

WEANING DISEASES IN DEER

Weaning is an important calendar event for deer farmers, and one that takes planning and preparation to ensure stress is reduced and young deer adjust to the change effectively. Many deer farmers know that when things go wrong, they go really wrong. There are as many methods to weaning practices as there are farmer's so I won't go into detail and focus instead on weaning diseases. Recognising any disease early in its course can prevent spread and reduce mortality, so if you suspect something is amiss- give us a call and act quickly. Of course, prevention is better than cure!

Yersiniosis

Yersinia is caused by a bacterium *Yersinia paratuberculosis*. The bacteria can live for several months in soil and water. Things to look out for are scours, often starting watery green and progressing through to bloody and death (sometimes without any clinical signs at all). There is a vaccination for Yersinia, discuss with your veterinarian whether this should be something you consider.

Fusobacterium

Deer have a very small surface area to stand on for their weight, and as a result there can be a lot of force generated when deer slip and propel themselves. This coupled with their flighty nature means that their hooves come under stress and often have nicks and grazes, particularly of the lower limb during yarding. Enter *Fusobacterium necrophorum*; a bacterium which is widespread in the environment and soil. It only becomes an issue when it passes the skin barrier via these wounds and set up an infection. The bacteria causes foot infections and sepsis and death can result. Look out for lame weaners, or animals lagging at the back of the mob during shifting. Antibiotics can prevent death if given early enough, there is no vaccination for Fuso. Careful yarding and handling, and patience can prevent the number of foot wounds as does rubber matting in high pressure areas of the deer shed.

Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis is another bacterial disease which can present as lethargy, deaths and sometimes jaundice (very yellow gums) and red urine. It is spread through carrier animals shedding the bacteria in their urine, which can live in the environment for months in the right conditions. There is a vaccination for leptospirosis, and there is potential for humans to become very sick if they are in contact with infected deer urine.

Don't forget getting your internal parasite program up to scratch- if you need help developing a plan for your farm, please don't hesitate to get in touch with one of our vets.

Samantha Edgar BVSc

TEASERS

As many of the family men out there will know, teaser surgery is fairly quick, safe and simple. Ideally we do them a month or two before they are needed, but they can be done closer if it slipped your mind! Bring them in on a trailer or we can come to you.

Why use teasers?

- More lambs sooner!
- Advance lambing, synchronise, improve lambing %, and if harnessed help select ewe replacements by identifying dries, assess timing of mating, detection for AI.

Who?

Consider using more virile breeds for teasing such as the Finn, Suffolk or Poll Dorset. Young rams are okay (and surgery is a little quicker) but best not to use hoggets as they often aren't smelly enough for use that season.

When?

There are a few variations but generally they should be introduced 17 days prior to the ram (contact us if you want to discuss this).

How?

- The aim is to trigger that first less fertile cycle, ensuring ewes are in their 2nd cycle by the time of the ram. Hence the teaser needs to be before the normal onset of heats. If you mate late or within the normal season, teasing may not help a great deal.
- For the 'ram effect' to work, it is best that ewes are well away from rams for at least three weeks leading up to teasing (out of sight, smell and sound).
- Remember to use high ratios of rams following teasers as if the synchrony works they will need to be busy to capture the benefit.

Hoggets: Teasers are essential for successful hogget mating. Again 17 day's prior – silent heat in 0-4 days with fertile heat 17- 21 days after that. You can use the same teasers on the hoggets as the ewes. Breed for 26 days only to avoid late lambs.

Ratios:

Ewes: 1:300 or 1:500 on flat farms (but use more if you can)
 Hoggets 1:75

Note that teasers are not immune to **Brucellosis** and should be tested for this too. The lumps that form in the testes of teasers could mask those we look for at ram palpating time.

Finally, don't forget to remove the teaser as they can dominate the real rams and distract them from their work!

Rochelle Smith BVSc MANZCVS

Pet Reminders

- Check for barley grass
- Flea prevention and treatment

LAUNCH OF THE LIFESTYLE BLOCK CLUB

Animals on lifestyle blocks, although often loved like pets, frequently miss out on vital preventative health care treatments due to financial or practical constraints. Too often we see these animals suffering from preventable diseases which we generally don't see on larger farms anymore due to strict vaccination protocols, parasite prevention programs and regular nutritional testing. We want to change this!

Throughout 2018, we aim to make animal preventative health care treatments more affordable and accessible to lifestyle farmers by introducing individual dosing in the areas of vaccinations, parasite control and trace elements. This will be available to owners of small numbers of cattle, sheep, goats, alpacas, llamas, pigs and chickens.

At this point in time, oral drench, injectable drench and 7-in-1 vaccinations can be purchased at individual doses from behind the counter at the Riversdale Clinic. We also offer Faecal Egg Count (FEC) testing for many of these animals prior to drenching to determine whether a drench is actually required- simply bring us a small pottle of poo for us to test and we will get back to you with recommendations!

If you are unsure about how to administer any of these treatments to your animals (this can be very difficult with friendly animals), one of our veterinarians will happily come out to your farm to administer them. Additionally, farm visits will be required if we need to carry out trace element testing via blood tests.

Currently this programme is free and open to any of our lifestyle block clients wishing to improve the health of their animals. We ask that you leave your details with us so that we can send out reminders about when booster vaccinations are due and keep you up-to-date.

Further details about the recommendations for individual species can be found at the Riversdale clinic or by speaking to one of our veterinarians out on farm!

Kate Taylor DVM, BSc-Hons

Horse Reminders

- Check teeth
- Hoof care

STAFF COMMENT

Unfortunately we have recently received word of an injury to Bev who has hurt her leg and will require some months off work.

Bev is our longest standing staff member after Paul and will be hugely missed while she convalesces. We wish her the very best in her recovery.

Debbie MacLennan will be filling in for Bev in Mossburn until she recovers.

Julia G managed to do a 'little' damage to her arm while falling through the glass house. Nothing a couple of nights in hospital and surgery couldn't fix!

Jill also managed to injure her knee and will be a little restricted for a few weeks as she mends.

At Riversdale we are thrilled to welcome Julia Molloy to the front desk team. Julia has settled in seamlessly but does make life a little confusing with now two Julias and a Julie.

We hope you all managed to get a little break (not literally) over the Christmas or New Year period and wish you all the very best for the year ahead. A little rain wouldn't go astray.



Julia Molloy

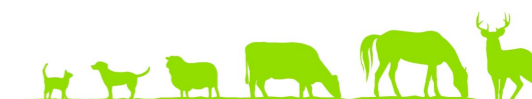
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CALF AND HEIFER MANAGEMENT OVER AUTUMN

Like so many things in farming, good reproductive performance starts well before the bull goes out.

Puberty in cattle is influenced largely by size as opposed to age, or more specifically % of mature body weight. There is a limit to how fast an animal can grow and if they start behind the 8 ball, no amount of feed can make up for poor growth or nutrition early on.

Calves ideally should have been grown to good weaning weights (Friesian 90-110 kg, Jersey 65-85 kg) on high quality, high protein feed.

Ensure animals have been tested and supplemented for trace elements, and have a parasite programme in place so that there are 'no excuses' for not performing as you would like. They should be up to date with their Clostridial and Lepto programme (call if you want to discuss any of this).

Measuring liveweights

When heifer liveweights are low, repro performance is reduced for two reasons

1. Delayed first calving – delayed puberty and less likely to be cycling by PSM
2. Delayed interval from calving to the next conception – late calving heifers become late calving cows and so on. The 6 week in-calf rate in first lactation can be reduced by more than 15% in underweight heifers.

Weigh at least every 3 months at a similar time of day (morning) and stand for about 2 hrs prior, to reduce gut fill changes from each session.

Tips to make weighing easier

- Walk through heifers regularly to accustom them to people
- Handle them quietly – it will be quicker in the long run/next time
- Cover scales with matting to reduce noise
- Sometimes helps to have them run through prior to weighing
- Portable yards may be worth investing in

Setting liveweight targets

Weigh your 6-8 year olds of body condition score 4.0-5.0 in Dec-Jan or April-May to get an idea of the adult live-weight in your herd. Or you can estimate these from lwt BV from your herd improvement organisation. Set your targets from weaning through to calving. Weigh every three months. If a freisian is 500 kg, crossbred 450kg and jersey 400 kg...

Mature liveweight	400kg	450	500	550	600
3 mo (weaned)	70 kg	80	90	100	110
6 months (30% of mature weight)	120 kg	135	150	165	180
9 months	160	180	200	220	240
12 months	200	225	250	275	300
15 months (60% of mature liveweight)	240	270	300	330	360
18 months	290	330	365	400	440
22 months (90% of mature body weight)	360	405	450	495	540

Animals falling behind the targets (usually those later born) should be separated and preferentially fed. Feeding the whole group can be inefficient and lead to fatty udders and actually reduce the future milk production of the animal.

Assessing calving pattern of first calvers

Top farmers have 75% of their heifers calved by week 3 and 92% by week 6 of calving. Less than 65% and 85% respectively needs reviewing. (Include calf and heifer management, bull management, and inseminating technique and heat detection). Higher results should be expected if heifer mating was earlier than for the milking herd.

Assessing the 3 week submission rate of first calvers

This may be a good indicator of how successful the calf and heifer management has been. Top farmers are achieving 90% submitted by week 3 of AB.

Planning mating

Consider mating 2 weeks earlier than herd to help achieve good repro performance at their next mating. Will you do AB (with or without synchrony) or natural mating? Select low BV for calving difficulty or an easy calving bull.

During mating

Monitor liveweights and supplement if need be. Ensure parasitism is not an issue, avoid sudden changes in feed. Monitor bull behaviour and have ample bull power.

Pregnant heifers

Monitor liveweights at least every 3 months. Remember to feed for growth and pregnancy.



Rochelle Smith BVSc MANZCVS

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

IODINE ISSUE

You are probably all now aware of the flexidine shortage this year. Many of you will remember the days before injectable iodine and at this stage this is our best back up option.

Do I need it?

Lambs born to iodine deficient ewes may have a lower metabolic rate, impaired suckling, and inability to control heat loss. They are often born premature by 3-7 days or may be still born. They have less wool or may be hairless, small and weak with less vigour. They may or may not have overt goitre.

The mother may also have reduced milk production. Iodine also plays a role in fertility by increasing ovulation rate therefore number of lambs born but only provided selenium levels are adequate.

When do I need it?

Pre- mating: for more fecundity – more multiples, provided selenium is adequate.

Pregnancy: 60-70 days of pregnancy – the heart, lung, brain, nervous system and wool follicles are developing at the end of the third month and are all influenced by iodine.

Pre lamb – for lung surfactant and lung maturation improving lamb survival.

Also consider all animals 2 months prior to feeding of goitrogenic feed (brassicacs)

Supplement options

Injection (Flexidine/Depodine)

Normal full dose one month pre tup – lasts 200 days achieving benefits in the three key timeframes

You can dose later, and this may be an option should flexidine become available before scanning time.

Oral dosing

Timing of oral iodine supplements is ideally 8 and 4 weeks pre-lamb (+/- pretup as well)

Potassium iodide – dose of 280 mg as a powder mixed with water. We can't advise mixing this with drench as it may not mix well and the activity may be effected.

There are several products available including Vet LSD which also incorporate other vitamins and minerals to varying degrees, some of which may be in a form available to the animal.

Salt blocks

Unreliable due to varied intake and also loss of iodine by oxidation, volatilisation and leaching.

Pasture spray

Iodine is too volatile to be available to the animal this way, regardless of how careful you are to graze animals on the sprayed pasture. Also almost impossible to get the required intakes anyway.

Priority groups

This is up to each farm and depends on which ewes will have the highest value lamb.

We would generally suggest the 2 toothers as the main priority.

Animals that will graze on brassicas are also a priority.

If waiting until scanning we can select multiple bearing ewes and perhaps those in the first cycle.

Rochelle Smith BVSc MANZCVS



Deer Reminders

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

FEBRUARY IS PUPPY AND KITTEN MONTH!

The first months of a puppy's and kitten's life are action packed, but they are also crucial for their development into a healthy, happy adult.

Book a consult for your new kitten or puppy and we will discuss vaccinations, nutrition, fleas, worming and socialisation, ensuring they have the best start in life. All kittens will receive a free Bravecto spot on flea treatment, and all puppies go into the draw to win a years supply of Bravecto spot on flea treatment.

Puppy Preschool - Enroll Now!

STARTING 15TH Feb 2018, Riversdale

Puppy preschool is a must for all owners looking to give their puppy the very best start in life and the opportunity to grow into a well behaved sociable dog

The four week course includes...

- Socialisation
- Basic Training
- Intro to clinic
- Info on Puppy Care
- Questions and Answers
- Freebies

Phone Janece for any enquires (03) 202 5636