



# Veterinary Centre EwesNews

## BEEF COW PERFORMANCE What did we do right?



**Dave Robertson BVSc BSc – VETERINARY CENTRE Oamaru**

This might be the best season of beef cow preg testing results in my 16 years working here. Generally speaking, we have had two reasonable years of pasture growth cycles: 2023 was a good autumn, a mild winter and a spring where grass grew at the right time when the bulls were out. From January on everything got cooked so the preg testing results listed below defy the hungry look the landscape of the regions. It has been interesting to see late calving cows drag themselves forward and empty rates minimal.

The list of mixed-age beef cow herds is a group of beef producers that have performed exceptionally well. They have captured more detailed information at their preg testing sessions, most done through EID tags. It is not all the top performers, and I apologise if others that have performed equally well have not been mentioned, but it is a good representation of the regions and cattle types we visit.

Farm	First Service CR (%)	Empty (%)	Mating Cycles	BCS Average	Breed
Bog Roy Station	86	3	3	6.7	Hereford
Lyndores	83	2	3	5.3	Dairy x Angus
Caberfeidh Station	79	6	3	6.5	Angus
Stoneburn Station	77	3	3	6.1	Hereford
Strathavon	76	6	2	6.5	Angus x Hereford
Strathview	76	3	3	6.8	Angus
Fossil Creek Angus	75	5	3	6.5	Angus
Hawkdun Station	72	5	3		Angus
Ngaripa Farms	70	3	3	6.5	Hereford x
Longslip	69	4	3	5.9	Angus
Glenbrook	69	5	3		Short Horn
Redbank	68	4	3	5.8	Hereford
The Rocks	68	6	2	6.1	Angus
<b>Target</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5.7</b>	

Generally, these herds have optimised the essential ingredients of a condensed calving pattern, few empties and fat buffer for wintering. The low empty rate allows culling on poor producers and later calvers, further improving herd efficiencies.

Weaning early has worked well for some herds, where cow condition has been protected leaving options for wintering clean-up duties.

Animal health of long-acting selenium and copper are fairly standard, but there has been more blood testing and works livers taken this autumn to assess requirements this season.

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Ben Avon Cows, Ahuriri Valley, with a good in-calf rate for manager Tony Holder and owner Bryan Patterson

**MAY**  
**Pub Talk's**  
with Veterinary Centre

### Topics

- New farm approach to lice control with FlexOLT oral lice treatment.
- Compliance 2024 RVM's and Animal Health Plan's.
- Review on Pain Relief for tailing and shearing cuts.
- Farm Systems Sustainable worm control.

### Where & When

- **Middlemarch Bowling Club** Thursday 23 May at 2.30pm
- **Waipiata Country Pub** Thursday 23 May at 6.00pm
- **Omarama Hotel** Thursday 30 May at 2.30pm
- **Kurow Top Pub** Thursday 30 May at 5.30pm



Paul Rae and Jarron Farmer working studiously on some farm systems modelling at the recent Enfield Wormwise workshop.

# Life after Capsules ... the results are in!

**Simon Laming BVSc – VETERINARY CENTRE**

Last lambing season was the first when farmers no longer had the option of using Bionic CRC drench capsules. Farmers were forced to look at other options, so we have conducted an extensive survey to see how clients who previously used Bionic capsules managed.

The questions asked included the following;

- What did you do instead of using Bionics?
- How do you rate your ewe performance?
- How do you rate your lamb performance?
- Was the dag score any different?
- If Bionics became available, would you use them again?

## Discussion

It is important to recognise this survey represents anecdotal comments from farmers, and this is not a scientific document. However several trends emerged.

- It is really encouraging to hear how many farmers now use targeted worm control programmes, with a mix of long acting injection, oral triple drench, or no drench at all, combined with a range of mineral supplement options. And these decisions are based on real information – age, body condition, twins, pasture contamination, laboratory tests, feed available, etc.
- Most farmers who used long acting injections (Cydectin LA, Exodus LA) to replace Bionics saw similar lamb numbers produced and similar lamb live-weights, and similar ewe losses to previous years.
- Many farmers who went from Bionics to a selected oral drench only, were happy with the season's production, though this was confused by the associated use of minerals such as Smartshot B12.
- Farmers who used Cydectin LA or Exodus LA reported little change in dag score. Most clients who changed to a single oral drench or no drench reported increases in dags, while also noting the season "dried out" and dags were not really a problem.
- Many farmers reported excellent feed availability during the 2023 tupping, and felt this was the main factor holding their production up. (Certainly, it was a kind season, with heavier ewe tupping weights, -and lots of bearings out!)
- Despite acceptable results without Bionics, many farmers still said they would use some if they were available. Several comments reinforced the desire for long term worm control and

cobalt and selenium supplementation in a single delivery system, in selected groups of ewes.

## Resistance Monitoring

**Worm egg counts 50-80 days after long-acting injections** ("leakage"). For many years we have monitored faecal egg counts from ewes treated with Bionics, 60-90 days after insertion, to monitor their effectiveness, keep a check on emerging drench resistance, and make recommendations when exit drenching was required. These egg counts have generally stayed variable, but low, over many seasons of Bionic use.

It was unexpected to find this egg "leakage" was lower this year after long acting injections – 75% of all samples tested had zero or less than 50 egg, and only one test had more than 300 egg (further resistance testing followed this case). We had expected long acting moxidectin injections to show higher egg counts, in the knowledge that its length of action against *Trichostrongylus* worms was much shorter than Bionic capsules.

## Veterinary Summary

So far we have proved we are not reliant on Bionic capsules.

Long acting moxidectin injections appear to be fairly equal in their performance in the field.

Most farmers have taken a hugely responsible attitude with their selection of options for targeted worm control programmes.

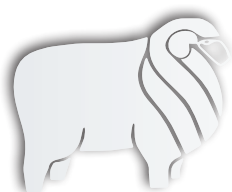
Long acting moxidectin injections are still performing as a valuable option in select groups of animals-lighter ewes bearing multiples, under feed pressure, etc.

If long acting injections are used, egg counts should be done 60-80 days after treatment, an essential part of product stewardship for future options.

Provision of adequate levels of high quality feed is the number 1 requirement for sound production-last season proved that!

It is likely the favourable season hid some of the increase in dags most of us were expecting to see.

**A HUGE THANK YOU TO THE MANY CLIENTS WHO SO WILLINGLY PROVIDED THIS INFORMATION. IT IS BECAUSE OF YOU WE ARE ABLE TO ENHANCE OUR LOCAL KNOWLEDGE, AND MAKE BETTER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STOCK HEALTH AND PRODUCTION.**



Otago  
Merino  
Association

## Nikke Child Cancer Foundation Fleece Competition 2024

Congratulations to Trent Spittle of Quailburn Downs, who was the overall winner of the recent Nikke Child Cancer Foundation fleece competition and Charlie Hore, Patearoa Station, who won the New Zealand Wool Testing Authority Otago Merino Association Two Tooth Competition.

Winner of the Super-Fine section of the Child Cancer Fleece Competition was Bevan McKnight. Bevan received the award along with a prize from Veterinary Centre – 20 litre drum of Matrix and a "Drench Performance" kit which includes the analysis of 40 FECs. Well done Bevan.



*Overall winner of the Nikke Child Cancer fleece competition announced at the conclusion of the Two Tooth Competition on Friday night was Trent Spittle of "Quailburn Downs", Omarama.*



*The inaugural Two Tooth Competition winner was Charlie Hore of "Patearoa Station".*

# NEW TRITON

Lucy Cameron BVSc BSc MANZCVS (Rumin. Nutr.)  
VETERINARY CENTRE Waimate

## Winter Feed Budget

While welcome rain in the last few weeks has greened up very grey looking hills somewhat, most areas will still be very short looking ahead to winter. Autumn is the time to start planning for spring and do a winter feed budget. All this means is working out what your potential feed supply is, and then allocating it to your animal demand from all the stock classes on farm, and working out where the gaps are, and what to do about them. The end goal is to maximise productivity in spring – ewes and cows in good condition at lambing and calving will produce good quality colostrum, giving their lambs and calves the best start, and adequate pasture covers of good quality feed will help with lactation and youngstock growth rates.

Your winter feed budget may involve the whole farm and every stock class, or just the lambing platform – for example you may aim to have a cover of 1400-1500kg DM/ha on this at set-stocking.

It can be as simple or complicated as you like. Don't get bogged down in the nitty gritty, being 5-10% off is far less concerning than having no idea at all what your situation is.

If you're not keen on a full feed budget the key areas to focus on would be:

- How much feed is required at set-stocking? How many ha and what cover – and work back from there
- Have a rough idea of how much silage etc you have available, and what the quality is like?
- Measure your winter crops (especially fodder beet) so they can be accurately allocated
- Plan to body condition score your ewes at scanning time – and scanning early/late – to help with further allocating feed at this time if necessary
- Remember that it's 3x more energy efficient to keep condition on stock than to take it off and put it back on again!

## Osteoarthritis in Working Dogs



Abby Robertson BVSc – VETERINARY CENTRE Oamaru

Dave and I have a nasty habit of acquiring elderly retired working dogs. They are mostly sound of mind (with a couple of notable exceptions) but are not capable of doing the big distances and so have retired to our modest farm. It comes as no surprise then that most of them have signs of osteoarthritis in their senior years.

Osteoarthritis, is a progressive disease of the joints causing cartilage loss and inflammation which gives rise to the clinical sign of pain, lameness, difficulty standing, reluctance jumping, reduced ability to walk and work and increased irritability.

Although most commonly associated with old age, arthritis can be found relatively commonly in even young animals. Arthritis is estimated to affect approximately 20% of dogs older than one year old and up to 90% in senior dogs. It is especially common in Huntaways who have a genetic predilection for hip dysplasia.

While there is no cure for osteoarthritis, there are numerous treatment options available that help to reduce pain and support joint health and longevity. When it comes to treatment of arthritis, it is important to know that there is no 'silver bullet' and considering all the factors of weight management, pain relief, joint support, environmental modification holistically is key. Also, the best outcomes are achieved when support is started as early in the course of the disease as possible.

Medical treatment is targeted according to severity. At risk dogs and early stage disease may benefit from specialised diets and joint supplements but as loss of mobility and signs of pain worsen, anti-inflammatories alone or in combination with other medications become fundamental for maintaining quality of life. There are now monthly tablets (Trocoxil) and injections (Beransa) that are designed to make consistent treatment convenient. Archie certainly doesn't seem to notice being given his monthly pill and it has meant he is still happy to go to work at 15 years old.

As winter arrives, osteoarthritis often worsens in our pets. If you have any concerns about the mobility of your dog then please feel free to visit one of our friendly Veterinary Centre clinics and we will be happy to discuss and customise treatments for your pet.



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## Sheep & Beef Winter Seminars

JUNE

6

• **Waihao Forks Pub**  
Thursday 6 June at 6.00pm

JUNE

13

• **Timaru Veterinary Centre**  
(18 Sefton St)  
Thursday 13 June at 2.30pm

AUG

TBC

• **Palmerston TBC**  
Date & Time TBC



# ANIMAL HEALTH

## Compliance & Opportunities

Dave Robertson BVSc BSc – VETERINARY CENTRE Oamaru

To market our unique position as a “first world” food and fibre producing country we have to do a bit of work to prove it. For the premium customers we court the asymptote of truth about NZ farming is unlikely to be reached by looking out a rental car window or through media images and marketing brochures. The dull reality is that we have developed independent auditing and verification systems to legitimise our marketing claims. It is a growth industry, which maybe where the rural children of the future are encouraged to find “a well-paying career before the come home”. There is a vast spectrum of engagement levels with farmers, from the aggravated combatant to the blissfully unaware.

**The Veterinarian in your business has an important role to play with planning and documenting sound animal health practices. The resources generated are essential to the verification and auditing process.** Passing an audit is not the reason or end point of these resources.

The scope of the veterinary servicing of your business extends to, but not limited to:

- Animal health calendar
- Restricted Veterinary Medicines list and allocation. This includes antibiotics, pain relief and vaccines
- Parasite management review
- Vaccine and mineral review and allocation.

- Key performance area review and goal setting (wastage, limiting diseases. Scanning, tailing and weaning rates and weights etc).
- Monitoring programmes for system fuel (BCS), FEC and trace elements
- Welfare and pain mitigation intentions and allocations.

Compliance is a big beast and if farming was about freedom to do as you please and answer to no one, then yes it is a constraint. But if you are being sunny side up about it an audit is a chance to get many key aspects of your business functions reviewed and sorted for the next season. Animal health and wellbeing is everything to your business profitability. Demonstrating good practices are worth it.

So ... you have 2 months notice to get organised for most audits. Please contact your Veterinary Centre clinic well in advance of this so we can have a meaningful discussion and prepare the documents for your business. Opportune times to get ahead of this area are:

- **June/July to discuss other pre-shearing/lambing animal health.**
- **October (pre-tailing) requirements for new seasons lambs.**



## Nitrate Poisoning

Vanessa Love BVSc – VETERINARY CENTRE Ranfurly

Nitrate poisoning is due to a buildup of the compound in plants that cattle are grazing or accidental fertilizer ingestion. The nitrate ion in the plant becomes nitrite in the rumen, enters the blood stream and combines with red blood cells. This causes non oxygen carrying methemoglobin to form instead of hemoglobin. While all ruminants get nitrate poisoning, sheep are more resistant than cattle, deer and goats. Clinical signs can occur within an hour of exposure to the toxic feed and include:

- Salivation and frothing
- Diarrhoea
- Abdominal pain (especially if fertilizer is the cause)
- Laboured breathing
- Staggered walking
- Body tremors
- Blue/grey gums
- Coma and death

Nitrate poisoning cases usually involve multiple animals. The treatment is methylene blue dissolved in saline given intravenously, which replaces methemoglobin with hemoglobin and if given quickly enough will save the animals life. While waiting for your vet to arrive, all animals that seem unaffected should

be moved away from the toxic feed and monitored closely.

Eye fluid and blood from deceased animals can be tested for nitrate levels, and the blood usually has a characteristic chocolate brown colour. It is not uncommon for affected immobile sheep to lose their eyes and gain other injuries due to bird scavenging and this may affect treatment decisions.

Plants use nitrates for growth as a protein source, this process requires energy from photosynthesis. Nitrates build up in plants during periods where photosynthesis is limited such as during prolonged foggy weather, low temperatures and during frosts. When rain breaks a drought, plants rapidly pick up nitrates and commonly become toxic.

Feeds often affected are annual ryegrasses, some new pastures, oats, kale, rape and brassicas. Suspect feeds can be tested either at your local Veterinary Centre clinic or test kits can be purchased for use on farm. The test turnaround time is approximately 40 minutes and only requires two handfuls of the feed. Toxic feeds should be retested at weekly intervals until safe to feed.

Risk can be managed by feeding suspect pastures or crops in the afternoon during

winter, and filling stock up on hay before changing breaks.

### Nitrate Test Kit

- For checking nitrate toxicity in crop or pasture.
- The kit provides for on farm analysis of nitrate levels in at risk crops.

#### RISKS

- Slowed plant growth caused by cold and cloudy weather.
- Excess Nitrogen uptake in crops following fertiliser application going into winter.



#### Full Kit

\$198.40 incl GST  
(25 tests = \$6.90 + GST per test).

#### Testing Strip Refill only

\$129.50 incl GST  
per Pk/25

# FARM SPOTLIGHT

## Puketoi Angus

**Vanessa Love BVSc – VETERINARY CENTRE Ranfurly**

Puketoi Station in Gimmerburn has been farmed by the Crutchley family since 1939, with the Puketoi Angus cattle stud being founded by Geoff & Noela Crutchley in 1972. The cattle are run alongside their commercial Romney flock, with the major role of the beef cows being to maintain pasture quality for the lambs. The farm has substantial hill blocks and elevation gains which the cattle are used to traversing in winter. The farm has seen substantial development over the decades under the Crutchley family's guidance, with Emma Crutchley and husband Kyle Hagen now at the helm and supported by Emma's brother Bruce.

Emma brings a wealth of knowledge around agronomy, lucerne and irrigation in particular to their farming business. The family wants to farm sustainably and try to view agricultural challenges as opportunities.

They have a strong passion for the Angus breed and its development. Heifers are first bred as yearlings and are expected to mother and raise a good calf year on year. Correct conformation and good temperament are non negotiable assets their cows and bulls must have. Puketoi Angus has recently started using artificial insemination to expand their genetic lines and all cows are recorded with Angus NZ. Notable AI sires used are LD 316 Capitalist and Musgrave 316 Stunner, there are also some weaned calves by Kincardine Renegade R36 and New Ground Landfall N90.

Kyle's aim is to breed cows and bulls that are structurally sound, with a constitution to handle the Central Otago extreme environment. He is bringing some carcass traits into the herd, but not at the detriment of the cow. Kyle thoroughly believes the cow herd is the powerhouse of the beef production system.

The Veterinary Centre was involved in semen testing the sale bulls this year. Semen testing aims to identify and remove subfertile bulls prior to sale and involves a standardised sperm density and motility exam, and further morphology testing of samples at an accredited breeding centre laboratory. While they are tested the penis is examined for defects, injuries, corkscrew issues and growths that

may impede breeding. All bulls are BVD blood tested and have met a minimum scrotal circumference of 36cm.



**Puketoi Angus 30th Annual  
on farm/Bidr bull sale – May 16th 2024 at 2pm**

with a fantastic line up of rising 2 year olds  
accompanied by up to date Breedplan data.

## Beef+Lamb Genetics Bull Buying Workshop

### COMMENTS FROM JANE SMITH –

It was a well attended day at the Beef and Lamb Genetics bull buying workshop, hosted by Blair and Jane Smith, Fossil Creek Angus. Jane's summary was: Choose a breeder that aligns with your focus and whom is carrying out monitoring and selection for your most important traits. Select your breeding priorities and focus on 3-4 of the most important traits to your own farming operation.. Structure first, then EBVs. Do your homework before going to a bull sale, not at it. Make a short list of bulls that would suit your operation before you go to a bull walk or sale.



*PHOTO RIGHT – Simon Williamson, Glenbrook Shorthorns, Omarama. Offering some guidance on where to find a good shorthorn bull this year.*

# A day out in the Maniototo



Craigneuk 2 tooth, Maniototo, heading out to their hill block after crutching. Minimal egg counts, in top condition and no drench required this year.



Staff at 'The Rocks' Middlemarch administer Flexolt (Oral Lice Drench) and vaccinate their Ewes on a warm Autumn day.



Matarae



Veterinarian Vanessa Love from Veterinary Centre Ranfurly at 'Kintyre Farm', owned by Deb and James Paterson



Sam Foss scanning cows under the watchful eye of Stephen Dykes and his daughter Ruby (Gladsmuir, Middlemarch)



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