

CLUTHA VETS SHEEP & BEEF FARMER NEWSLETTER



Issue 251

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Clinic News

Annie Jackson

Spring is here, and with it comes that familiar tug-of-war between Winter and Summer. One minute it's sunny and warm, the next we're reaching for the raincoat again! It's classic Spring—unsettled, unpredictable, and keeping us all on our toes.

But there's no denying the shift. The days are stretching out, the paddocks are greening up, lambs are skipping about, and trees are starting to leaf out. That fresh burst of life somehow lifts the spirit... even if it also means the workload suddenly doubles!

It's a busy time across the board—farming, vet work, tractor work, stock work, prepping pastures—the list doesn't stop. And with the countdown to Christmas already ticking in the back of our minds, there's plenty to do before the year's out.

It has been a busy Spring season for the vets and it is a fantastic change seeing our farmers filled with optimism again after a few tough years. We remain fully staffed for the rest of the season and are looking forward to welcoming two Massey new graduates, Marco Syme and Sam McCleary (another Sam, but of the male gender this time!) who will join us to begin their journey in the New Year.

You may notice a small change starting to appear — we've decided it's time to refresh the Clutha Vets logo:



Clutha Vets
Trusted since 1908

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Clinic News (continued)

Clutha Vets has a long and proud history with our local farming community, and we've been careful to carry elements of our original logo into the new one. Our past has shaped who we are, and it's just as important in guiding where we're going.

This update will be rolled out gradually — signage, uniforms, documents and more — so don't be surprised if you see a mix for a while. Just as we aim to stay up to date with the latest in animal health and veterinary care, we also want our workplace to reflect the times.

These changes also matter more than you might realise when it comes to recruitment and attracting the next generation of vets and support staff. But while we look to the future, we will always honour the people who came before us and laid the strong foundations that make Clutha Vets what it is today — and what it will continue to be in the years ahead.

Lamb Vaccinations

Giving lambs a "5 in 1" shot at tailing was a pretty rare occurrence 15-20 years ago, but now tailing is probably the time when most lambs in our area receive their first vaccination.

With the vast majority of farmers protecting their young lambs against tetanus, pulpy kidney and other clostridial diseases by vaccinating the ewes pre-lambing, it is often asked why should there be a need to vaccinate the lambs themselves as early as tailing time.

The reason is that, while the protection the lambs received from their mothers' colostrum should still be covering them at tailing, for most lambs it will run out shortly after. So, if you wait till weaning time (or when they are in for a pre-weaning drench) to begin their vaccination programme, there will be a window of a number of weeks where they will unprotected.

This period without clostridial disease protection is unlikely to result in a large outbreak of pulpy kidney deaths, but the odd lamb dying every day or two can still add up. Especially in current times where we are getting quite well paid for our lambs!

So, if you are not already vaccinating your lambs at tailing time, maybe give it some consideration. Or come and have a chat to the Clutha Vets team about your options and potential benefits

To B12 or Not to B12?

Andrew Roe

With tailing getting underway we field a lot of questions at this time of year around the use of vitamin B12 supplementation in lambs. Both around the choice of product and the timing of the treatments.

While the level of cobalt deficiency varies hugely from farm to farm, the typical pattern is for pasture levels to be reasonable in the spring and then decline as we head towards summer. Deficient pasture levels are most commonly seen from around late November to the end of February.

So, on most farms in the area the lambs are unlikely to have low B12 reserves at tailing time. However, tailing is the only opportunity you'll have for 6-8 weeks to give any treatments to your lambs, so it is understandable that many farmers are keen to give them a B12 top-up while going down the tailing chute.

The standard short acting vitamin B12 injectable products (whether plain B12 or incorporated with "5 in 1" vaccines) will lift the lambs' B12 levels for four to six weeks. So, it is important to remember that using these products at tailing does not guarantee that the lambs will have adequate B12 reserves all the way to weaning time. If your pastures are known to have low cobalt levels your lambs may need further supplementation (either another B12 injection or pasture cobalt application) some time in November.

The other option is to use SmartShot B12 (with or without selenium) at tailing time. A full 1ml dose of this long acting B12 supplement will elevate your lambs' liver B12 reserves for around six months, taking the guess work out of if and when further supplementation is necessary.

With SmartShot you also have the option of giving a half dose at tailing, which offers around three months cover. This should see a good proportion of your works lambs right, while your smaller works lambs, as well as your ewe lamb replacements will possibly needed a top up with a short acting product, part way through the summer.

Whatever supplementation option(s) you settle on, it is a good idea to do some monitoring to check how well it worked and whether additional supplementation is needed. A great way to do this is to arrange liver B12 testing through the meat works. Please give Clutha Vets a call to discuss the ideal timing for your situation, and to book in the testing.

Lamb Drenching: Early Season Recommendations

Andrew Roe

At this time of year, with farmers starting to think about their lamb worm drench requirements for the upcoming season, the team at Clutha Vets field plenty of inquiries from our clients, keen to have a discussion about the current recommendations around lamb drenching. The following paragraphs deal with some of the most commonly asked questions.

When should I start drenching my lambs?

We occasionally get asked if lambs should be drenched at tailing. In nearly all cases the answer is “No”. With most lambs being somewhere between four and six weeks old at tailing, they would be very unlikely to have ingested enough worm larvae to warrant being drenched. While lambs are eating a certain amount of grass by tailing time (and maybe a few worms as well), milk is still the main component of their diet. Also worm eggs and larvae that have survived the winter in the topsoil do not resume their development, and wriggle up the pasture sward, until temperatures warm up a bit more than where they are currently sitting.

In more northern regions of the country it is common to start lamb drenching around weaning time. However, in the lower South Island, we often have to contend with *Nematodirus*, a worm type that can be particularly harmful to young lambs. The juvenile stages of this worm over-winter on our pastures and, all “wake up” at the same time, stimulated by rising soil temperatures. They can do quite a bit of damage to a young lamb’s intestinal lining, leading to a prominent dark scour, dehydration, loss of condition and, in severe cases, even death.

Waiting until weaning time is often too late, when aiming to control *Nematodirus*; a pre-weaning drench (usually given around four weeks before weaning) is recommended. A faecal egg count can be used to determine if *Nematodirus* is a potential problem on your farm. However, many farmers in our area know from past experience that the worm is on their property, and routinely make a pre-weaning drench the start of their lamb drenching programme, followed by a drench four weeks later, around weaning time.

What drench should I use?

Regardless of the time of year, it is generally agreed that a triple combination worm drench is your best option for routine lamb drenching, assuming, of course, that you do not have triple drench resistance on your property. The best way to postpone the development of drench resistance for as long as possible is to use a product that contains all three of the commonly used drench classes. And, if you do have worms on your property that already have some resistance to one or two of these drench groups, then using a triple is the best way to minimise the chances of that resistance escalating.

The only drawback with using a triple drench as your first drench of the season (the pre-weaning drench) is that abamectin, one of the active ingredients of most commercially available triple drenches can be harmful to young (under 20kg) lambs.

Thankfully, Alleva has come to the rescue and developed “Turbo Triple” a triple drench which contains eprinomectin, a different member of the “mectin” group, that has a better safety profile than abamectin when used in young animals.

If you do decide to use a product containing abamectin for your first drench of the season, ensure that you do not overdose the smaller lambs in the mob.

Should I use a tapeworm drench?

This is a hotly debated topic, with most studies finding no productivity gains in controlling tapeworm in lambs. However one New Zealand study, involving lambs that had quite heavy tapeworm burdens, did achieve better weight gains in those lambs that were drenched with a tapeworm effective drench. So we tend to leave it up to farmer preference and prior experience. For most of the commonly used drench types, there is an equivalent product that has praziquantel added, the ingredient that kills tapeworms, for those farmers who do want to clean their lambs out.

The good thing about tapeworm control, is that tapeworms are not fast breeders and so, in most situations, you only need to treat your lambs once. The best time is early in the season; either their first or second drench.

Great Triple Drench Deals

Troika Triple: The Best Buy in Town!

Best Triple Drench single drum price: **\$545!!**
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Buy 2 x Boss 20ltr
And get a FREE Boss 5ltr*

OR a Christmas Ham*

PLUS: Enter the draw for
"Take A Mate Fishing"

* All promos have limited stock

And the winner is.....

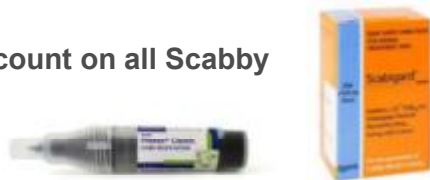
Well done **Ross Begg** for winning our autumn **Triplemax Dewalt** promotion. If anyone needs anything cleaned, you know who to contact: the new owner of a Dewalt power washer!
Cheers Ross



Clutha Vets Members' Discounts

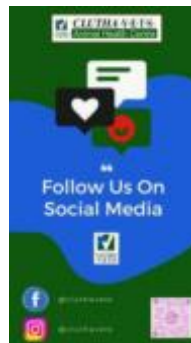
Check out these Vet Club members' discounts, just in time for tailing!

20% Members Discount on all Scabby
Mouth Vaccines



20% Members Discount on 8 or more
packs of SmartShot B12

20% Members Discount on
Royal Canin 4800
Premium Dog Food



Your Vets

Balclutha Clinic

Jason Darwen	BVSc
Hamish Moore	BVSc
Catherine Copland	BVM&S
Peter Heslip	BVSc, MVM
Steven Butler	BVSc, PGDipVSc
Andrew Roe	BVSc, MANZCVS
David Exton	BVSc
Darius Tan	BVSc
Anneke Muller	BVSc
Wing Szeto	BVSc
Hayden Linton	BVSc
Chase Jordan	BVSc
Rebecca Everingham	BVSc
Michael Sole	BVSc, BSc

Milton and Lawrence Clinics

Annie Jackson	BVSc
Martha O'Connor	MVB
Bevan Topham	BVSc
Anna Burrell	BVSc
Alisa McDonald	BVSc
Sam Lewis	BVSc, MSc MANZCVS
Sam Looney	BVSc
Emma Young	BVSc
Keira Reynolds	BVSc

BALCLUTHA 03 418 1280

MILTON 03 417 8032

CLYDEVALE 03 415 9121

LAWRENCE 03 485 9008

Scabby Mouth Vaccine: Reminders and Recommendations

Phenax Classic

For those farmers who prefer the Phenax Classic scabby mouth vaccine brand, we suggest **you get in touch and let us know how much you are likely to need**, especially if you're in a later lambing area or you lamb your hoggets, and therefore will be tailing a little later than most others in our patch.

Phenax tends to have quite a short shelf life so we are reluctant to order large quantities unless we have orders for it. We can usually get it down from the distributor within a day or two, but if you turn up wanting some vaccine for tailing the next day, you may be disappointed if you hadn't already placed an order.



Scabigard

Scabigard, the other scabby mouth vaccine, typically has a 12 month (or more) expiry date, so there is not the same need to advise us of your requirements if this is your preferred vaccine option.



Check Vaccination Effectiveness

While "scratching" your lambs for scabby mouth protection may seem like a simple job, there is potential for things to not work out as planned. The vaccine contains living organisms and, if not stored and handled correctly, the efficacy can decline rapidly. Vaccine technique is also critical with effectiveness reducing if the scratch is either too shallow or too deep.

Consequently we strongly recommend a bit of quality control. Catch a few lambs about a week after they were vaccinated and check the vaccine site. There should be a prominent brownish scab

running along the scratch line. If not, vaccination has not been successful and the lamb may not be protected.

While repeating the exercise may seem like a daunting job it is far better to find out early if there has been a problem, rather than in a month or two's time when lots of your lambs are suffering from debilitating scabby mouth lesions!

And finally....

Please remember that both scabby mouth vaccines are classified as Restricted Veterinary Medicines. As such our retail staff are not permitted to dispense them if not already authorised by a vet.

If you have not had an RVM consult in the last twelve months you will need to have a brief catch up with a member of a vet team when you call in to purchase your scabby mouth vaccine.

With spring time being a particularly busy period for vets on farm, we can not guarantee that a vet will be in house when you pop in, unless you phone ahead to organise a time.

Better still, make an appointment to have an RVM consult and we can cover a whole year's RVM requirements (vaccines, antibiotics and trace elements) in one sitting, saving you a lot of potential hassle!

Dog Poisoning Alert

The Clutha Vets small animal team has been quite busy lately, dealing with a number of very sick dogs that have come from properties where calves are being reared (both dairy and sheep and beef farms).

In each case the culprit was coccidiostats, a group of drugs added to most commercially available brands of calf milk replacer and calf meal.

The typical finding in dogs that have got into the calf milk or meal, is severe muscle weakness. Affected dogs are usually found collapsed, giving the impression that they are paralysed. However they are still able to move their legs a little; just don't have the strength to stand or walk.

Most dogs recover from coccidiostat poisoning following supportive therapy and a day or two on a drip. However there is a chance that they may be left with permanent heart damage.

The take home message is pretty straight forward; keep dogs well away from the calf sheds and definitely don't give them a "treat" of any left over calf milk!

Animal Health Reminders

Check effectiveness of pre-lamb capsules and injectable drenches

Long acting drench products can be very helpful in assisting your more vulnerable ewes and pregnant hoggets through the lambing period. However, as has been widely publicised, their usage does carry the increased risk of drench resistance developing. To check if many worms have survived the treatment we suggest you carry out a faecal egg count on treated ewes.

Not only will this inform you if an exit drench is required this season, it will also help you decide if you need to modify your pre-lamb programme next season. As an extra incentive our field reps will even call around and collect the samples for you! The exact timing of this faecal egg count will depend on which product you used; give the clinic a call for specific advice.

Worm drenching weaner deer

We have had a lot of conversations with clients on worm issues in sheep and cattle and how the late autumn period saw pretty high worm levels on some properties. Deer are equally at risk and, for those of you with weaners, it is important to control worms to ensure that their spring growth rates are not impacted. Cervidae Oral, the NZ developed triple combination deer drench, is ideal for this, having a meat withholding period of only 28 days.

BVD vaccination for heifers

For those beef breeders who have embarked on a BVD vaccination programme, remember that your heifers require two doses of the vaccine before mating. For the two BVD vaccine brands that we use, it is possible to have an interval as long as six months between these two shots, so some of you may have given your heifers their first dose back in autumn. If you did not go down this route, then it would pay to start soon, to enable the second dose to be fitted in three or four weeks before the bulls go out. And remember to give your mixed age cows and bulls their annual booster, ideally around a month before the start of mating

Replenish copper reserves in deer and cattle

Deer and cattle have higher copper requirements than sheep and spring is the time when their liver reserves of this important trace element are usually at their lowest, especially if they were not supplemented before winter. Animals wintered on fodder beet or brassica crops are at the most risk as the iron in the soil they ingest with the crop interferes with copper uptake.

Stock to pay the most attention to now are pregnant hinds, to ensure their offspring are born with good copper reserves, and breeding cows, to ensure good copper levels for mating. Talk to our vets about the range of supplement options available and the pros and cons of each method.

Getting ready for the velveting season

It won't be long before the first few stags are ready to be velveted. For accredited velveters, if you have not already done so, remember to pay your annual NVSB fee ASAP to ensure you maintain your accreditation. And, once you start to get a few stags ready, please arrange your supervisory visit.

Any VelTrak velvet ID tags that you have left over from last season are still able to be used this year; we will be in touch soon to sort out your tag requirements for the season ahead.

Book in your calf debudding

For those farmers rearing dairy-beef calves, the best way to avoid the hassle of dehorning them when they are older, is to have them "debudded" when they are small. We offer an efficient calf debudding service involving removing the horn buds under sedation and local anaesthetic. If done when your calves are around four to eight weeks old the entire horn bud can be readily removed, guaranteeing that the animal will not develop horns. If you wait until the calves are older, the buds start to calcify and unite with the skull, forming the actual horn. This means that, even though they can still be removed, there is a chance that they will be able to grow back.

And we do have a few clients who get us out to debud their home-bred beef calves. This does involve mustering and yarding cows with young calves at foot, so will not suit everyone's system. But, if this is feasible for you, debudding young beef calves is a lot less hassle than dehorning older cattle.

GROW SMARTER



When did you last check that your worm drench and trace-element programme is working for your farm?

- Clutha Vets is offering free selenium and B12 blood testing collection for your lambs - for the first 10 clients to register... the lab fees are also free!*

* Blood samples taken when present on your farm for your annual ram check

- Clutha Vets is also offering free FEC (drench check) vouchers again*

* Voucher available with the purchase of two 20L drums of drench and a maximum of 4 per farm.



And as always Clutha Vets offers expert animal health advice, product and services for your farm to help grow them smarter.



Roly 027 643 5813



Lisa 021 262 0387



Kate 027 265 8600

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