

SITUATION COMMENT

How cruel for one part of the country to be basking in sun and in need of rain, when the other end is under devastation from too much of it. And to think this time two years ago we were recovering from our own state of emergency. We do not underestimate the grit and resilience required to farm and continue farming in all dynamics.

On the vet front our surgery at both centers has been very steady with the full array of ailments from broken bones, and dislocations, to twisted guts, and infected uterus, never a dull moment. Scanning results in the dairies is pretty similar to last year, maybe a reflection of a poorly timed wet week in November, affecting heat detection, particularly in the heifer mobs. Final results are still to come, as are the beefies which we have just started in the last week.

Fly, after laying low though the new year, came back with a vengeance in February in all classes of sheep to the frustration of many. The majority of ewes that were struck even though recovered will be dry at scanning, so don't be too tempted to hold on to these. Most rams in Northern Southland have been palpated and should be in preseason training before their call up.

Now here is hoping we move on to a damp, warm, frost-free autumn. *Rochelle Smith*

WORMWATCH MARCH 2023

Despite the odd, inconsistent bit of rain, ground conditions continue to be relatively dry. This will be slowing parasite development and it is likely that drench intervals for young stock on pasture can be extended, utilise FEC to help make these decisions. For any lambs on summer crops, it is possible that lambs won't need drenched at all - talk to one of our vets to discuss if this might work for you. Beware that larval challenge may be high when we finally get good rainfall in autumn. We are not receiving many drench checks, despite this being an excellent tool for checking your drench has worked. Collect 10 fresh faeces 10 days after drenching to check whether your drench worked as planned. Remember that if you cant get your FEC in to us straight away place them in the fridge – they can stay in the fridge comfortably for several days without affecting results.

Faecal egg count reduction tests (FECRT)

We have completed two of these and are waiting for final results. Keep an eye out for next months wormwatch to see what we have found.

Andrew Cochrane BVSc

Cattle Reminders

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

STAFF PET CORNER

Meet Pumba and Phoebe

Some of you may have already met these beastly siblings at Pet Fun Day. They were acquired after a moment of weakness 2 years ago and serve no function other than to reveal loose areas of a netting fence, and as such live mostly free range. They consume massive amounts of grass, but don't actually tend to rut the ground, which at least is one good thing. When not eating they spend the rest of their days sleeping on their bellies, like giant slugs.

They are very friendly and seem to enjoy human company, so do come when they are called. They have learned to sit when waiting for treats and become putty when getting belly scratches. They perhaps have some therapeutic values but can cause as much angst as they cure.

On pet fun day we had a guess the weight competition. Pumba was aprx 120 kg and Phoebe despite being the greediest was aprx 115kg.



Rochelle Smith BVSc MANZCVS

Horse Reminders

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

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BODY CONDITION SCORE - CRUCIAL

Research has proven benefits for achieving a target BCS for cows of 5.0 at calving (5.5 for heifers and first calvers). Barriers to achieving the goal are a combination of feed available, and so often more TIME to gain weight. We must dry cows off before they lose more condition than they can gain back in winter.

It is more beneficial to target early milk yield than it is to squeeze the last drop out at the end of the season.

Options include:

- drying some cows off sooner
- go to once a day milking

Note that:

- Supplements to milkers in autumn may be partitioned to milk not BCS
- Cows rarely gain more than 0.5 BCS in 30 days
- Cows rarely gain BCS in the month before calving
- Cows need time to adapt to winter crops before any condition gain is made

Grazing Dairy Young Stock?

Don't risk a dispute. Both parties must know the condition of the stock and the expectations from the start.

Condition score animals and weigh young stock regularly. This avoids any doubt around the improvement in stock, and allows for early changes to be implemented if things are not trending correctly. Photos are useful especially if you have concerns, hind sight is a wonderful thing.

We have several DairyNZ accredited Body Condition Scorers that can score your herd (individual or a sample) and can help select cows at risk. We can provide this service for you for peace of mind, and support where needed.

Months before calving	BCS
4 (MARCH)	Dry off Cows \leq 3.0 R3's \leq 3.5
3 (APRIL)	Dry off Cows \leq 3.5 R3s \leq 4.0
2 (MAY)	Target R3 \geq 5.0 R2 \geq 5.5
Dry off day	Target cows 5.0 First calvers 5.5
Heifers at all times	5.5

Target (kg)	For 450 kg mature weight	550 kg mature weight
18 month	330 kg	400 kg
9 month	180	240
6 month	135	165

Rochelle Smith BVSc MANZCVS

DOG WHELPING

COMMON BIRTHING QUESTIONS

How long is a dog pregnant for?

63 d (58-68)

How do I know she is pregnant?

We can scan for pregnancy from 21 days but preferably a little older as they are still only about 0.5mm big!

How will I know how many pups she will have?

Xray is often more accurate for counting than ultrasound scan and can be done from 42 days.

How will I know she is in labour?

There are 3 stages to labour.

First stage:

- o From 2-3 days prior she may show restlessness and nesting behaviour.
- o From 1-2 days prior she may go off her food.
- o Their temperature will drop to 37-38 degrees.
- o In the day prior she may start shivering, panting and may vomit.
- o This may last around 4 hours (or even 36 hours in a maiden bitch).

Second stage:

- o This is when contractions, straining and licking the vulva will occur.
- o And pups will be born.

Third stage:

- o The placenta comes out.
- o This may be before, during or after other pups.

How long does birth take?

There may be a big gap between the first and second pup but should still be less than 6 hours. Subsequent pups usually come fairly quick, but it can take 24 hours for a full litter to be born.

Abnormalities

- Pushing for 20 mins or more with no pup
- Rest periods of more than 3-4 hours
- No signs or fail to move from stage 1 to 2
- Copious dark green fluid without first stage

If in doubt call the vet. Abnormalities may be brought about by exhaustion (especially in large litters), obstruction and calcium deficiency. Intervention may be required.

Rochelle Smith BVSc MANZCVS

Sheep Reminders

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

Deer Reminders

- Weaners—treat for parasites
- Put stags out
- Yersiniavax—second injection
- Certified velveters—return drugs and book

TEASERS

Ideally Teasers need to be 'created' 1-2 months pre-mating. Although low risk, this is to ensure they are not hindered by any complications like swelling or infection. Teaser use varies depending on what you want to achieve. Below are some tips.

Why? Basically, more lambs sooner!

Reasons may include to synchronise, to advance lambing date, to improve lambing %, or if using harnessed teasers, to help select ewe replacements, to identify drys, to assess timing of mating, and detection for AI.

For example, one vet field trial (several years ago) mated a teased mob 5 days later than the main mob and had 10 % lamb on the due date with 90 % lambed in the first week compared to none on the due date and 15 % after one week in the un-teased mob!

Who? Consider using more virile breeds for teasing such as the Finn, Suffolk or Poll Dorset. Young rams are okay but best not to use hoggets – they don't have as much scent, and may be a bit shy.

How? Ideally teasers are introduced before the ewes show heats, but not so early that they don't/can't respond!

- 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).
- If you tend to mate ewes late in the season (or are shifting mating back – say due to feed supply) ewes are probably already in their second (or more) cycle of the season and no increase in conception rate will occur just because you throw in a teaser. Once in the third cycle, ovulation rate will not increase.

Remember to use high ratios of rams following teasers as if the synchrony worked, they will need to be very busy over a short few days to capture the benefit.

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.

To Shift Lambing Forward

- Use teasers to trigger early ovulation. 'Ram effect'
 - 10-12 days prior to the ram – no more than 17 days prior
- Most ewes will silent ovulation in 50 hours followed by a true heat for the ram 6 to 18 days later.

Synchronisation - To condense lambing (increase early conceptions)

This essentially also brings mean lambing date forward by ensuring ewes are in their second (or third) more fertile and fecund heat when the rams join.

- Generally put teasers out 17days prior to the Ram
- For 10 days duration.
- Ratios 1:300 or up to 1:500 on flat farms

Increase multiples

If you do not want to alter (or improve) the lambing pattern but just want to increase the chance of multiples, you can tease 34 days pre-tup.

For 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.

- Ratios 1:75 ideal but can use greater ratio.
- Breed for 26 days only to avoid late lambs.

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 - especially between toes, under arms and around ears.
- Flea prevention and treatment

RAM PALPATIONS

Our vets have been hard at work over the last month making sure your rams are in good working order before mating. These ram checks (or palpations) involve the vet checking the testicles for any defects. Ideally these are done at least six weeks prior to mating, so any unsound rams can be removed and replaced.

Traditionally our focus for ram palpations has been to identify *Brucella ovis*, a sexually transmitted bacterial disease that affects mature rams. It causes epididymitis which can be palpated as lumps within and around the testicle. These rams may still be fertile, but their reproductive performance will be severely limited and will often result in reduced lambing

Other defects we commonly see include scrotal mange, shearing cuts and infections or small testicles. We even occasionally get the old one-baller slipping through the cracks.

There is still time to get your rams checked so give us a call to book an appointment.