

Pregnancy Scanning

A lot of information can be gathered from aged pregnancy scanning and it is still not too late. The right A.I. date is not always the last one! What will you achieve?

- confirmed conception dates
- more reliable expected calving dates
- better information on in-calf rates across all mating
- assess bull performance – review bull policies
- identify late calvers for culling decisions
- make targeted dry-off decisions to meet BCS targets at calving
- implement more precise winter management of cows e.g. milk late calvers longer
- calculate grazing days for feed budgeting and to plan for calving
- accurately review mating performance to identify areas for focus and what worked well
- compare age groups of animals or early calving cows with late calving cows on MINDA web



A calf at 42 days pregnancy

Northern Southland Submission Rates

Across the board submission rates are down. Of all the farms on Minda we average 80.65% 3 wk submission rate (from a high of 93% to a low of 69%). Essentially the average farm is a full 10% back on SR compared to where they should be.

The consequences of lower than expected submission rates may include

- Lower replacement heifer numbers next season
- Increased workload for service bulls this season
- Poorer total in calf rate as a result of poorer 6 week in calf rate
- A slower calving pattern next season

The Fertility focus financial analysis estimates every 1 % below target 6 week in calf rate is costing you \$4 per cow (\$2 for 50:50 sharemilkers).

Rochelle Smith BVSc MANZCVS

Hot off the press

Early 6 week in calf rate results so far show a mixed bag but generally below par. Range currently extends from 59-75%, averaging 68.5% with a mean of 63.4%. This is a full 10% points behind the target of 78% however, it is not surprising given the poor submission rates experienced in spring.

Cattle Reminders

- Worm treatment for calves
- Remove bulls
- Pregnancy test

Removal of Excede LA & Excenel Rtu From RVM's

As some of our dairy farmers may have already noticed, we are gradually removing 3rd generation cephalosporins such as Excede LA and Excenel RTU from Restricted Veterinary Medicines (RVM's).

Cephalosporin antibiotics are important in treating many human diseases so it is critical that we preserve the effectiveness of these drugs and slow the development of antibiotic resistance by only using them when absolutely necessary.

Consequently, these drugs are inappropriate as first-line treatments options. This change in clinic policy was unanimously agreed upon by our veterinarians in response to increasing industry pressure to minimise the use of antibiotics, particularly those of importance in human medicine, in food producing animals.

Many of the infectious diseases we see in cattle will respond to tetracycline antibiotics (Alamycin LA, Bivatop) or penicillin-based antibiotics (Intracillin, Norocillin). If an animal fails to respond to these first-line treatments, it may be worth getting a veterinarian on-farm to examine the animal. Remember that antibiotics are only effective if a bacterial agent is causing the disease.

Whilst Excede LA and Excenel RTU will still be available, they will only be dispensed at the discretion of the consulting veterinarian. Please remember to always refer to your PARs to determine what drug is appropriate for the condition you are treating. If you have any questions about individual cases, we are only a phone call away.

Kate Taylor DVM



1. Staff Comment, Feline FIV
2. The Dark Side to Legumes
3. Iodine in sheep
4. Pregnancy scanning, Removal of Excede LA & Excenel Rtu From PARs

February is kitten month! Make sure to bring your new addition in for a check-up, vaccination and worm!

Staff Comment

We were delighted to welcome Becky back at the start of December. She had spent 9 months working in the UK in general practise and in Canada at a referral hospital. The time in Canada was done as part of her Masters in Veterinary Science. She worked with the Internal Medicine and Imaging specialists and we are already benefitting from the lessons she learned. The large number of difficult cases she saw in a condensed period allowed her to cram several years of experience into a few months. She is well through the course at the moment and we are looking forward to celebrating her successful completion of it next year.

After four and a half years we have said goodbye to Colleen as our cleaner in Riversdale. She will be sorely missed, especially everyone's favourite Friday smoko. We hope she will still drop in from time to time, she doesn't even need to bring the picnic basket.

Tamahine Matthews has replaced Colleen and is doing an exceptional job. We are very pleased to have her on the team. Our annual spud in a bucket contest was wide open as last year's champion



was not here to defend the title. The count and weigh in were held in mid-January; Jill managed to produce a little over 1.3kg of potatoes to take out the heavyweight category. Paul won the most spuds section with 28 spuds ranging in size from a peanut to a hazelnut. Special mention goes to Morgan for failing to produce a potato and to Andrew for failing to plant one despite a theatrical performance worthy of Shortland Street.

Pet Reminders

- Check for barley grass
- Flea & worm treatment and prevention

Have you heard about Feline Aids?

Feline FIV infection is similar to HIV infection in people. It is a virus that is spread primarily by biting, so any cat that has access to outdoors is at risk of infection. NZ has one of the highest prevalence's of FIV infection in the world, and in some feral cat populations in NZ it is estimated up to 36% of cats are positive.



Following infection a cat may show no signs for many years.

The virus affects the cells of the immune system, causing a gradual decline in the cat's immune function. A variety of diseases are associated with FIV infection including anaemia, lymphoma (a form of cancer), chronic inflammatory conditions and increased susceptibility to secondary and opportunistic infections.

There is no treatment for FIV infected cats except to support good health by a balanced diet, parasite and vaccination programmes and managing any infections early and aggressively.

There is a vaccine available against FIV. This is not considered a core vaccination, however, due to the high number of cases of this disease we strongly recommend it. Prior to vaccinating we perform an in-clinic blood test to ensure your animal is not already infected with the virus. If this is negative, your cat will require 3 initial vaccinations 2-4 weeks apart and then a yearly booster. It is recommended that cats that are vaccinated should be microchipped, as some rescue shelters routinely test for FIV status and vaccination will result in a positive ELISA test.

FIV infection has serious implications for your cats health – talk to your vet today about vaccinating your cat against this virus! Rebecca Morley BVSc BSc



The Dark Side of Legumes

The race to fatten and slaughter lambs before the schedule takes another dive is well under way and a complaint we often get at this time of year is the sudden death of healthy looking lambs. In a lot of cases it can be attributed to clostridial disease (i.e. pulpy kidney), particularly when vaccination regimes have been poorly managed and lambs are on good quality feed.

Many of you may also be using specialist lamb crops to help fatten lambs and the rest of you have probably considered or tried this in the past. Recently we have been involved in another cause of sudden death of lambs on such crops.



These lambs are typically on pure clover or lucerne swards and some farmers have reported in excess of one lamb death per day over several weeks. The attributable disease in these cases has been "Redgut", a disease in which the gut twists and strangulates itself. The resulting venous obstruction causes rapid death with little in the way of clinical signs. Typically lambs are fine for 3-4 weeks before the deaths start occurring. This is thought to be the result of shrinking of the rumen (largest stomach) due to the highly fermentable feed passing through much quicker. Shrinking will usually take several weeks and may then predispose the gut to twisting as a result of more room in the abdomen and a smaller rumen to act as an anchor.

Not a lot is known about this disease but it is thought that the best way to prevent these deaths is through allocation of adequate fibre which will slow passage of feed. This can be regularly running animals off onto ryegrass, supplying hay (if they eat it?!) or planting mixed swards with a ryegrass (or enough weeds!). None of these options are perfect and can be counterproductive to fattening a lamb quickly, but so is a dead lamb. Ensuring clostridial vaccination is up to date is also paramount for these crops and it is often worth considering a 6-in-1 or 10-in-1 vaccination programme. If you have any questions please contact Rochelle or I at the clinic. *Andrew Cochrane BVSc*



A Happy Customer



Dear Riversdale NSVets
to whom you go to fix up pets
I'm a favourite customer of yours
and have my own four paws.
You help with kind and care for me
and even let me sniff your tree!
I've been in there, you've had me fixed
right in the place I like to lick!
That Michael Baer, he is the man
if he can't fix it no one can.
I once got stung by a bee
on my tongue where you cannot see
the vet was Morgan on that day
he got it out for me, hooray!!
Then there was the time, I had a problem with my paw
some barely grass had made it sore
Vet Becks looked at me and gave me help
and made me better and I didn't yelp
So NSVets you are the best miles above all the rest
I love going there to get fixed up
Lots of love Miss Pheobe Pup



Horse Reminders

- Check teeth & hoof care

Purchase your Drench from us and we will give you a FREE FEC Check

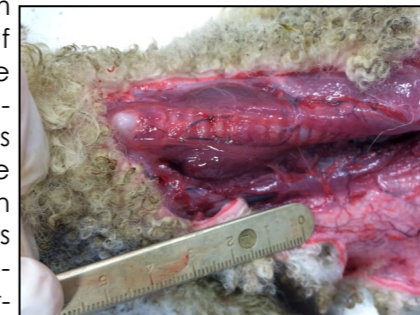
It is recommended that you do at least one **drench check** every year. This is very simple. Collect 10 fresh faecal samples 10 days after drenching with an oral drench. Send them in for a FEC. Ideally keep the samples separated, an egg carton works quite well. Send these in as soon as possible but if you have a delay, store the samples in a (working) fridge. Anything less than a zero count requires discussion. It is recommended that you test drenches to be used on your farm with a full faecal egg count reduction test (FECRT or **drench test**) every 3-5 years. The price of this is cheap compared to the cost of continuously using an ineffective drench.

Iodine in Sheep - Plant and Soil

It is well known that most cases of iodine deficiency are seen where stock are grazing goitrogenic crops, namely brassica species. It is not simply because these crops contain goitrogens called thiocyanates, which interfere with iodine uptake in the thyroid gland of the ewe. It is further compounded by the fact that brassicas have an iodine content that is already very low. All plants have 10-30 fold less iodine than the soil in which they are growing, because plants do not require iodine for growth, however brassica species contain notably less. To top it all off, our soil is naturally very deficient limiting the ability of this crop to provide sufficient iodine for pregnant ewes.

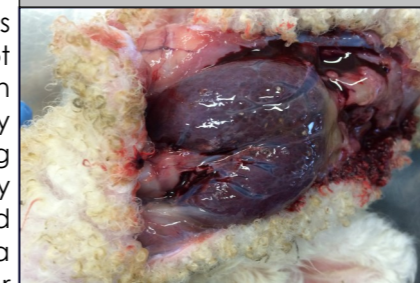
But do we have any idea how much we are lacking? Grace et al, 2010 found that ewes require 0.2 mg of iodine (I) per kg of dry matter (DM) fed. Where goitrogens and crops are fed this rises between 0.5mg to 2mg I per kg DM to account for the reduced uptake of iodine when they are present. The same research showed that in Southland the concentration of iodine for perennial ryegrass was 0.12-0.18mg/kg DM and in swede and kale it varied from 0.05mg/kg DM in swede bulb, 0.28mg/kg DM in swede leaf and between 0.07-0.15mg/kg between kale stem and bulb. Of course there are variations in soil types and cultivars so we must keep this in mind, but it does help to demonstrate an interesting point.

With this in mind, it is not perhaps surprising that we have recently seen a case in hoggets which were not winter grazed on brassica crop, only on ryegrass, giving birth to severely goitre-affected lambs. This was a timely reminder that even animals purely grazed on pasture are not immune from iodine deficiency in our soils. Goitre is seen as the tip of the iceberg. Subclinical iodine deficiency may be affecting your lambs without you realising. You may see that there are more stillbirths or weak lambs which easily topple in



Above: These thyroids probably would not be visibly enlarged externally, however they have a thyroid:body weight ratio of clinical deficiency!

Below: Massive thyroids! Visible goiter seen.



our delightful southern spring weather, which of course is easy to give the primary blame! If you are you will have many more which go unnoticed. The only way to know for sure is to check!

Currently the only reliable way to diagnose if a sub-clinical or clinical deficiency is occurring, without overt signs of goitre, is to bring in stillborns or lambs that die very soon after birth. Bringing us 10-15 lambs is enough for us to dissect out and measure the lamb body weight with the total thyroid weight and come up with an average ratio to determine if any deficiency is present. Lambs with un-noticeable but enlarged thyroid glands will have a higher thyroid to body weight ratio than others. If this is over 0.4-0.8g/kg body weight there is likely to be benefits in supplementing with iodine. Though this is reactive rather than proactive, it is the only way to reliably diagnose deficiency and help you to make a plan for years ahead. Remember that only very severely deficient animals will show noticeable thyroid enlargement to the naked eye!

Flexidine is a long acting iodine injection which is given 4-6 weeks prior to mating or not less than two months before the start of lambing. Benefits of treating prior to mating are twofold. If you are grazing crops, it is recommended to give this at least 2 months prior to going on crop. This usually times well if done prior to mating, also there has been some research to suggest that ewes may have increased mean litter sizes (compared to deficient ewes) if done then. Annual re-treatment is necessary, as the effects lasts for 200 days. Oral treatment at strategic times is also an option, however is more labour intensive and less reliable due to their short acting nature, if you wish to know more about your options, give us a ring at the clinic.

Samantha Edgar BVSc



Deer Reminders

- Sex and tag fawns
- Copper supplementation - pre - mating & weaners
- Weaners - Yersiniavax first injection
- Clostridial vaccination

Sheep Reminders

- Inject Toxovax and Androvax
- Inject 1st dose Campylobacter Vaccine
- Faecal egg count lambs
- Check, exercise and palpate rams
- Treat ewe lambs - long acting cobalt
- Fly treatment and prevention
- Weigh ewe lambs & assess for mating
- Inject iodine at least 4 weeks pre-tup
- FECRT