

## SITUATION COMMENT

Whilst we are a little dry most of Northern Southland is in a better position than a lot of the rest of Southland – regular rainfall has just about kept things going for most coupled with the fact that in general we are better prepared for the dry conditions. However, Covid continues to cause problems, with closures at the works the latest spanner to be thrown in to the mix, and this may impact feed availability with delays in getting stock away. Hopefully the days of Covid-causing-problems are numbered and we can move on from the hassles that it has caused.

Flystrike continues to cause issues and it certainly seems to be a more common problem over the last few years. Scanning of dairy cows and heifers has been in full swing with beef scanning in its early stages. Dairy results have been very mixed with some excellent results and some very disappointing ones but as ever the average remains relatively constant. The use of technology in the form of collars and tags certainly seems to have had some positive results.

On the staff front we have farewelled Lauren who heads away on her Big OE. Those four and a half years seem to have gone by very quickly!! We have been very fortunate to have persuaded Juane to swap life in Te Anau for the “big smoke” of Riversdale.

Social soccer in Gore has been dominated by the news that we have had multiple first-time goal scorers!!! Sam “Fabrizio Ravanelli” Edgar , Taylor “Van Basten” McArley and Laura “Ronaldinho” Gardyne have had pretty successful seasons and goal celebrations to match.

Finally, MPI have requested that we try and take the opportunity when non-milking cattle are in the yards to get some blood samples if possible to test for Mycoplasma bovis. This covers both beef cattle and dairy heifers at run-offs/graziers. The reason for this is to try and prove that we are free of the disease. All milking herds are tested monthly via bulk milk therefore MPI has a good handle on milking cows but not enough sampling has happened in non-milking animals to prove freedom from disease. This is voluntary so please let us know if animals are in the yards and we can take some bloods (minimum 25 and maximum 150 animals). Can also be a good opportunity to do a BVD SP ratio and/or trace element testing.

*Morgan Greene MVB MANZCVS*

## **Horse Reminders**

- Worming treatment for foals
- Control bot eggs on horse legs

## STAFF PET CORNER

Sid is the newest member to the Stanton Stewart clan. He is only 2.5 months old, a real hard case, has fitted in with the rest of the animal clan and become best friends with Tia. He loves exploring the garden and climbing trees.



## PRIORITIES IN LEAD UP TO MATING

With the change of season to autumn, there should be a change in focus from lamb finishing to ensuring ewes are meeting targets for mating. It is an easy trap to be sidetracked by lamb finishing, but hopefully you have got the bulk of these off farm and are now ensuring good feed is available for ewes. Ewes should be condition scored and light ewes drafted off for priority feeding. Time is quickly running out to get these up to condition for mating. Ewes at body condition 2 need to put on at least 7 - 9kg LW to be at target for mating, which at growth of 150g/day will take 45 - 60 days! This requires good quality feed and frequent shifts to achieve. Young ewes should also be a priority, especially 2-tooths that raised a lamb as a hogget, but also ewe lambs if the plan is to mate them as a hogget. Target weights for 2-tooths at mating should be 90% of the mature ewe weight, which for many of you is 63kg (70kg ewe liveweights). Target weights for hoggets should be around 65% of mature weight, which would be 45kg at a 70kg mature weight. Reaching these targets will maximise your scanning results and also help to ensure ewes are in good condition going into winter.

Do you know the mature weight of your ewes? Are you prioritising these classes of stock? Don't leave it too late to make a difference! If you are still carrying large numbers of lambs maybe it is time to consider selling some stores to break the cycle and give your ewes a chance to perform to their potential.

*Andrew Cochrane BVSc*

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## LIVER BIOPSIES

Autumn is upon us – do you know the mineral status of your herd? Liver biopsies give us the most accurate data, especially in the case of copper.

- **Blood tests** are best for diagnosing mineral deficiencies in animals that have no trace element stores remaining in the body.
- By **liver testing**, we can assess mineral storage in the liver.

### Sample cow selection

- **Healthy cows** are more reliable than cull cows as they are an accurate representation of the herd's true status.
- **6-10** is our recommended sample size.

### Key minerals to monitor

- Copper, selenium, +/- Cobalt/B12

### Clinical signs of deficiency

- Poor condition (BCS)
- Scouring
- Reduced milk production
- Poor fertility

Knowledge enables you to spend your money where required for maximum return and save where

supplementation is not required/toxicity is to be avoided. Clinical disease is just the tip of the iceberg; subclinical deficiency (before clinical signs show) will have been affecting production for a significant period.

### Copper

Copper is stored in the liver. Testing liver tells us how much is in reserve. The blood contains copper constantly; however, it doesn't tell us how much is stored. There will still be adequate copper in the blood, even if the liver stores are getting low, as shown in the above results. Research has shown that blood copper is a poor indicator of stores as there is wide variation in levels each day. High blood copper doesn't always mean high liver copper. B12/cobalt runs on the same principle, in contrast to selenium, which can be assessed accurately via both liver and blood.

At a minimum, **annual testing** is recommended due to changes in mineral levels yearly. Even if your supplement program is consistent, it will not always result in the same mineral levels due to external factors (weather, fert application, supplementary feeds etc.). **Autumn** is a key season to test, as it gives time to make changes to supplementation prior to wintering on crop and calving.

To discuss your trace element program and book in your next mineral check; please call us at the clinic.

**Laura Gardyne BVSc**

Serum Copper umol/L	Liver Copper umol/kg
10.0	57 L
10.0	61 L
12.0	61 L
16.0	<15
6.0 L	98
10.0	
10.67	69.25
8 - 20	95 - 3000

## WOODY TONGUE IN CATTLE

Woody tongue is a common disease in cattle, particularly during the summer period. The disease is caused by a bacteria called *Actinobacillus lignieresii*. This bacterium is part of the normal flora which can reside in the mouth and throat, and only becomes a problem when there is trauma (often caused by roughage/thistles/seedhead awns or teeth eruptions) to the gums or tongue. If the bacteria can get into the tissues through an abrasion, it can form pyogranulomatous lesions on either the tongue or can affect the cheeks and nasal regions.

The most common infection called "woody tongue" presents as a large, swollen tongue with a mottled yellow surface (due to the presence of 'sulphur colonies'). As a result the cows are inappetent, lose weight and salivate a lot. They can also have a swelling below their jaw. It is important to assess the tongue and mouth properly if you suspect woody tongue as a cause of the swelling under the jaw and weight loss in an animal, as woody tongue is often mistaken for Johnes disease. If you are unsure, get a Veterinarian to assess the animal. Always take care if you are assessing the mouth of cows as we have seen some horrific injuries when fingers go between molars in cattle!

Treatment for woody tongue varies on severity, and we have options for mild cases to be given Intravenous sodium iodide (which has a nil meat and milk withhold), and in more severe cases antibiotics are required (either tetracycline antibiotics, or Vibrostrep). Streptomycin (Vibrostrep) is an antibiotic of critical importance and therefore can only be dispensed by a Veterinarian who has seen the animal to ensure that it is properly diagnosed.

**Samantha Edgar BVSc (dist), DipSciTech**



## **Sheep Reminders**

- Monitor B12 levels
- FEC lambs
- FEC ewes
- 2nd Camylobacter Vaccine
- Review winter feed budget
- Exercise rams—check feet
- Flush ewes
- Re-vaccinate ewe lambs clostridial vaccine
- Check zearalenone levels
- Teasers out with ewes 17 days before ram
- Weigh ewe lambs & assess for mating

## **Cattle Reminders**

- Pregnancy test
- Wean, mark & drench beef calves
- Cows & Yearlings—Lepto vaccination
- Dry off light cows and culls

## **BEEF PREGNANCY TESTING**

The value gained from pregnancy testing cattle is undisputed and this has increased in recent years with the ability to accurately age pregnancies. This has allowed farmers to winter cattle in mobs based on expected calving dates and to better allocate spring feed to those that need it most. We have a great team at NSVets capable of accurately aging pregnancies and the latest in scanning equipment to make this quick and easy. Having a team means we can almost always fit you in on the day you want and the time you want, making things easy to manage at your end. As vets we can tend to sick cows, investigate fertility issues and discuss any other topics that may come up on the day. We are also competitively priced, charging only half the price of many vet clinics around the country. Give us a call at the clinic to discuss what we can do for you.

*Andrew Cochrane BVSc*

## **SPECIAL OFFER**



**We are offering a special deal this season for beef pregnancy testing where any herd tested can receive up to 15 blood samples for free – perfect for testing for BVD or minerals**

\*conditions apply

**NSVETS ADDING VALUE WHERE IT COUNTS**

## **WORMWATCH MARCH 2022**

Larvae have continued to have a fairly uninterrupted summer and as we enter autumn we can expect larval numbers to be high especially if regular rain continues to fall, so be sure to keep drench intervals to 28 days if grazing pasture. Now is the perfect time for knockout drenches, a single drench with a novel combination (Startect or Zolvix Plus) in March is likely to double the length of time before resistance affects the regular drenches on your farm. This should be done soon to avoid any surviving worms from contributing to the autumn larval peak.

### **FECRT**

**We have had reasonable uptake again this year and most of these are nearing completion, watch this space for a summary of results in April...!**

*Andrew Cochrane BVSc*

## **Deer Reminders**

- Weaners—treat for internal parasites
- Put stags out
- Yersiniavax—second injection

CERTIFIED VELVETERS—RETURN DRUGS AND BOOK

## **Pet Reminders**

- Flea treatment & prevention
- Check teeth and clip nails

## **PIPPY CASE STUDY**

Pippi is a mischievous border terrier who presented a bit dull and depressed over two days and didn't eat her dinner – very unlike her! As a keen possumer who would often take herself hunting, it was suspected she may have scavenged something that may be causing issues so she was taken to the clinic. Xrays revealed she had eaten something alright but there were no troublesome bones!

It was also decided to rule out rat bait as a cause of her lethargy. It was thought this would be unlikely as it was some time since baits had been placed and when used, they were always secured.

The results showed major poisoning. Pippi was bleeding internally. She was started on fluids and her blood count monitored. By that night she had not responded and it was decided to give her a blood transfusion – cue Ace her young heading dog brother as the obliging doner.

Dogs do have different blood types with one universal doner. Unfortunately Ace is not universal. Pippi will now need to be blood typed if she was to ever receive another transfusion as this would have to match hers. The clinic does stock frozen plasma for blood loss patients in emergencies that does not require matching, however in some cases blood itself is preferable as it supplies both clotting factors and blood cells. Pippi slowly improved over a few hours of transfusion, but recovery took a few more days. She remained on vitamin K therapy for 6 weeks and is now back to her troublesome self. Worryingly rat baits were a few days later found on the ground in the yard where the kennels are. This seemed bizarre, the container was still high up on the shelf in a locked shed, with the lid on. They were disposed of only for more to appear two days later! It was since found that the bait container was tampered with and rats must have been carrying the baits.

The moral of the story is rat bait poisoning is always a possibility if there has ever been some on farm, even if you are very careful.



*Rochelle Smith BVSc MANZCVS*