

### Elastic Vs Resilient Beef Cows

Many of our beef cows are run in conjunction with sheep. Her role is to produce a big calf EVERY year. Her other role is to maintain pasture quality for other classes of stock. This means eating varied amounts of often poor quality feed, and we still expect her to fulfil job number one. What is the effect of this practice on performance of our beef herd? That is what Beef and Lamb NZ's FITT Elastic Vs Resilient cow FITT project was trying to find out. Results of one years' trial are below.

#### What is an elastic cow?

This is the beef cow that uses summer surpluses to increase body weight while withstanding loss of weight in winter. Her weight fluctuates greatly.

#### The Resilient cow

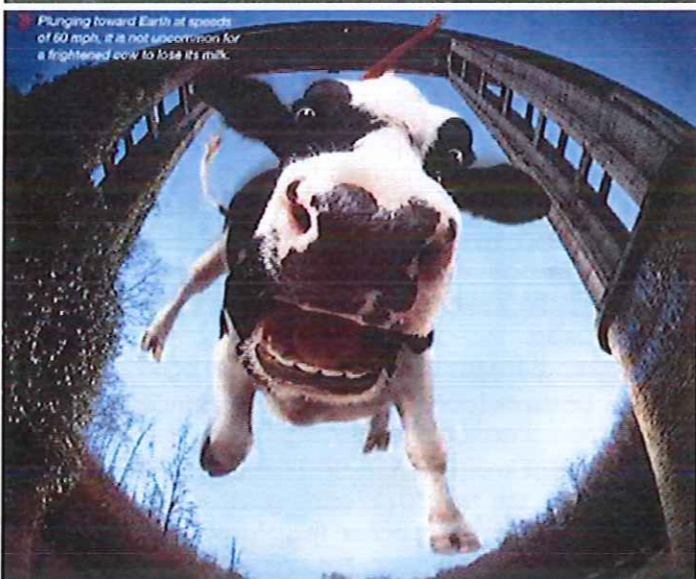
This is the cow that resists losing weight in poor feed conditions, and therefore is less dependent on gaining weight in the summer.

#### What they have found so far

- Single most important factor determining beef cow productivity is cow condition at mating
- The elastic cow is more economic provided
  - Winter feed is 6 x more expensive than the late spring/summer feed excess.
  - That reproductive rates are the same as the resilient cow and not put at risk.

I am sure this is provided the winter loss stops by 2 months after weaning and doesn't continue into calving!

Rochelle Smith BVSc MACVSc



### Interesting Facts About Ducks

- All types of ducks are part of the bird family Anatidae, and there are species of ducks found worldwide on every continent except Antarctica.
- A baby duck is called a duckling, and a male duck is a drake. An adult female duck is called a hen or a duck, and a group of ducks can be called a raft, team or paddling.
- All ducks have highly waterproof feathers as a result of an intricate feather structure and a waxy coating that is spread when preening.
- Ducks are precocial, which means that ducklings are covered in down and able to walk and leave the nest just a few hours after hatching.
- A hen will lead her ducklings up to half a mile or more over land after hatching in order to find a suitable water source for swimming and feeding.

- Male ducks have an eclipse plumage similar to females that they wear after the breeding season for about a month as their new feathers grow. During that month, they are completely flightless and more vulnerable to predators.
- Most duck species are monogamous for the breeding season but they do not mate for life.
- When constructing her nest, a hen will line it with soft down feathers she plucks from her own breast.



1. Equine dental care, Sheep farmers food for thought
2. Constipation in dogs
3. Leptospirosis and deer
4. Elastic verses resilient beef cows, interesting facts about ducks

### Winter Dairy Training

Over winter we will be holding weekly training sessions on a wide range of topics.

Check out our Facebook page for details

### Pet Reminders

- Check diet for winter
- Check bedding warmth for winter
- Worm cats and dogs
- Arrange annual check up
- Check dog registration

### Dental Care

The importance of maintaining the health of your horse's mouth

#### Common dental problems

- Sharp enamel points forming on the cheek teeth, causing ulcerations on the cheeks
- Retained caps (baby teeth that are not shed)
- Discomfort caused by bit contact with the wolf teeth
- Hooks forming on the upper and lower cheek teeth
- Long and/or sharp canine teeth interfering with the insertion and removal of the bit
- Lost and/or broken teeth
- Abnormal or uneven bite planes
- Excessively worn teeth
- Abnormally long teeth
- Infected teeth and /or gums
- Misalignment/poor apposition (can be due to congenital defects or injury)
- Periodontal (gum) disease



#### Recognising dental problems

Horses with dental problems may show obvious signs, such as pain or irritation, or they may show no noticeable signs at all. That is due to the fact that some horses adapt to their discomfort. For this reason dental examinations are essential. Indicators of dental problems include:

- Loss of feed from the mouth, difficulty chewing or excess salivation
- Loss of body condition
- Large or undigested feed particles in the manure
- Head tilting or tossing, bit chewing, tongue lolling, fighting the bit, or resisting bridling
- Poor performance, such as lugging in the bridle, failure to turn or stop, maybe even bucking
- Foul odour from the mouth, or nostrils, or traces of blood from the mouth, nasal discharge or swelling of the face, jaw or mouth tissues

Oral examinations are an essential part of any annual health plan. The end result is a healthier, more comfortable horse. Call one of our clinics to book an appointment.

### Sheep Farmers Food For Thought

Once again we are hearing about ewe weights and body condition scores. Here are some comments I have read lately.

Trevor Cook's "...ewe condition remains a major limiting factor...too many ewes are going to the ram below BCS 3...for two tooth too many are not heavy enough regardless of their condition...so often it starts with the weight of the 2 tooth as a ewe hogget back in May..."

Tom Fraser of AgResearch...average body condition score of NZ ewe flocks is half a point lower than what is should be at the start of lambing. This half point equals 3 kg of weaning weight per lamb in a set of twins...15 % loss in body weight mid pregnancy means 10% less lambs...12 % loss late pregnancy equals 10 % lower birth weight... sheep farmers may be looking after dairy farmers at the expense of their own flocks.

Remember generally there is no extra requirement above maintenance for the first 100 days of gestation. However nutrition is important as this is when the placenta is developing (up to d 90). Ideally from 6 weeks out from lambing have covers of over 1200 kgDM/ha to ensure ewes are being fully fed and maintain this residual over lambing to ensure adequate allocations.

Rochelle Smith BVSc MACVSc



### Sheep Reminders

- Vaccinate 2 tooth 2nd vaccine Salmonella Brandenburg
- Re-evaluate winter feed budget
- FEC ewe lambs
- Introduce winter feeding
- Condition score hoggets & ewes
- Vaccinate mixed aged ewes Salmonella Brandenburg



## Constipation in Dogs

Constipation is very common in working dogs. It is the most common gastrointestinal problem that we treat working dogs for. Constipation is the infrequent and difficult evacuation of faeces. If left untreated, animals can become very sick.

There are a variety of causes of constipation including:

- Diet: bones, foreign bodies, hair
- Painful defaecation: pelvic fracture,
- Mechanical obstruction: enlarged prostate (entire male dogs), perineal hernia
- Severe dehydration
- Inactivity

Of these, **bones, severe dehydration** and an **enlarged prostate** are the most common causes of constipation that we see.

Constipation makes a dog strain to pass the faeces. Sometimes, small amounts of liquid will come out around the blockage, this can look like diarrhoea. Dogs may also vomit, refuse to eat and generally look unwell. If left untreated, constipation may progress to obstipation, a serious condition that requires surgical correction.

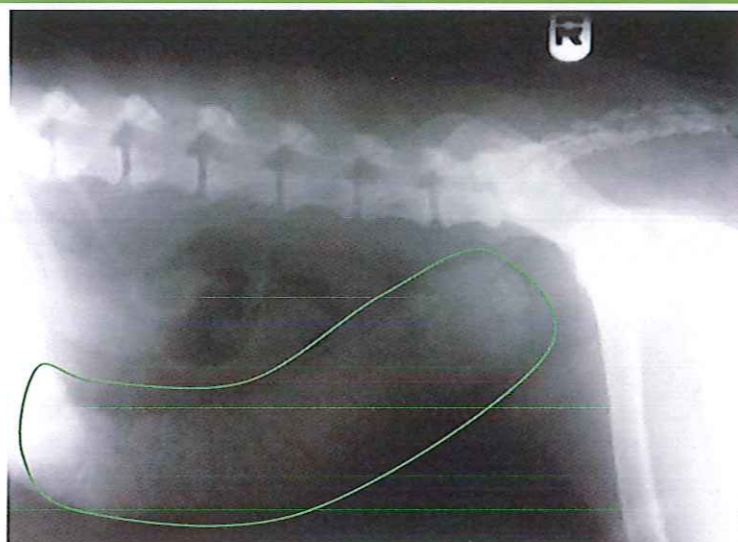
Treatment involves warm, soapy enemas to try and soften the faeces and allow them to pass. Along with this, often intensive fluid therapy, antibiotics and pain relief is required to support the animal. The longer an animal is constipated, the more difficult it is to treat and the poorer the prognosis. **If you suspect your dog is constipated, please do not delay in bringing them into the clinic.**

Prevention is much easier than treatment. Some simple steps you can take to decrease the likelihood of your dog becoming constipated are:

- Always provide fresh, clean water
- On frosty mornings, check that the water bowls have not frozen
- On days when your dogs are not working, let them out for a run and time to go to the toilet as normal
- Castrate your male dogs if you do not want to breed from them. This prevents benign enlargement of the prostate gland (but will otherwise not change your dog!)
- **DO NOT feed your dogs bones**, especially smaller bones that are likely to splinter and block the rectum
- Feed a diet that has a low risk of causing constipation and is designed for working dogs (such as Eukanuba Premium Performance)

Constipation is a common, unpleasant condition that can be difficult to treat but is very easily prevented! Keep a close eye on your dogs this winter for any signs of constipation and bring them to the clinic promptly for treatment.

Shelly Hann BVSc



X-ray of a dog with compacted faeces



### July is Arthritis Month at NSVets!

As the cold weather sets in arthritis in our furry friends and working dogs can become more obvious.

Book your cats and dogs in now for their arthritis check up during July.



### Horse Reminders

- Supplementary feed horses over winter
- Annual dental check
- Lice treatment
- Check for cover sores
- Check for mud fever
- Clip horses for hunting
- Hoof care

## Leptospirosis and the deer

Like most animals farmed in New Zealand, deer can be infected with and affected by leptospirosis. The main strains linked to disease are the same as those causing disease in cattle for the most part, with *Leptospira Copenhageni* the exception. It has been said that up to 85% of herds nationwide are infected with leptospirosis at any one time. Hardjo and Pomona are the most commonly found strains, with Pomona being most commonly incriminated in cases of clinical disease.

The cost of a disease outbreak can be substantial. Not only due to the loss of lives, but also the costs of antibiotic treatment and the reduced productivity in affected stock.

**Who is affected:** Clinical disease is most commonly seen in recently weaned calves, especially when mixed with deer from other mobs or properties. Wet conditions that promote pooling of surface water increase the risk of disease transmission.

**What to look for:** Sudden death is the most common presentation of disease. There may be no outward signs of disease prior to death and unless a post mortem examination is undertaken, diagnosis is difficult to make. Post mortem findings include red water, jaundice (yellow staining of the tissues), spotted kidneys and swollen liver or spleen which can be used to tentatively diagnose this disease. It can be easily misdiagnosed as *Yersinia* if post mortem is not undertaken.

**Sub clinical losses:** Recently, the less obvious effects of this disease have been partly quantified. In studies undertaken by Massey University, the effects of infection on weight gain and reproductive performance were examined. Weaning rates in vaccinated R2 hinds were 7% greater than unvaccinated herd mates in one study. In a separate trial, growth rates in vaccinated weaners were found to be 31g/day greater than non-vaccinated individuals on 5 properties in the North Island. While these results are not directly transferable to other farming situations, they indicate that sub clinical infection does cause economically significant losses.

**Control:** The risk of disease has to be assessed on a farm by farm basis, as no one control strategy will be appropriate for all properties. Assessing the risk in terms of past events, stock classes on the property, the environment and management factors (age at weaning, buying in stock, mixing of mobs) is important.

If the risk factors on your property are such that leptospirosis is more likely to occur, then vaccination is a key tool to manage disease. Benefits of vaccination are likely to be the greatest in herds with high prevalence and conversely lesser in those with low prevalence. However, naive herds are at increased risk of disease "outbreak" as they have had no prior exposure and hence no immunity, passive or active.

**Vaccination:** Two doses with either leptavoid 2 or 3 should be given 4 weeks apart, ideally prior to weaning to provide protection over the high risk "stress" period. This can be challenging to fit in, especially with early weaning in February/March. The most practical is to give a sensitising dose 4 weeks prior to weaning then a booster at weaning.

Vaccination has been shown to reduce the shedding of leptospires in urine and therefore reduce the level of exposure to humans. Thus, vaccinating deer not only helps protect the health of your stock but the health of the wider agricultural public, including yourself.

Justin Hogg BVSc



### Deer Reminders

- TB Test
- Pregnancy scanning
- Weaners—drench for lungworm
- Liver copper and selenium check dry hinds

### NSVets Dairy Winter Training

Dates for our first four seminars

- **Session #1 Stock sense**  
Thursday 5th June 2014
- **Session #2 Mastitis #1**  
Tuesday 17th June 2014
- **Session #3 Calf rearing**  
Thursday 26th June 2014
- **Session #4 Mastitis #2**  
Tuesday 1st July 2014

Phone 03 2025636 for more information or to register

### Cattle Reminders

- Lice control
- Milking machine annual check
- Calf rearers—organise suitable housing and milk powder requirements
- Rotavirus vaccine
- Salmonella vaccine
- InCalf fertility focus review
- Preferentially feed light cows
- Teatseal heifers

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