

Rural round-up



Donna Hamilton
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Farming is always throwing up a challenge of some sort. I have always thought we are a bit bonkers to be investing our time and money in an industry that is so heavily reliant on the weather and markets – of which we have no control. But at the same time, I love what farming offers our families and communities.

During the break I read the book *“Tools for the Top Paddock – Lessons from life on the land”* by Kane Brisco. It is an easy read with lots of tidbits from a farmer who has needed to work out a way to manage farming to suit his life, and his mindset. He talks about mental fitness as a way to measure where he is at, which I thought was a useful analogy.

Farming sure can be all-consuming, especially at certain parts of the year. How do you go about maintaining your mental fitness during these times? Kane suggests having a plan well ahead of these all-consuming times so you don't have to figure it out in the middle of everything. We're eager to ensure your animal health runs smoothly for you in these times – let's plan together to prevent problems.

So, what's on top for your 2025? We hope you have some fun plans, so there's always something to look forward to, and some farming plans too: to focus on a specific production target; find out more about a topic such as survival or lameness; see the benefits of optimum body condition scores; or to attend a Wormwise event!

Every farmer will need to be intentional to keep the wet spring of 2024 limited to this financial year. Bring on 2025!

Preparing for hot summer days

by James Benstead

Despite having non-stop rain this past spring, unfortunately (and somewhat ironically) this summer may turn out to be a hot, dry one.

Keeping stock happy, healthy and productive in the heat requires good preparation, here are some of our tips:

Handling heat stress

An important thing to be aware of during high temperatures (above 20°C) is heat stress in stock. Key prevention methods include:

- Always ensuring animals have access to clean water, which may mean having water available in laneways or yards.
- Utilising paddocks with shade.
- Implementing shade or sprinkler systems on dairy shed yards.

Budgeting feed

We know you'll be assessing your feed supply and forecasting how much you'll need, particularly if things dry up. Ways to reduce pressure on feed include:

- Culling low-value stock.



- Pregnancy scanning dairy herds (we can age scan from 42 days) to identify empty cows and inform culling decisions.
- Moving to once-a-day or 16-hour milking and considering drying-off some cows early.

Managing pasture

Good pasture management becomes even more vital during hot spells, so you can get the feed you've budgeted out of each paddock. Some strategies to mitigate impacts include:

- Buying in feed supplements early.
- Remaining consistent with pasture residuals and not overgrazing.
- Increasing dairy platform rotations to an approximately 30-day cycle to help achieve optimum grass growth.

Every farm is different, with different goals, stock, land, and weather patterns, so how you manage summer will differ. We're here if you need us.

ON-FARM FOCUS



DAIRY



- Complete early aged scanning and organise re-check scans – there's still time to book in.
- BCS cows to check they are coming through summer well.
- Look out for lameness and review your hoof care kit to aid treatment.
- Continue following your drench plan for calves.

BEEF



- Protect your calves through growth season with clostridial vaccination.
- Scan early to make the most of good beef prices.

SHEEP



- Udder ewes – good to repeat now 4-6 weeks post-weaning to identify any issues.
- Campylovexin vaccination.
- Apply fly prevention.
- FEC test two-tooths and lambs.

DEER



- Yersiniavax and drench for fawns.
- Finish velveting (regrowth, spikers etc.).

WORKING DOGS



- Remember monthly tablets for Sheep Measles prevention.
- Watch out for signs of heatstroke.



Treating a lame cow

by Lily Chin

1. Secure the leg.
2. Clean the foot with a hose.
3. Feel between the claws and all around the foot. Look for trapped stones and cracks, and examine the skin above the hoof for infection or growths.
4. Use hoof testers along all areas of the sole to identify the problem claw and painful spot.
5. If a lesion is identified, ensure all under-running sole is removed by trimming with a hoof knife. Avoid bleeding as it will delay healing!
6. Transfer weight away from the painful area by putting a block on the sound claw.
7. Manage pain during recovery with anti-inflammatory pain relief and consult your vet if antibiotics may be needed.



What's in a well-stocked lame cow kit?

- Hoof knife and sharpener
- Hoof testers
- Hoof trimmers
- Hoof grater and/or paring knife
- Plastic, wooden or foam blocks and glue (i.e. Cowslips)
- Bandages
- Antiseptic spray (i.e. Iodine)
- Antibiotic spray (i.e. Tetravet blue spray)
- Pain relief (i.e. Metacam, Key)
- Gloves and apron
- Rope
- Towels
- Tail paint

Identifying lameness

by Lily Chin

New Zealand's pasture-based dairy farming system, where cows graze in fields in all weather and walk fair distances along lanes to get to and from the milking shed, can increase the risk of lameness.

We know farmers work hard to prevent and treat lameness, so we've put together a guide to help you determine what type of lame cases you might be seeing on your farm.

Sole bruising – reddish areas on the hoof sole indicating damage to the corium (the blood nutrient-rich layer directly underneath the sole). Time will heal with simple bruising.

Interdigital cracks – a crack in the inner hoof wall between the two claws. Trimming the area and a hoof block can help in most cases.

Sole ulcer – damage to the hoof sole leading to an infection. May appear as a small crack and can track widely under the sole. Treat by removing all under-run sole. Use a block on the sound claw to take weight off.

White line disease – damage in the junction between the hoof sole and hoof wall. Treat by trimming the hoof and all under-running sole to allow drainage. Use a block on the sound claw to take weight off. Antibiotics may be required in cases where the infection tracks deeper into the joint. In severe cases, a vet might need to consider regional antibiotic perfusion and/or claw amputation.

Footrot – an infection of the soft tissue above the hoof. The skin will be red, swollen and hot. Check for trapped stones. Treat with antiseptic spray and antibiotics.

Digital dermatitis – a superficial bacterial infection of the skin above the heel of the foot. There will be a grey or red sore, which can have a wart-like appearance. Treat with antibiotic spray. Note: this condition is contagious, so it can spread from cow to cow.

A recap of Johne's disease



by James Benstead

Johne's disease is a common problem in Southland.

It's caused by a bacteria that damages the gut lining, leading to two main signs:

1. Watery "hose-pipe" diarrhoea.
2. Progressive weight loss.

Infection usually occurs in young calves. The bacteria then lies dormant in the cow for a number of years, with these **clinical signs often not apparent until they are at least 3-4 years old**. These later-staged diseased cows shed the most bacteria leading to higher risk of transmission.

Regular testing for Johne's through bulk milk testing provides a greater chance of identifying affected cows (who may not have visible symptoms) and removing them from the herd.

Unfortunately, given the nature of the disease, it can take several years of herd testing and culling before a large improvement in case numbers can be seen.

Johne's disease is costly and large numbers of affected cows can lead to huge production losses. Making a plan with your KeyVet about testing for and managing Johne's can lead to better productivity and animal health in the long-term.

Reflecting on a Salmonella spring

by Kate Irving

This spring we saw huge numbers of Salmonella cases in both sheep and cattle.

With such bad weather leading to large amounts of dirty surface water, limited feed and increased stocking densities, overall infection pressure and stress was much higher than usual. This caused a many outbreaks.

In sheep, there are two main forms of the disease:

- 1. Enteric form – caused by Salmonella Hindmarsh and S. Typhimurium:**
 - Mainly seen December-June.
 - Cases mainly occur after a period of stress, such as yarding and transport.
 - Signs to look out for are sudden death, scouring ewes and ewes that are dull and not eating.
- 2. Abortive form – caused by Salmonella Brandenburg:**
 - Mainly seen in late pregnancy.
 - Causes late term abortions and death in ewes.

If you are concerned you may have Salmonella cases occurring on your farm, talk to your KeyVet. We can test affected stock to confirm the diagnosis and aid in creating a treatment plan, along with helping you work on prevention.

Luckily, we do have a vaccine available for Salmonella, Salvexin+B, which is a



big help in controlling the disease and covers the main strains seen in New Zealand.

If you are seeing the enteric form of the disease, the best time to vaccinate is between weaning and mating, but animals can be vaccinated as part of a treatment protocol in an outbreak.

If you have the abortive form, then vaccination is recommended at scanning. However, in the face of an outbreak of the abortive form, vaccine is not recommended and therefore **it is much better to vaccinate before the problems occur.**

If you've got any questions, please reach out to your KeyVet.



Let's make a vaccination plan!

Your KeyVet will get in touch with you before the end of February to discuss protecting your stock from Salmonella and to confirm numbers ahead of a season in which we anticipate high demand for the vaccine.



Avoiding Yersiniosis



by Lisa Roberts

Yersiniosis is a highly infectious disease that is characterised by a green, watery scour which rapidly leads to death if untreated.

Recently weaned fawns in their first autumn are typical candidates, as the stress from weaning coupled with possible changes in feed, transport, parasite burdens and bad weather all create the ideal 'perfect storm' for this bacteria.

Around weaning farmers should:

- Aim to reduce the effects of common stresses on fawns.
- Vaccinate twice with Yersiniavax vaccine, 3-6 weeks apart, to prevent disease. The last vaccine should ideally be completed one week before weaning.

Use Yersiniavax as an 'insurance policy' in case of environmental stressors and to enhance good management practices.

Contact your KeyVet to discuss a plan for your weaners.



Ewe feed requirements



by Donna Hamilton

Please identify your ewes that can be maintained through to mating! These animals need 2% of their body weight in kg of dry matter (DM) each day, i.e. a 70kg ewe needs 1.4kgDM/day.

Animals that need to gain weight will need 3-3.5% of their weight in DM.

That's 2-2.5kgDM/day for a 70kg ewe. Get them to the required condition score (3-3.5), then drop them back to maintenance.

If you're keen to get more accurate, you would measure requirements and feed in megajoules of metabolisable energy (MJME). We are happy to help with this, just give us a call.

Worms more resistant

by Angela Butcher

Our recent faecal egg count reduction tests (FECRT) results show continuing parasite resistance to triple combination drenches and growing resistance to dual-actives.

We completed nine reduction tests during the 2023-2024 season. All of the nine participating farms tested dual and triple drenches. Fewer farms tested single-acting and novel drenches. The graph below shows the overall results.

It is important to note that this is a small sample size and likely not fully

representative of the southern region as a whole, but the results still give some very important insights.

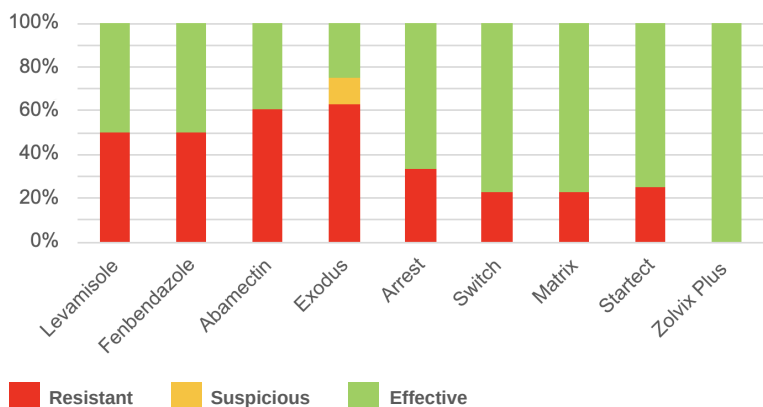
Of concern, we did find some resistance to novel drench Startect on one property as well as further triple resistance – supporting the belief that the battle against internal parasites requires more than just drenching. There are numerous ways to ensure well-grown lambs and a healthy mob in the face of drench resistance. Reach out to your KeyVet for help with which parasite management practices will work best on your property.

Unfortunately, we noted the most resistance across both *Trichostrongylus* and *Teldorsagia* (formerly *Ostertagia*) worm species, as shown in the two graphs to the right.

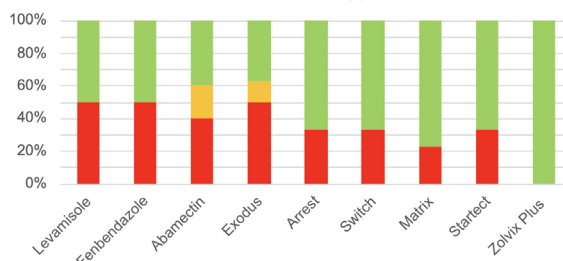


Faecal egg count (FEC) testing will continue to be your best mode of defense going forward to understand your worm burden and make informed decisions, helping you target an effective treatment plan and have more control over your animal health spend across the season.

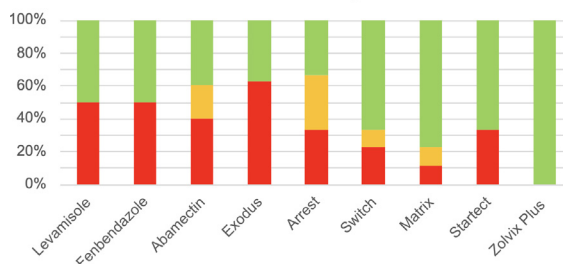
2024 FECRT



LC Trichostrongylus



LC Telodorsagia



Clinic corner



Don't forget, we deliver on-farm!

Save on fuel and time this year – get us to deliver your animal health products to you on-farm for FREE! We can also collect samples to be tested and hoof knives for sharpening, just arrange with your local driver prior to collection. Give your clinic a call to find out more.



Scanning support

Our vets and techs have been busy across the countryside age scanning dairy herds and heifer mobs. Often they are rewarded for their hard work with a yummy smoko spread – thank you to all those farms who've fueled our teams! Sometimes they're given a helping hand (or hoof!) as well...



Our clinics

Balclutha
Gore
Winton
Otautau

Tapanui
Invercargill
Lumsden
Clydevale

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