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NS VETS TOTAL VET CARE

	MARCH	JUNE
DAIRY COW	Aim to **dry off** at BCS 5.0 Dry off NOW (4 month precalving) cows ≤ 3 R3 ≤ 3.5 In APRIL (3 month precalving) Cows ≤3.5 R3 ≤ 4.0	Aim to hit BCS 5.0 for cows at calving 5.5 for heifers and R3s No more than 15% of herd less than BCS 5.0 or more than 5.5
DAIRY HEIFER	**18-19months** 290-440 kg for 400-600 kg herd weight respectively	**22 months** 90 % of mature weight 360-540 kg for 400 + 600 kg herds respectively
DAIRY CALF	**6-7 months** 120kg-180kg for mature weight of 400 and 600kg respectively	**9-10 months** 160-240 kg for 400-600 kg mature weight
EWE	**PreTup** Min. 2.5 best at 4.0 for maximum ovulation rate and lambing percentages. 1kg extra weight at mating can increase lambing by 1.3%	**Scanning** May lose weight (5kg but gain foetus and fluid weight 8-12 kg) A 12% loss in weight over pregnancy decreases lamb survival by 10% Don't lose more than half a BCS through pregnancy and aim to end at 3-4
LAMB Replacement	**May** Aim 35kg+	

Dear God:
Let me give you a list of just some of the things I must remember to be a good dog.
1. I will not eat the cats' food before they eat it or after they throw it up.
2. I will not roll on dead seagulls, fish, crabs, etc. just because I like the way they smell.
3. The litter box is not a cookie jar.
4. The sofa is not a "face towel."
5. The garbage collector is not stealing our stuff.
6. I will not play tug-o-war with Dad's underwear when he's on the toilet.
7. Sticking my nose into someone's crutch is an unacceptable way of saying "hello."
8. I don't need to suddenly stand straight up when I'm under the coffee table.
9. I will not come in from outside and immediately drag my butt on the rug,
10. I will not sit in the middle of the living room and lick my crutch.
11. The cat is not a squeaky toy, so when I play with him and he makes that noise, it's usually not a good thing.
12. I must shake the rain water out of my fur before entering the house—not after.

P.S Dear God:
When I get to heaven may I have my testicles back?

1. Situation comment, staff news and Drying cows off-who? Why? And when?
2. Magnesium in horses, Fawns first drench
3. If you don't measure, you can't manage, Fertility focus
4. Bob the greedy huntaway, Mismating-what are your options?
5. Denis the menace, Interesting facts about rabbits
6. Ewe fertility-pasture problems, Mastitis—How to take a sample and why it is worth the trouble
7. Drench resistance-the use of Startect, Knock out drench, Inductions in dairy cows-whats happening?
8. Body condition scores

Situation Comment

The dry has really set in recently and while not as serious at this stage as in some years previously it may well provide some reasonable challenges unless some rain arrives. Fortunately most people have plenty of supplement on hand unlike in other parts of the country.
Pregnancy testing of dairy cows and heifers has been in full swing for the last little while. Results are generally average with no major unexpected disasters to this point. We have been able to take great advantage of our new mobile device for recording cow numbers which can then be directly downloaded to computer which helps cut out a lot of paper work and time consuming data entry. We simply need to have MINDA access to your farm data to be able to do this.
There have been confirmed reports of enteric salmonella in Western and Eastern Southland. Please keep an eye out for this disease and report cases to the clinic. It helps us greatly to build up a picture for the area.
Worm levels have been pretty good recently but we would expect a large larval challenge once the rain comes.

Staff News

Quite a bit going on this month. We welcome Natasha (Tash) Leamy the newest member of the vet team at Riversdale. Tash brings enthusiasm and lots of knowledge fresh from gaining her veterinary degree at Massey University. Many of you will have met Tash already and for those that haven't, don't hold the fact that she is from the North Island against her or that her navigational skills are about as good as Shelly's.
On the nursing front there has been quite a virulent case of pregnancy with both Abbey in Te Anau and Hannah in Riversdale leaving us shortly for maternity leave. We wish them all the very best with their new careers in motherhood. Latasha McKaskie in Te Anau and Michelle Delange In Riversdale will be joining NS Vets and we are delighted to have them on board. Mike became a godfather again in January this time in the snow and cold of Germany — Marlon Brando eat your heart out.
Staff continued…
Becky has attended the World Small Animal Veterinary Conference in Auckland and Rochelle the World Sheep Conference in Rotorua. The sheep conference has only been held here once before so it was great to have Rochelle attend.

Drying Cows Off—Who? Why? & When?

The last couple months of the season have a profound effect on next seasons production. The timing and method of drying off affects calving condition, metabolic conditions at calving, mastitis, production and reproductive performance. It is a hard task for cows to gain condition in the last trimester and bad weather makes it more difficult. Drying off light cows, especially early calvers, off early is a good way to avoid the problem.
When feed is tight in autumn drying off is easy but it can make sense even when feed is abundant to dry off a proportion of the herd early. The amount of feed offered can be maintained and as the extra feed per cow will be converted into weight gain and increased production the effect on the vat is often less than expected.
Spring feed intake is highly dependant on available feed. High silage intakes have a negative effect on appetite so pasture cover in the first month after calving is important to keep appetites high. Growth over winter is unreliable so having a moderate pasture cover at drying off helps.
Drying off cows is the start of the new season not the end of this one.
Keeping this in mind can make it easier to dry cows off early.
Micheal Baer BVSc

Teddy Bear

A teddy bear is working on a building site. He goes for a tea break and when he returns he notices his pick has been stolen.
The bear is angry and reports the theft to the foreman.
The foreman grins at the bear and says "Oh, I forgot to tell you, today's the day the teddy bears have their pick nicked!!

Magnesium in Horses

Magnesium is an essential macroelement that is required for several physiologic processes in the body.

It serves as a co-factor for more than 300 enzymatic reactions. It is necessary for membrane stabilisation and nerve conduction.

Dietary magnesium deficiency is very rare unless extreme conditions combine to result in decreased consumption and increased demand, e.g. long distance transport of unfed lactating mares.

Maintenance magnesium requirements have been estimated for a 500kg horse doing no work to be approximately 7 grams (16g mag oxide).

Growing, lactating and exercising horses have a higher daily requirement of dietary magnesium. Mg intake should be increased to 1.5-2 times maintenance for horses undergoing moderate to intense exercise.

The typical equine diet contains sufficient Mg for maintenance, with supplementation rarely required.

If extra supplementation is required oral magnesium is commonly available as Magnesium Oxide.

Severe magnesiumb deficiency (hypomagnesaemia) results in neuromuscular disturbances, but such obvious clinical signs are rarely documented in horses.

However hypomagnesaemia is common in critically ill animals.

Clinical signs of hypomagnesaemia include muscle fasiculations, ventricular arrhythmias, seizures, ataxia and coma.

Hypermagnesaemia or overdose is extremely uncommon and signs include agitation, sweating, muscle tremors followed by recumbency and flaccid paralysis.

Feeding excessive amounts of Mag oxide can lead to major imbalances in uptake of other inorganic minerals.

There is no evidence that magnesium binds toxins in the grass. These toxins have oxidative effects meaning anti-oxidants like Vitamin E and selenium are more important in this role.

There is also a lack of scientific evidence to support the use of magnesium for modifying nervous behaviour in the horse.

Megan Reidie BVSc

Horse Reminders

- Worming treatment for foals
- Control bot eggs on horse legs
- Vaccinate foals for Salmonellosis, Tetanus and Strangles

Fawn's first drench

The most common question being asked at the moment is "what should I be using to drench my fawns". Having been involved with two drench trials undertaken in the Te Anau basin in the spring of 2011 and 2012, we have gained first-hand knowledge and are in a good situation to answer your questions.

In the late summer and autumn fawns are most susceptible to lungworm. The risk of intestinal worms increases later in the autumn (and continues the following spring). Therefore at the moment we are mainly targeting lungworm but we can't overlook the developing burden of gastrointestinal parasites. It is the gastrointestinal parasites that are causing the biggest headache at the moment with regard to drench resistance. Consolidating the results of all the drench trials in deer shows that we are yet to find a property with no resistance.

Results of trial in spring 2012:- Kill rates for ostertagia-type adult gastro intestinal parasites

Treatment	Efficacy
Moxidectin injection (ML)	100%
Moxidectin oral (ML)	97.9%
Oxfendazole oral (white)	71.8%
Levamisole oral (clear)	71.7%
Moxidectin inj + oxfendazole/ levamisole oral combination (ML/white/clear)	100%
Monepantel oral (Zolvix) double dose	86.6%

The results show that injection is a more effective method of drenching deer with only moxidectin injection and the moxidectin injection combination with levamisole and oxfendazole oral reaching 100% effective. Clear drenches (levamisole) were thought to be ineffective in deer because they were metabolised to quickly – this was work based on their efficacy against lungworm. However this trial is showing that levamisole does have some effect on ostertagia type worms but does fall well short of 100%. The new sheep drench Zolvix used at (double dose) is not effective. We suspect this is not a resistance issue because deer parasites have hardly had any exposure to this drench family. It is more likely that we don't know what the effective dose (and if there is one) for use in deer. The efficacy against immature ostertagia type worms is not available due to insufficient numbers being present when the trial started. However in all previous trials the efficacy against immature parasites tends to be poorer compared to adults.

From these results and results in previous trials, combination drenches (ML + white + clear) are likely to be more effective against resistant gastrointestinal parasites. Using the drench families in combination is the way to help preserve the activity of the individual actives and prolong their effectiveness. The newer anthlemintics - Zolvix in this trial and Startect used on spring 2010 trial - are not showing any promise for use in deer. Getting in and starting a drench programme early helps reduce the number of parasites the fawns are harbouring, optimising their weight gains and consequently reduces the number of eggs and larvae being shed onto pasture. This in turn helps keep pasture worm burdens to a lower level.

Jill MacGibbon BVMs MRCVS

Drench Resisitance -The use of Startect

Drench resistance is a main concern for NZ sheep farmers resulting in production losses and increasing costs to control parasites. Drench resistance can be effectively managed by using strategic drenching and an integrated approach to worm management. When routine lamb drenches are not fully effective they can allow resistant parasites to accumulate in lambs and contribute to a pasture build up of resistant parasites.

Strategic drenching to delay or manage anthelmintic resistance is the planned use of drenches to make routine drenches work effectively for longer.

Startect is an ideal strategic drench, it knocks out susceptible and resistant parasites. It can break the resistance cycle and has been shown to delay the onset of resistance to the existing routine drenches by reducing the period of reproductive advantage for resistant parasites over susceptible parasites. This reduces the resistant gene frequency in the population. This strategic or knockout drench can be given to lambs at any time but the greatest benefit is seen when conditions are favourable for larval survival on pasture and this is generally in late summer and autumn.

Paul Langford BVSc

Knockout Drenching

What is Knockout drenching?

It is the substitution of one of your routine lamb drenches with a new drench active.

When should I use a Knockout drench?

The ideal time to use a Knockout drench is in the late summer/early autumn prior to the time when weather conditions favour rapid larval development on pasture.

Why should I use a Knockout drench?

Modelling work has clearly shown that the substitution of a Knockout drench, into your existing lamb drench program, can significantly delay the onset of resistance to the existing drenches.

Which product should I use as a Knockout drench?

STARTECT is a ideal Knockout drench, because:

1. It contains a brand new active derquantal, against which there is no known drench resistance.
2. It is a combination product, also containing abamectin, which means each component protects the other and hence delays drench resistance for longer.
3. It has a very broad spectrum of activity, killing all of the major gastrointestinal parasites of sheep.
4. It is effective against parasites that are resistant to other drench families.

Paul Langford BVSc

Inductions in Dairy cows – what's happening?

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) stakeholders for use of induction drugs met in late 2012. The initial phase down agreement (15% - 8% - 4%) is coming to a close with farmers and veterinarians in the process of managing to the 4% level for the current calving season (2012-2013). **The group has set a limit of no more than 4% of cows to be induced in any individual herd for the 2013-14 calving season.**

Limits beyond 2013 are to be reviewed by the MOU stakeholders. Dairy companies have been conducting follow-up audit procedures with farmers, and are reinforcing the 4% limit for 2012/13. In addition MPI have been auditing the supply chain from manufacturers through to end user (vets). Farmers that have worked outside the guidelines will be personally visited by a milk company representative who may then also call in the veterinarian involved. The MOU stakeholders and central government are determined that the current level of inductions must be further reduced.

Operational guidelines remain in place and veterinary certification must be accurate. Where farm and mating management problems occur outside of the farmer's control, farmers can apply for a dispensation through their veterinarian to exceed the 4% limits. In 2012 this process has been more formal than in previous seasons and in each case a representative of the dairy company supplied has been involved in the decision.

In 2013 dispensations will only be granted where there is clear evidence that the predisposing circumstances were beyond the control of the farmer such as; AB technician failure, outbreak of a serious disease in the herd, major weather-related issues such as regionally declared drought, or serious ill-health on the part of the farmer. Generalised reasons such as 'poor body condition' or 'poor reproduction management' are unlikely to be acceptable. **Veterinarians cannot make their own decisions on whether farmers may exceed the target of 4%.**

Farmers purchasing cows to expand or establish new herds need to know that pregnancy testing information is a mandatory requirement where they intend to induce the cows being purchased. Our hands are tied. A clearly-defined recovery plan identifying the steps that will be taken to reduce future induction levels must also be provided.

In order for the dispensation process to be timely, it is important that induction lists and plans are developed as soon as possible after pregnancy testing data is available. The Guidelines indicate that plans and lists should be finalised at **least 60 days before** the start of calving. This will be essential in cases where dispensations are requested.

Ewe Fertility – Pasture Problems

Red Clover

Red clover is a palatable highly nutritious feed but it has a high oestrogen content that can cause ewes grazing it to be temporarily infertile. Ewes will still cycle but fail to conceive. This can be costly leading to more dry ewes, less multiples, and late lambers. Continued grazing of high oestrogen pastures can lead to permanent fertility issues - permanent clover disease (PCD). Grazing management can reduce this risk.

High oestrogen feeds alter the secretions of the reproductive tract hindering sperm transport. Ovulation rate is also reduced (less multiples). PCD may also be associated with lambing difficulty, bearings, and teat elongation.

If using red clover (particularly around mating) choose a low oestrogen cultivar, graze for no more than 3 days at a time alternating with low oestrogen feed for the remainder of the week. Pasture levels can be tested as the oestrogen can be highest in spring and autumn.

Or play it safe and don't graze red clover paddocks within 6 weeks of mating.

Zearalenone

This is a toxin produced by fusarium fungi. The fungi can grow on dead litter at the base of pasture particularly in warm dry conditions. After 10 days to 2 weeks of exposure the toxin can reduce ovulation rates despite the ewe being on heat more often and for longer. The result is more drys and less multiples. Rams may also be affected with reduced drive, teste size and sperm output.

Pasture samples can find the presence of toxin but not how much the sheep is actually getting. 3mg/ewe/day or more will depress ovulation rates and lower lambing percentages. Pooled samples of ewe urine can be tested for exposure. But this must be at the time of grazing the feed. It cannot be tested for retrospectively.

Risk is minimised by using grazing practices that maximise green leaf intake, and reduce dead matter production, and its ingestion.

Exposure to Zearalenone *after* mating does not affect the number of ewes pregnant nor their lambing rate. Most of the decreased reproductive performance is due to pre-mating exposure and reduction in ovulation rate.

Rochelle Smith BVSc MACVSc

Reference

Reproductive performance of Coopworth ewes following oral doses of zearalenone before and after mating.: Smith JF, di Menna ME, McGowan LT. J Repro fertility 1990 May; 89(1):99-106

Sheep Reminders

- Monitor B12 levels
- FEC lambs
- FEC ewes
- Vaccinate 2 tooths, 2nd vaccination of Campylobacter vaccine
- Review winter feed budget
- Exercise rams-check feet
- Flush ewes
- Re-vaccinate ewe lambs with clostridial vaccine
- Check zearalenone levels
- Teasers out with ewes

Mastitis –How to take a sample and why it is worth the trouble

With dry cow season fast approaching it's time to review the season's mastitis history. Was mastitis a problem, how big a problem, what to do in preparation for the next year?

An important part of any decision making is to know what bacteria is causing the problem. The colour of the milk, its texture, the degree of swelling or hardness of the udder gives no hint as to which bacteria may be responsible. The only way to know is to do a milk culture and at a herd level, to do several milk cultures (up to 20).

Milk cultures are similar to (what experts tell me) computers—the information which comes out is only as good as the starting product, in other words "SH_T IN SH_T OUT". Personal experience tells me that this not really true for computers—they all hate me, but it certainly is true for all milk samples. Contaminated milk samples produce an uninformative result—and the same bill. To take a proper sample requires care but gives a huge reward—knowing what you are dealing with. All of our clinics have detailed flyers on how to collect a sample.

Michael Baer BVSc

Cattle Reminders

- Pregnancy test
- Wean, mark and drench beef calves
- Cows & yearlings-lepto vaccination
- Dry off light cows and culls
- Review mastitis control—plan dry cow therapy and inductions
- Vaccinate for Salmonella
- Liver biopsy check for copper and selenium

If you don't measure, you can't manage"
EID and Deer

Experience and judgement are fundamental to farm decision making. When gains have been made (or things go backwards), inferences about their cause are largely based on the sixth sense of experienced judgement.

But is this 'sixth sense' going to be enough to maximise profitability? Have you ever *challenged* your suppositions and inferences? To complement sixth sense, better measurement is critical to management and fully embracing EID for its monitoring potential offers the chance to do just that.

Having reference to key performance indices (KPIs) allows better answer to the questions of 'where now', 'why', 'where to' and ' how'. Variation around these KPI's is also very important: averages may be useful, but may hide the critical detail. With data, targets can be set, accountable plans developed, working theories tested, benchmarks compared against, and goals realised. They also allow advisers to better understand your farm dynamics and - above all - share your vision. Some 'KPIs' are 'not negotiable'. Regular weighing of growing stock is obviously one of these – scales have always paid dividends. Equally important, arguably, is the need to physically and *objectively* body condition score (BCS) breeding hinds at critical times of the year: for example, (1) at least a month before the stags are put out; (2) at second scanning ie- mid winter scanning; (3) at set stocking for fawning. BCS is as important to breeding animals as is the pace of weight gains in the stock that are finished. Yet few people objectively monitor it.

Data collection for other KPI's may help with analysis of poor performance. Foetal ageing/ foetal scanning (and second scanning) is one example, for in the context of the private lives of deer, they will help to ascertain at what point any losses are likely to be occurring and they will allow prediction of expected fawning spread (with better understanding, in turn, of all the factors that underlie such spread). KPI's are especially useful, however, when looked at *collectively*. If your first fawners aren't achieving, for example, the causative problems may translate well back in time and historical information may be critical: weight at mating may correlate with poor fawning percentages, and the reasons for low weight/ BCS at presentation to the stag may need more critical analysis in relation to feed budgeting, specific management practices, worming regimens and so forth.

Part and parcel of the development and/or refinement of herd health/productivity planning is the identification of key information gaps. Means and 75% quartile data should be readily available for some indices (such as, for example, fawn weights at, say, 1 April, growth rates over autumn, winter and spring) and compared or extrapolated against target KPI's such as mean kill dates and mean slaughter weights. Weaning percentages (including both survival of weaners from first scanning and in relation to hind numbers put to the stag) should be identified separately, for first fawners versus mixed aged hinds.

You may already be employing EID to your advantage and know exactly where you stand with the most critical indicators (in terms of profitability and efficiency). It is, however, quite surprising how many enterprises do not have such refined data readily available at their fingertips and with the advent of EID, failure to embrace its huge potential is a tremendous opportunity foregone. If you don't measure, you may have excellent sixth sense but lack of measurement may mean inferences go unchallenged and potential progress may be marred.

Nigel Dougherty BVSc MRCVS

Deer Reminders

- Weaners—treat for internal parasites
- Put stags out
- Yersiniavax—second injection
- Certified velveters—return drug books
- Check copper and selenium status and treat if necessary

Fertility Focus

Reminders March-June

Calves

- Live weight— compare with targets
- Winter grazing

Heifers

- Live weight—compare targets
- Pregnancy testing
- BCS—will they calve at 5.5

Cows

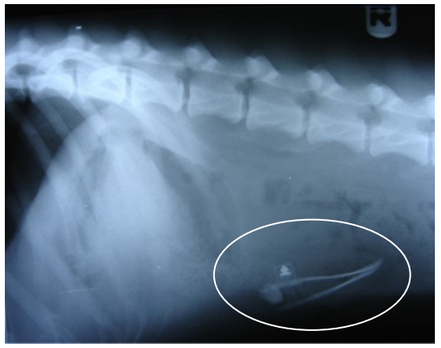
- BCS– will they calve at 5.0
- Sort into calving mobs before sending to grazing
- Final pregnancy test
- Dry off early calvers and light cows first

Password

During a recent password audit it was found that the office blond was using the following password: MickyMinniePlutoHueyLouieDeweyDonaldGoofey. When asked why such a big password, she replied that it had to be at least eight characters long.

Case Study:
Bob – the greedy Huntaway.

Bob is a 1 year old male Huntaway that presented to the clinic as he had been off colour for a week. He had been vomiting bile and the owners had been unable to entice him to eat. Bob had a temperature and was dehydrated. Bob had x-rays of his abdomen taken and there was a very unusual finding, as you can see below (in the white circles). It looked like Bob had swallowed an ear tag! Bob was taken to surgery where his abdomen was opened. The intestines were checked and there was a loop of small intestine that had been perforated by the corner of the ear tag. The damaged segment of intestine had to be removed along with the ear tag and the two healthy ends of intestine were then sutured together. Bob recovered well and is now back to running around the farm. Hopefully we won't see him again for any further foreign body removals!



Rebecca Morley BVSc BSc

Pet Reminders

- Flea treatment and prevention
- Check teeth and clip nails
- Worm cats and dogs

Mismating: What are your options?

There are several options available if your dog has been mismated. This article will outline the advantages and disadvantages of each option to aid your decision making.

Spey (surgery to remove the womb)

This is the only certain way to ensure your dog will not have puppies. It involves a surgery to remove the uterus and ovaries. This can be done 4 weeks after she has finished her heat. There are risks associated with the procedure as it is an invasive surgery. The risks are increased with the length of gestation as the blood supply to the uterus increases and the uterus becomes more likely to tear during the surgery. However, the further benefits of speying your dog are that she will not come into heat again nor will she be at risk of developing a uterine infection. Uterine infections cause dogs to become seriously ill and are life-threatening.

Alizin injection

This involves two subcutaneous injections of an anti-progesterone drug, given 24 hours apart. Administration of Alizin prevents implantation and maintenance of the embryo. The drug is most effective if given before 22 days post-mating but can work up to 45 days post-mating. However, this drug does not work 100 per cent of the time – you should be aware that there is a chance that your dog may still have puppies. It is therefore very important that your dog returns to the clinic for a follow-up ultrasound scan to determine if the Alizin has been successful.

Do nothing

The third option is to allow your dog to have puppies. She can then be speyed after weaning the pups to prevent another mismating occurring. The likelihood of a difficult birth must be taken into consideration, for example, if a Huntaway dog has mated a Jack Russell bitch, the likelihood of her having birthing difficulties is high. Also to be considered is the cost of raising a litter of puppies. Puppies require a lot of input – both in terms of money and time.

Ultimately, the only way to ensure that your dog will not have puppies is to spey her before her first heat. This has the added benefits of greatly decreasing the risk of mammary tumours and eliminating the risk of your dog developing a life-threatening uterine infection.

Shelly Hann BVSc

Dear God,
We dogs can understand human verbal instructions, hand signals, whistles, horns, clickers, beepers, scent ID's, electromagnetic energy fields & Frisbee flight paths.
What do humans understand???

Denis the Menace

It was seven years ago when Olivia's Dad met her off the school bus and asked if she wanted to go and pick up a new puppy. She promptly replied "does Mum know about this?" Dad said "Mum does not need to know everything." The lure of a new puppy was too much so consequently I arrived home to a fairly cute (don't quote me) Foxy/Jack Russell cross puppy who was promptly named 'Denis'.

'Denis' has become an indispensable farm dog (at least he thinks so). He has a fairly large ego and so completely ignores any other dogs of the same size and picks fights with larger ones. Coming off worse for wear does not seem to deter him.

Up until recently 'Denis' has been very good at staying at home when he is meant to but unfortunately he believes he is a bit of a man about town and has taken to visiting a local bitch when she is on heat, spending a lot of time under her kennel defending her honor. This visiting took an embarrassing turn when the owner came home to find 'Denis' had found that he could fit through the cat flap and met him at the door as if he owned the place.

Olivia and Amanda were helping out with the school end of year production when to their horror who should turn up at the Hall with the children, but 'Denis'. Apparently he had been at the school for the morning playing with the kids. He was pretty pleased with himself as he had also managed to steal a tennis ball (a passion of his).

He now has a tag with his name and phone number on it. Although there has been a lot of 'time out' in a kennel in the yards recently to curb his wandering, I suspect he thinks this is just confirmation of his farm dog status.

His claim to fame in the last six months has to become a possum hunter extraordinaire. Unfortunately we usually find out about his finds by his incessant barking at 2 o'clock in the morning indicating that he has a possum bailed up in a tree and is waiting for someone (not me) to deal to it. He has found the odd one during the day by climbing the Macrocarpa trees (a skill honed by retrieving a ball placed in a tree out of reach by the men of the household)

Up the top of the tree

with possum up here

The chase is on

Got it (shotgun may have helped)

Julia Grant

Interesting Facts About Rabbits

- The male rabbit is called a buck
- Baby rabbits are called kittens
- Wild rabbits generally weigh between 1-11/2 kg and are approximately 35-40cm long
- Rabbits inhabit every continent except Antarctic
- Rabbits are herbivores and eat leafy plants in the spring and summer months and bark in the winter
- Rabbits live in areas below 2000 feet from sea level
- A wild rabbit has a life span of about a year while domestic rabbits can live between 8-12years
- A wild doe starts to mate at 6 months, the gestation period is 30 days and each litter has 4-12 kittens
- The mating season for wild rabbits lasts 9 months and in that period a doe can have hundreds of children and grand children
- Baby rabbits are fed by their mother twice a day at dusk and at dawn
- Bunnies explore outside their nests as early as 10 days old
- A rabbit can run up to 35 miles per hour
- China raises more rabbits for food than any other country
- The United States primarily raises rabbits for pets and medical research
- Rabbits live in groups and when they are eating one stands guard: if danger is sensed the guard will stamp his feet and the rabbits will hide in burrows