



The Do's and Don'ts of lamb vaccination

It is still best practice to vaccinate ewes within 4 weeks of the start of lambing with a clostridial vaccine (e.g. Ultravac®). The ewes respond to this vaccination by producing antibodies. The antibodies are then concentrated in the ewes colostrum ready for the new-born lambs to absorb them into their system within the first 24 hours of life. The job of the colostrum antibodies is to protect the lambs from disease until their own immune systems have time to start responding to the disease causing agents. Lambs become susceptible to infection once the colostrum antibodies are used up. The length of protection that is provided depends on how much colostrum the lambs get in the first 24 hrs. Twins and triplet lambs must share the available colostrum so are likely to get less than a single lamb. Birth order and how long they take from birth to suckling will also dictate the amount of colostrum each individual lamb receives. The age that

the lambs become susceptible to disease varies greatly. For some lambs this will be at 3-4 weeks of age while others receive enough protection to cover them to 16 weeks of age.

The aim of any vaccination program is to protect animals before they can contract the disease. Docking would be the logical time to start as this is the first opportunity to vaccinate lambs and the majority still have some degree of protection. The second vaccination can then be given at weaning or pre-weaning 4-6 weeks after docking. The lambs will not be fully protected by their own immunity until after the second vaccination. Starting the vaccination program at weaning would mean virtually all the lambs are susceptible to Pulpy Kidney at a time when they are at the highest risk of that disease occurring.

Clostridial vaccines come with or without Selenium (Se) and/or Vitamin B12. From both a safety and economic perspective "mineralized" vaccines should only be given after testing shows that a deficiency exists.

Treatment of lambs at docking with vaccines containing selenium can cause death due to selenium toxicity and supplementation with either Vitamin B12 or Selenium in situations where no deficiency exists will have no benefit and is simply a waste of money.

Benefits of Ultravac 5+1:

- Cover against the 5 main clostridial diseases affecting sheep in NZ
- Trace element supplementation (Vitamin B12 or Vitamin B12 and Se)
- Added control of Caseous Lymphadenitis (cheesy gland)
- All in one easy to give injection.

For further advice on the best time to vaccinate or how to test for trace element deficiencies talk to your vet.



Getting Serious about fleas and tick protection for your working dogs



Having the right set of tools makes farm work all the more pleasurable and efficient. It's the same for working dogs. Bringing in a fractious mob goes much smoother when your dogs are concentrating on the task rather than stopping to scratch at fleas! As Spring kicks in flea populations start to boom, so it's time to get your dog team set up with some serious tools of their own to prevent fleas distracting them from work.

If you're looking for a good old-fashioned flea collar that actually works, we recommend Seresto, a long lasting 8 month flea and tick collar. Seresto collars allow the controlled release of tried and trusted active ingredients, which diffuse into the fatty layer of the dogs' skin in low doses, only replenishing when required. As these actives remain in the skin's lipid layer, the product is water resistant, so it stays effective when charging

through rivers or working in downpours. Fleas and cattle ticks (*Haemaphysalis longicornis*) are killed on contact with your dogs' skin and coat, meaning that unlike systemically active treatments, fleas do not have to bite to die.

For a limited time, Seresto is offering a FREE Shepherd's whistle, just sign up online at www.serestopromo.co.nz

Seresto® is totally unique as flea treatments go, so ask for it at the clinic before the flea season really kicks in! We have a special promotion running in clinic until the end of October with **\$10 off each Seresto® collar**.

- Longest lasting flea and treatment on the market, with 8 months protection
- Safe, convenient, odour-free and water-resistant
- Kills fleas on contact – they don't have to bite to die - better for dog welfare
- Kills 99-100% of fleas before they lay eggs and kills flea larvae in the animal's environment
- Repels and kills ticks on contact, preventing them from attaching to dogs
- The emergency release ratchet system allows the collar to loosen or break without injury
- Proven in the field on sport and working dogs



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Here's a heart-warming statistic that we should be pushing more - did you know that we are such efficient producers of milk that we could take a litre of milk produced here, fly it to Ireland (the next most efficient dairy farmers in the world) and it would still have a lower carbon footprint than a litre of milk produced in Ireland?



How come no-one ever points that out when we're getting hammered left, right & centre about our methane emissions? Our carbon footprint for meat is so low that the Guardian newspaper recently produced an article encouraging British greenies to eat NZ produced lamb rather than homegrown because it's better for the environment. Any chance the local media could highlight these good facts once in a while? And let's face it; the main reason why our methane emissions per capita are much higher than the rest of the world is simply

because we have very few people living here and millions of farm animals.

We could easily reduce our per capita methane emissions by filling the country up with people – and I hate to think what that would do to the environment. I've got a greenie sister-in-law who constantly chides us about how we recycle, what packaging we use and what clothes we wear but does it while she chain-smokes herself to an early grave. I did some research and the next time she has a go I'm going to remind her that smokers are producing 5% of the world's greenhouse gases and those filters contain micro-plastics that ultimately end up in our fish!

Speaking of carbon footprints I see everyone is giving Prince Harry hell about all the flying he does on private jets. Surely Prince Andrew has a bigger footprint these days as he frantically burns all his old clothes and documents in the wake of the Epstein scandal...



RUGBY
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By the time you read this we will have played our first match of the World Cup against the old foe. Luckily my South African-born wife and her family have no real interest in the game so I'm unlikely to get much grief if by some freak of natural law we lose. I've managed to connect the new TV at reception into the Spark Sport World Cup app, so my intention is to have replays going at reception for the duration. You can let the wife know you're just popping into the clinic to pick up some penicillin and return 2 hours later "complaining" about long queues at the vets.

I'm not sure what to think about this tournament. I have some worries (and repressed memories) of 1991 lingering but I also have faith that big Steve and his team will have kept something up their sleeve for this. At least I hope so because while it's great that we won the netball world cup and tied the cricket world cup, let's face it; if we don't win this World Cup the country will be plunged into a massive collective depression and no-one wants that.

Calving is almost over, the sun is coming out more often, things are warming up and mating is just around the corner. As a result much of this newsletter is dedicated to sex. Don't get too excited; not that sort of sex – the farming sort of sex. That is; getting cows in calf early and successfully. Hopefully you'll find something in here that is helpful as you go into a crucial period in your farming calendar.

Taking Your Pet to the Vet



"Oh yeah? . . . well, I'd like a second opinion."

The Value of Early Intervention

How long are you going to mate for this season?

If you start mating on the 20th October your calving start date is around 29th July. A Christmas day conception results in a 3rd October calving and pulling the bull out on New Year's Day means your last calving will be on the 10th of October. That's just over a 10-week mating period. If you go to the end of January then you will still be calving after the start of AB and we're getting back into the pre-induction days of the 1960's & 1970's. **Do you really want that?**

So let's settle on a 10-week mating period as a fair compromise. You'll still have some cows calving late, but if you get all your ducks in a row the bulk of the herd should be in well before the end of September allowing sufficient lead-in time to mating.

With the help of early intervention.

We've banged on about this for years but the biggest return on your investment (and that's what it is) with cidrs, etc, is when you use them pre-mating, i.e. **starting about 9-10 days before you begin AB.**

Here's the numbers based on a \$6.75 pay-out for a 400-cow herd with an expected rate of non-cyclers 10 days out from AB at around 20% (around 80 cows):

- 10 days prior to AB the costs of treatment will be around \$4,600 but the income from earlier conception & more days in milk, more AB calves, etc. will be around \$9,000; a nett return of about \$4,400. That's not a bad return on investment.
- If you wait until the end of the first round there will be fewer cows to treat so your costs drop to just under \$800 but your return on that investment is just under \$700 because of lost days in milk, less replacement calves & so on so it will cost you just over \$100.

Breaking that down to a per-cow scenario:

- ◆ 10 days out the nett return is about \$55 per cow
- ◆ 7 days after the start of mating the return is about \$24 per cow
- ◆ And waiting until the end of the first round? It will cost you about \$8 per cow so you're actually losing money if you treat any later than about a week after the start of AB

Remember these figures are calculated for farm owners. **If you're a 50/50 sharemilker then the only time you'll get a positive return on investment is if you intervene early.**

These numbers are based on the usual assumptions of milk production, extra feed costs for more cows calving early, added value of an AB heifer calf & pay-out. There is enough evidence out there after many years of early intervention to back these figures up so if you're serious about having a compact calving & getting more income from more days in milk, then early intervention really is a no-brainer.

Either that or we go back to the days of 3-4 month calving spreads and mating into March.



Re-Use of Cidrs



I know some of you like to 'save money' by re-using cidrs on your non-cycling cows or perhaps transferring them from your heifers after synchrony to your cows. Opinion on re-use of Cidrs amongst the vets in our practice is mixed. I'm not a fan, while others are more comfortable with the procedure. Certainly re-use of a cidr to treat a non-cycling cow is better than doing nothing but if you are a re-use fan be aware that release of progesterone from cidrs is not linear i.e. it doesn't release into the cow evenly. On insertion of a new cidr into a cow the initial release of powdered progesterone is quite rapid, known as 'dumping', and then you get gradual release after that.

So when you re-use a cidr, while there's still progesterone there you can't assume that there is half the initial progesterone & you won't get the "dumping" effect, which can be important for influencing the pituitary gland. So, while you are still free to re-use cidrs (and for some of you it seems to work okay) please be aware that you do run the risk of inferior results because of the lower progesterone in the cidr and the lack of a "dumping" effect to stimulate new follicles on the ovary.

There is also the questions of hygiene given some of you aren't the best at cleaning these things after they have been in another cow. That increases the risk of inflammation of the vaginal walls leading to an uncomfortable infection that in itself will affect the chances of a cow getting back in calf.

And of course there's the question of cost benefit and we know from years of data that every week into mating that you wait before treating reduces your R.O.I until you're losing money at 3 weeks after planned start of mating. So the money you may save by waiting a week to do the other half of your non-cyclers is probably lost in terms of return on investment. After-all it's the extra days in milk that give you your return and you've just elected to lose at least a week's worth of milk which would more than pay for itself if you had just bitten the bullet and treated everything early as recommended.

Give it some thought and discuss with us if you're considering re-using cidrs this season.

Treating your Calves for Worms this Season

Calving is a busy time of year that seems to go on until Christmas. Before doing what you've always done, take a moment to make sure it is still correct for your property. Here are some basic rules that all farmers should go by:



- **Use combination drenches**

We used to say rotate drenches, but now we say use combinations as research has shown this is best for production and preventing resistance. You should always use combination products (double or triple) in cattle under 15 months of age. The only exception to this is very young calves where safety margins may be an issue due to their size. That is why we still offer Dectomax injection in calves before Xmas because it has a very wide safety margin. After Xmas when all your calves should be comfortably over 120kg you should use combinations.

- **Give the drench properly**

Dose accurately for weight, take your time and do it right. Pour-on, injectable and oral drenches can all be given poorly, so make sure you do it correctly.

- **Take care with young calves**

Don't mix drench in with the milk. It can be fatal. Last season we had a tragic case of mass poisoning as a result of this, so it does happen. We know that some of you still subscribe to this method as an easy way to drench calves as they are transitioned onto grass. Believe us - you are playing Russian Roulette & eventually you will kill calves.

Avoid products containing abamectin in calves <120kg.

- **Take care with yourself**

Choose a drenching method that works for you and doesn't unnecessarily put you at risk of injury.

There has been a lot of research published in recent years that has changed the advice given around drenching. Unfortunately that can make it confusing for the farmer who has been told one thing, only now to be told another. If you are in any doubt, talk to us to discuss your particular requirements.

Could it be Coccidia?

As every farmer and calf-rearer knows, raising replacers can be a challenge. Diarrhoea is one of the costliest problems, so sorting out the cause is key to calf welfare and profitability.

One of the most common but easily treatable causes of diarrhoea is Coccidiosis. The parasite is a major problem for young calves and can spread quickly through a mob with devastating short- and long-term effects. Coccidiosis can be clinical, showing some or all of the following symptoms:

- Dark green to blackish diarrhoea
- Presence of blood and threads of fibre in stool
- Abdominal pain and straining
- Fever and lack of appetite



However not all calves will show symptoms of infection. A subclinical case can be invisible, but the damage is still being done. Plus the continued shedding of Coccidia 'eggs' (oocysts) and escalating environmental contamination may then lead to clinical coccidiosis in the mob.

It's important to remember that when clinical signs are seen, serious damage to the calf's gut has already occurred, reducing her ability to absorb feed and liquids, and opening a way for other bugs to cause infection. Plus even when the disease is treated, the gut does not fully recover for several weeks, and appetite may be suppressed. Longer term effects include poorer milk production at first lactation.

The good news is that studies have shown that early, preventative treatment with Baycox C not only stops Coccidia, it can result in earlier first service and higher conception rates. In other words, treating calves well before they display clinical symptoms is vital to your farm's prosperity. The key though is timing; if they haven't yet been exposed to coccidia then Baycox won't work. So we want to know they have been exposed but get to them before that exposure becomes production-limiting.

The first step to tackling Coccidia is to talk to us. Get some samples into us from 4 or 5 calves and we'll get them tested, while calves are still in the sheds. If the tests come back positive, treatment with Baycox C is recommended one week before the time you would usually expect to see clinical cases.

Baycox®C is easy to administer and usually works with just a single dose. So protect the welfare and worth of your calves by talking to your vet today.

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