

STAFF COMMENT DECEMBER

Here we are, accelerating to the end of the year. I hope you have all had a glance at our Movember participants for 2022 – something we are incredibly pleased to support.

I guess having thirty-five staff, the roll call will always be dynamic. We sadly farewell Juanne as she takes a break from her veterinary nursing career. Juanne has been a valuable component of the team, both in Te Anau and Riversdale, and we wish her well wherever her new path takes her.

NSVets Baby fight club eagerly awaits the addition of a new team member as Becky begins her maternity leave. Hopefully, she gets a well-earned albeit short rest before the due date!

Alicia Watson has settled in well at the Mossburn clinic - and makes a great cup of tea!

Sam Elder (Edgar) has reduced her hours to pursue her cervine interests, and I likewise will be pulling back a little.

In Te Anau Nurse Cherise is recovering from knee surgery (luckily no head cone required) and the remainder are now recovered from the wave of Covid that seemed to strike the Basin.

We are thrilled to announce that with the new year will come two new vets, who we have been harassing since meeting them as exceptional students seeing practice. Lochie Chittock will start at the end of January and Holly Gardyne later in March. More on these stars in later editions.

I hope you all have a wonderful stressless and safe silly season, and get a chance to relax, review and refresh for 2023.

Rochelle Smith BVSc MANZCVS

WORMWATCH DECEMBER 2022

It's been a mixed bag of weather through November, with plenty of warm days and plenty of rain – perfect conditions for grass growth and parasites! Most of you will have started drenching lambs and dairy calves by now and while conditions stay like this it would be prudent to stick to a 28 drench interval. Weaning drenches for lambs are arguably the most important drench they receive and should be a triple combination drench. This will ensure they get a good clean out during a particularly stressful time. Make sure you consider refugia, especially if these drenched lambs end up on a “clean” paddock such as any recently cut hay/baleage paddocks. There are several ways of providing refugia but one practical option is putting some light undrenched ewes in with the lambs – this also has the benefit of providing some direction at gateways! With resistance closing in on us we need to remember to drench smarter – it's not the drenching, it's how we're drenching!

Faecal egg count reduction tests (FECRT)

You need to know which drenches work on your property, you will not see resistance until it is much too late. If you are interested in finding out what drenches work on your farm, please get in contact ASAP.

Andrew Cochrane BVSc

Pet Reminders

- Vaccinate pets prior to boarding kennels
- Get pets Christmas presents
- Check for barley grass
- Keep them cool and hydrated over summer

STAFF PET CORNER

Meet Stumpy

Stumpy is a very sassy red deer hind that was found without a mother last fawning on Andy and Sam's deer farm. She wouldn't drink from a bottle, so grew up drinking her milk straight from a dog bowl, ending up with a milk moustache. She is mostly known for not liking Rose the dog and chasing her up and down the fence, her morning yoga poses, and for bullying Bee the pet sheep and her lambs.

NOTE: Deer make really good pets- but ensure that if stag fawns are collected that you castrate them, as these can be extremely dangerous during the rut when they have no fear of humans. There have been PLENTY of people killed by pet stags.



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Sheep Reminders

- FEC lambs - drench check test
- Flystrike prevention
- Wean lambs
- Consider leaving some lambs undrenched for FECRT this year
- Palpate ewes udders 2—4 weeks post weaning

DROUGHT

Despite the 30mls in 3 minutes downpours happening around the regions of late, it seems there are predictions of another dry summer in the south of NZ. Hopefully they are wrong, but as hope is not a strategy, it would be wise to have a plan in place to manage this impending risk.

Many of you have worked through this before, and there are many resources available as well as support groups to help us through, but below are some reminders of options you may consider: See also, B+LNZ, Dairy NZ, Federated Farmers, Rural Support Trust (0800 787 254) for great real-life scenarios that worked!

- Make a plan
- Short term (review each 7-10 days) and long term
- Setting yourself some rules or trigger levels and cut off times saves the stress of decision making when you are in the thick of it
 - * e.g., "If covers drop to 'x' kgDM I will do '...y... and... z...'"
 - * Sell remaining lambs store by (don't leave it too late!)
 - * BCS stock into lines by 'x' date

Do a feed budget – (be realistic!) and review it. From there it is all about managing feed supply and demand – it is better to reduce stock and feed them well than have them all on rations

- Identify priority stock classes
- Body condition score to partition feed more efficiently
- Consider off-farm grazing – secure early. But also consider disease risk that may come with this, particularly BVD for pregnant cattle.
- If supplements are required, be sure to buy early – before the price skyrockets
 - * It may be more economical to sell stock than buy feed, and this may differ depending on stock classes
- Preserve pasture covers
 - * It is likely better to reduce stock numbers than overgraze, recovery will be better
- Skim draft lambs before weaning
- Early weaning of ewes
 - * Can reduce total farm demand even if all mouths kept
 - * Can cull ewes early, and get good lambs gone
- Sell store

- Keep fewer replacements
- Pregnancy test cows earlier to remove dries or lates
- Put in extra crop (summer or winter)
- Consider legumes, utilise management systems that encourage feed quality
- Milk OAD, or early dry off
- Strategic N decisions

Remember as Doug Avery says, look after the 'top paddock'; designate time to get off farm and recognize your achievements and ability to respond to adversity.

Animal health in a drought

Acidosis and nitrates – These are perhaps the highest risk diseases we see in drought. Whether using crops, nuts, grain, or alternative feeds (e.g., bread, fruit) remember to introduce new feeds and levels of feeds gradually and use a feed out system that can reduce the risk of gorging. Immature crops may have higher nitrate levels, as can feed that has come away after a drought so consider testing for this and again introduce gradually.

Polio – A vitamin B1 deficiency may appear after a change from poor/low feed to lush, be sure to make feed changes gradually, including when the drought breaks.

Ryegrass staggers – Plants under stress can have increased levels of the toxin lolitrem B which causes grass staggers. While not as common as 30 years ago, we saw a few cases last year.

Listeria – grazing low may increase exposure to listeria in the soil, also be cautious of older stored baleage and silage that may contain listeria

Parasites – parasite larval levels usually decrease during droughts, so drench intervals should be extended, however the eggs can survive in the top layer of soil, ready to hatch when the drought breaks, so be prepared for a worm flush once it rains. Also remember to have a drench plan for stock grazing off farm and consider quarantine drench options on their return.

Other disease – animals under stress are more prone to succumb to other diseases, e.g., metabolic conditions, johnes, pneumonia etc, so while easy to say, try to reduce stress e.g., reducing droving, minimise yarding times etc

Rochelle Smith BVSc MANZCVS

BIT OF A LAUGH

How much does Santa pay to park his sleigh and reindeer?



Nothing. It's on the house!

Deer Reminders

- Fawning
- De-velvetting



Cattle Reminders

- Dairy calves—copper, selenium
- Dairy calves—worm control & boost clostridial & leptospirosis vaccination
- Bulls—watch for unsoundness
- Cows monitor SR and NRR

DAIRY COW SCANNING

She's all downhill from here until Christmas! Seems a bit early given mating has just begun for the main herd, but the next thing to think about is measuring your reproductive success. Here are some notes on booking your scanning to get the information you want.

To identify cows and heifers pregnant to AB

We like around 40 days (or 6 weeks) from your AB date. This means any cows that are not found to be pregnant will be a bull mating or empty. For heifers that have had a synchrony program in October, this scanning is during December- so right around the corner! An early scan allows management decisions to be made early in response to the results. To get your 6 week in calf rate, the scan would be booked 12 weeks after PSM. As this scan is early, unless your mating is very short, you require a second late scanning to age late calvers.

To find late calving cows

Work out the date when you want everything calved by, e.g., 1st October. That means that all cows in calf before the 22nd of December will be calved before this cut-off date. Therefore, if we scan 6 weeks after the 22nd Dec, cows at least 6 weeks pregnant will calve in the time frame we require them to. Cows less than 6 weeks pregnant would be calving after the 1st of October.

An additional benefit of finding late calving cows is the more efficient grazing management of pasture. Late calving cows can be held off the milking platform and can be fed differently over winter.

To find empty cows

The later this scan the better, as with most 'normal' pregnancies there is a chance that the pregnancy will not go full term (due to embryonic loss or abortion). Therefore, if all you want to do with scanning is to find your empty cows, the testing is best done later in the season. Foetal aging is best done earlier, as a result of variation in individual animal size accuracy can decrease after 90 days of pregnancy, this often means that you need to include an early dating scan if you require this information.

We recommend rescanning all cows as a way of detecting any slips that have occurred in natural calving cows. The cost of scanning these animals a second time is recouped by not needing to winter feed empty cows.

So give us a ring to discuss your scanning needs with a Veterinarian and get your scanning booked!

Samantha Elder BVSc (dist) Dipscitech (agriculture)

CATTLE DEHORNING AND DISBUDDING

Cattle dehorning and disbudding is a common job over the spring in the dairy herd, and summer for beef farmers at calf marking or weaning. Here are some reminders for the coming season:

- **It is no longer acceptable to disbud or dehorn animals without local anaesthetic EVER!!**



- **But this doesn't just mean only Veterinarians can do this job.** We are able to do some training and a short practical test in order to certify you to do your own local anaesthetic and dehorning/ disbudding. This is an annual accreditation and requires you to do a practical assessment yearly, to record and reconcile what local anaesthesia you have used and on how many animals, and that you return any left-over local anaesthetic after the end of the specified dehorning or disbudding period on your certification.
- There are benefits of giving an additional longer acting pain relief injection such as Rheumocam, in particular, when you are doing dehorning in conjunction with castration and other painful procedures to limit the growth rate reduction after the procedure. Consider talking with your Vet about a suitable pain relief option, nowadays there are very practical administration devices such as bottle mount guns that mean you don't need to draw up doses which can slow things down and make giving this extra pain relief convenient.
- We advise the use of a topical antibiotic such as Tetravet afterwards, and close monitoring for a week to ensure rapid action if infection occurs. Doing dehorning or disbudding in good weather spells is useful.
- Be mindful during the summer that flies can get in and lay eggs in disbudding or dehorning wounds, so ensure rapid action is taken if this occurs, or a preventative measure is in place.

If you have any issues with your dehorning or disbudding, as always phone the clinic on 03 2025636

Samantha Elder BVSc (dist) Dipscitech (agriculture)

Horse Reminders

- Keep bot eggs off legs
- Hoof care



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 2023.