

CLUTHA VETS SHEEP & BEEF FARMER NEWSLETTER



Issue 229

Pre-Lamb Edition

July 2022



Pre-lamb Update

By Andrew Roe

In the process of putting together this pre-lambing edition of our newsletter, I took a glance at last year's version to see what was topical then. And, as baseball legend Yogi Berra famously once said "it's déjà vu all over again!"

When it comes to challenges, both climatic and animal health, the last three or four years have been remarkably similar. Summer dry spells, extending deep into autumn, followed by a relatively warm start to winter. These warmer May and June conditions have been great from a feed perspective, ensuring we got some benefit from the rains when they finally arrived, partially offsetting the effects of the drought.

However, they have been devastating for some farmers as far as stock health is concerned. The large spike in worm numbers that usually occurs following a dry spell is well documented and most of us are prepared for this. What has taken many by surprise though, is how far into winter hoggets, two toothed and, even mixed age ewes have continued to get re-infected. We have dealt with cases of hoggets, for example, that were drenched in early June with an effective drench, dying about a month later from the severe effects of worms.

The days of giving your young stock their final drench some time in May and then letting cold winter temperatures take care of the worms appear to be a thing of the past. Especially for animals that are wintered on pasture. To quote Berra again, "the future ain't what it used to be!"

The pre-lambing period is perhaps the most complex time of the year from an animal health perspective. When looking at worm control, there is a wide range of products available for that portion of your flock that you feel needs some assistance over the lambing period. And, when you throw in the various trace element and clostridial vaccine options, making a decision around the best combinations for your stock can be quite daunting.

We look into some of these issues in this newsletter, with the insert giving you some examples of how you may settle on which products you give to which ewes. But, as always, we encourage you to have a chat with one of our knowledgeable crew to put a plan together that best suits your flock.

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Pre-Lamb Worm Control What are My Options?

By Andrew Roe

As a result of autumn feed shortages and ewes now in lighter condition than normal, we are fielding plenty of calls from farmers pondering the need for some form of pre-lamb worm control in their flock. So what are the options?

No treatment

Adult sheep that are in good condition and being well fed should have good immunity to internal parasites and be able to handle the incoming worms themselves, especially if only rearing one lamb. Carrying out a faecal egg count will tell you if the ewes currently have much of a worm burden. If they don't, and you are happy that they are looking good, you may opt to rely on good nutrition to control any worms they encounter over lambing.

Oral drenches and Nilvax

Apart from the drenches containing moxidectin (eg Trimox and Exodus Oral which continue working for about three weeks) these products do not have any persistent activity so they are great at cleaning out existing worm burdens but offer no help in preventing new ones establishing over lambing when the ewes are typically at their most vulnerable. Again, a faecal egg count will help in deciding if an oral pre-lamb drench is likely to be of any benefit at all.

Short acting injectable products

Injectable "drenches" containing moxidectin, such as Exodus 1%, Cydectin Injection and Eweguard (which also contains a 6-in-1 vaccine), offer five weeks persistent activity against the most important worm type at this time of year (ostertagia). So as well as eliminating existing worm infections, they prevent new ones establishing for about one month. Because of this relatively short window of protection they need to be given quite close to lambing for maximum benefit. Being single active products there is a greater risk of drench resistance development than with the drench capsules.

Long acting injectable products

Exodus LA and Cydectin LA continue working for around 100 days, so there is more flexibility around the timing of treatment with respect to lambing dates. And with this extended period of cover, they have value in treating the most vulnerable animals such as pregnant hoggets and ewes rearing triplets, which are more likely to take longer to bounce back after lambing than other ewes.

Drench capsules

Bionic Plus capsules also continue working for 100 days, but against **all** gastro-intestinal worms, compared to the injectable products which offer different periods of protection against different worm species. They also contain two active ingredients, so the risk of drench resistance development is lower than with the injectable products.



The accompanying insert gives some suggestions around how you may use these various options for different groups of ewes within the flock. Considerations when deciding "who gets what" include:

- Age of ewe—*hogget vs two tooth vs mixed age*
- Pregnancy status—*single vs twin vs triplet*
- Body condition—*good vs light*
- Anticipated feed covers over lambing

Mitigating the Risk of Drench Resistance

Use of persistent acting drench products carry an increased risk of drench resistance development. Strategies to reduce this risk include:

- Partial flock treatment (examples in insert)
- Giving a primer dose of a combination oral drench at the time of administration, especially with the injectable products
- Carrying out a faecal egg count on treated ewes, part way through the "payout period" of the product in question and, if necessary, giving an exit drench at tailing

Flexible Timing for LA Drenches

By Andrew Roe

The main benefit of long acting worm treatments (capsules and injectables) has traditionally been their role in killing incoming worm infections, rather than getting rid of existing worms. Adult ewes tended to have fairly low worm burdens at the end of winter, but because the stresses of late pregnancy and the first few weeks of lactation can give their immune system a hammering, they are at risk of developing a significant worm burden in the spring.

However, things appear to be changing. The recent dry summer/autumns, followed by rain and relatively warm early winters, have resulted in adult sheep, especially two tooth, carrying reasonable worm burdens into the winter on many properties. Consequently, on some farms, there may now be as much value in the long acting "pre-lamb" worm products eliminating existing worm populations as there is in them stopping new infections from establishing over lambing.

So should we be administering these products, especially the Bionic capsules, earlier? If your ewes are being affected by worms all winter, why wait till mid August to deal with them? We have discussed this point with a number of clients lately, with some opting to administer the capsules a few weeks earlier than they used to. Bionic capsules and the long acting injectables (Exodus LA and Cydectin LA) all last for around 100 days, so you can use them any time from now on and they will still be working right through that critical first three or four weeks of the ewes' lactation.

And, of course, the sooner you administer them, the sooner the meat withholding period wears off, enabling earlier drafting of your wet/dries and your one-year ewes. .

Improve Lamb Survival with LSD

When it comes to the viability of your newborn lambs the three micro-nutrients that you need to pay the most attention to are selenium, iodine and vitamin E.

These three nutrients all work in different ways, but deficiencies of any of them can result in still births, and/or lambs that appear visibly normal at birth but are weak, and often die at a day or two of age.

Veterinary LSD is a great way to top up the levels of all three nutrients in your ewes, prior to lambing, and can be especially valuable for those ewes that have spent at least part of the winter on crop.

While selenium and iodine are readily available in a range of mineral drench products, nothing compares to LSD for the quantity and stability of its vitamin E.

Ewe Vaccination Still Important

With many farmers now starting their lamb clostridial vaccination at tailing time, there have been some people questioning whether the traditional pre-lamb "5 in 1" vaccination of their ewes is still needed.

In fact some prominent rural advisors have been reported as saying that there is no longer any justification for the practice. At Clutha Vets we strongly believe that pre-lamb vaccination is still very worthwhile.

Sure, vaccinating lambs at tailing means that the protection they get from their mums doesn't need to last as long as it used to, when lambs were not done till weaning (if at all!). But some clostridial diseases, such as tetanus and some forms of navel infection, can cause significant losses in the birth to tailing window, and stopping ewe vaccination will increase the risk of these conditions. And, of course, giving your ewes their annual booster protects them as well!

RVM Consultations: Get Sorted Before Lambing

With lambing not far away there is a good chance that you will soon require one or two animal health products that are classified as "restricted veterinary medicines" (RVMs). Penicillin and all other antibiotics (whether they be injectable, topical or oral), most vaccines including scabby mouth vaccines, as well as some trace elements such as injectable iodine and copper products, all fall into the RVM category.

As such we are not permitted to sell any of these products without a veterinary consultation. For most farmers the most convenient approach is to have one "annual consultation" where we cover off a whole year's predicted RVM usage. We can discuss any other animal health or production issues at the same time. If you have not had a consult for a year please make a booking soon and get sorted before lambing.

For those preferring not to have an annual consult, the other option is to speak to one of our vets each time you require an RVM. An appointment is still recommended, to ensure that a vet is available when you visit.

Ultravac Packs Now Recyclable

By Jillian Clark

We are pleased to announce that the Ultravac range of vaccine plastic pillow packs are now able to be recycled. This is a great initiative by Zoetis, the manufacturer of Ultravac vaccines, and aligns well with the NZ Farm Assurance Programme's waste management and minimisation guidelines.

The packs will be recycled through Plasback into FUTUREPOST fenceposts and recyclable garden trays. Zoetis pays the recycling costs. Just bring your empty packs into the clinic and put them in our Zoetis orange bin. We can provide a receipt which can be used as part of your Farm Environment Plan and for Farm Assurance Programme audits, if needed.

Another reason to choose Ultravac as your clostridial vaccine! Hopefully more product packaging will be able to be recycled in the future.



Roly Ready to Lend a Hand

As mentioned in our June newsletter Roly (Rhiane Smith), our technical field rep, enjoys getting out on farm and helping our farmers plan their animal health requirements. He can be especially valuable at this time of year, with clients facing the daunting task of weighing up all of the pre-lamb worm management, trace element and vaccine options.

To book a farm visit please ring the clinic, or give Roly a call on 027 643 5813



Orders Essential

Important Message—limited supply

If you are considering using either of our pre-lamb vaccine / wormer combo products, namely **Eweguard** or **Nilvax**, this season, please phone the clinic to place an order as there will be limited amounts of each in stock.

Retail Ramblings

Clutha Vets have all the tools to suit your pre-lamb needs and your budget.....and we offer **Deferred Payment options for all of our PreLamb Drenches.**

July/August Promotions:

Bionic Plus Capsules

- Heavy duty Dometic Chilly Bins on all large purchases.

Zoetis Pre-Lamb Products

- Enter the draw for a "Stay Local" weekend away whenever you purchase Eweguard, Cydectin Injection or Ultravac vaccines. Receive one entry for every \$100 spent!
- And grab a woollen hat when buying Ultravac 5 in 1/Cydectin combinations

Black Hawk

- Pick up some Black Hawk Working Dog food and get the chance to win a woollen hoody

And don't forget to stock up on **LAMB WOOLOVERS**; keep them warm –keep them alive!!

Your Vets

Balclutha Clinic

Jason Darwen	BVSc
Rob Mills	BVSc
Hamish Moore	BVSc
Catherine Copland	BVM&S
Peter Heslip	BVSc
Steven Butler	BVSc PGDipVSc
Anna Burrell	BVSc
Andrew Roe	BVSc, MACVSc
Sam Howarth	BVSc
David Exton	BVSc
Marcus Yule	BVSc
Eckard Abrie	BVSc
Sam Lewis	BVSc, MSc MACVSc
Darius Tan	BVSc

Milton and Lawrence Clinics

Jillian Clark	BVSc
Sid Taylor	BVSc, MACVSc
Annie Jackson	BVSc
Martha O'Connor	MVB
Bevan Topham	BVSc
Olivia Hickman	BVSc
Anene Du Plessis	BVSc
Alisa McDonald	BVSc