horse vaccinated.

In emergency situations when an unvaccinated horse gets a wound we have a tetanus antitoxin that can be given. However this injection only lasts 4 weeks and carries with it the rare, but fatal, risk of Theiler's disease. The antitoxin is also a lot more expensive than a booster tetanus vaccine.

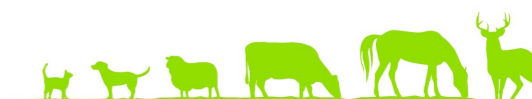
Tetanus can be a costly disease to treat with very often a fatal consequence. Vaccinate your horse today!

Megan Reidie BVSc

BRUCELLA OVIS - A REMINDER

For re-accreditation for farms on the *Brucella Ovis* Accreditation scheme:

AGE CLASS	TESTING REQUIRED
All stud rams over 15 months All Teasers Any stud rams less than 15 months which have been used	Palpate All Blood test All
Commercials over 15 months	Palpate all Bloods from 20 or all (which-ever is least)
All rams for sale	Palpated within three months of sale Blood test any with lesions



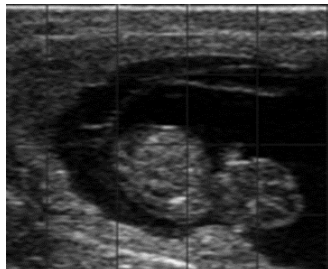
WHEN TO PREGNANCY SCAN

Cows can reliably be detected in calf from 6 weeks of pregnancy. We can accurately age scan from then (6 weeks) through to 12-14 weeks, any earlier and cows may still look 'empty', later and we can still confirm pregnancy but aging accuracy is reduced if at all possible. This is a 6 week window. If you want aged pregnancies, and mating is longer than 6 weeks then two scans are necessary. Scanning at 12 weeks after PSM will pick up the first 6 weeks of pregnancies. Every week after that loses a week from the front of mating, so rather than getting an AI date they will be called 'early' and your AI records will be used to assign the date.

Cows can only be confirmed empty 6 weeks after the last bull/mate date so final scans should be after this date. Typically the first scan assigns dates and 'rechecks' The second scan can confirm 'early' and 'lates' (lates can be aged at this time if necessary) and 'empties'. The timing of the second scan will depend on mating length and information required (e.g. if you need to make early cull decisions). If aging is not required, making the final scan later can give a more accurate final empty rate picking up any losses, reducing the amount of empty cows carried over. Half a percent loss per month can be considered normal loss rate.

Aged pregnancy testing will

- assign calving dates
- allow better feed planning (in conjunction with BCS)
- assist winter management – mobs both for feeding and transport
- aid dry off decisions (in conjunction with BCS)
- allows early culling decisions
- Get a detailed Fertility Focus Report



45 day calf – whole calf, head and body, grid at 1cm



85 day calf – head and neck



Calf head at 85 days

Rochelle Smith BVSc MANZCVS

Sheep Reminders

- FEC lambs - drench check test
- Flystrike prevention
- Wean lambs
- Have FECRT carried out on lambs
- Palpate ewes udder 2-4 weeks post weaning - cull hard or lumpy udders

FAECAL EGG COUNT REDUCTION TESTING (FECRT)

When asked which drench a farm should use the answer will inevitably be "one that works!" Yet few of us have this information. In that case we are often reaching for the triple drench which we are hopeful will work (or we have a problem!).

This then means triple drench is no longer suitable as a quarantine drench for your property. If you haven't done a FECRT in the past 5 years you should strongly consider it, after all how many of us put fertiliser on without first requesting a soil test?

Generally, it is best to FECRT lambs that have never been drenched so as not to bias the results however in Southland Nematodirus is enough of an issue that we are often forced to pre-wean drench and mark/tag 100 or so to leave undrenched from then on. Most of the time worm burdens reach the threshold around Feb/March. Contact us for more information on FECRT.



Rochelle Smith BVSc MANZCVS

NUTRITION FOR VELVET ANTLER PRODUCTION

Deer farmers are well into their first cuts of velvet as I write this article. It's quite a feat that the velvet being produced is growing at more than 100g/day of velvet (equivalent to 2-3cm per day), and to put it in perspective, this is compared to the skeletal growth in the first 18 months of life as 34g/day.

It is not surprising therefore that nutrition plays a large role in ensuring genetic potential for velvet weight is reached. Deer differ from traditional domesticated ruminant livestock in that they have strong patterns of seasonality dictated by changes in day length. Numerous aspects of digestion, growth, reproduction, antler growth, selective foraging behaviour and voluntary feed intake are affected. During the rut, stags lose a great deal of weight (up to 30% of their weight) even when not in contact or vicinity of hinds and given adequate room for reduction of conflict. The reduction in feed intake and associated live weight loss is an inefficiency in deer production, as it takes twice as much feed to gain a Kg of weight compared to feed saved by losing it (55MJME c.f 25 MJME).

High energy concentrates can be strategically used at this time to increase the energy gained from reduced intake, as well as management considerations to help reduce the proximity and aggression between stags. It was noted however by Fennessy (1989) that the stags had best response (in terms of velvet production) when supplemented with grain immediately post rut, or during the active period of spring velvet growth rather than the winter period. However the concentrate feeding during winter clearly has a place to try to reduce the weight lost during the rut to less than 25%. Protein is an important consideration when it comes to producing velvet, and stags require 15-18% crude protein (CP) for velvet antler growth. Luckily spring pasture often has protein well in excess of 20%CP so when offered in adequate quantities is suitable. Other popular choices are forage herbs which also have high protein levels and can reach 25% protein. Silage can be variable depending on quality of grass when it was cut but good quality silage will come close to this requirement so can be used should pasture be short. Deer pasture should be managed more similarly to cattle (height 8-10cm and above) than sheep which can cope to much lower swards. This means rotational grazing and break feeding are better options than the set stocking which is commonly employed on sheep properties. For liveweight gain, post grazing residuals need to be 1500-1600kg DM/ha or about 8cm.

As we move into the summer period, this is the time the stag has the most capacity for weight gain due to low metabolic requirements after antler growth cessation, and it is important for the stag to go into the rut in good body condition. Pasture is a good option, but consider silage or

supplements if things dry off. Utilise the 30% increase of voluntary feed intake during this time.

It is important to also consider your supplementation of trace elements such as copper and parasite control as this too can have effects on antler development and the productivity of the velveting herd. We welcome these discussions, so give us a ring!

Samantha Edgar BVSc

Deer Reminders

- Fawning
- De-velvetting - 2yr olds

PARASITE MANAGEMENT PLANS

Wondering what drenches you should use on your lambs and ewes this season? Come and have a sit down with Rochelle or Andrew and we will make a plan for your drenching this year. Mismanaging parasites can cost you significantly in weight gains – make sure you get it right!

Weaning Reminders

- If grass is short – wean earlier
- Short acting B12 given at tailing will be gone
- Once drenching starts, regular drench intervals of 21-28 day (and good pasture management) will lower the autumn larval explosion
- The pre-lamb 5 in 1 protection from mum will be falling. Vaccinate lambs now if you haven't already.

DISAPPOINTED WITH SCANNING/LAMBING DESPITE THE GOOD SPRING?

Planning for next mating begins at weaning and if you are serious about improving your results then Andrew and Rochelle are keen to help. Come and have a repro consult with us and lets make a plan to ensure the reproductive success of your flock!

Cattle Reminders

- Dairy calves - copper, selenium
- Dairy calves - worm control
- Bulls - watch for unsoundness
- Cows monitor SR and NRR