

## Rural round-up



**Mark Bryan**  
Director of  
Clinical Strategy

There was a saying going around earlier this year that the goal was to 'survive to 25'. Well, we've almost got there, but it's felt a bit like one of those nail-biting games against the Irish, where you never know if we're going to hold out 'til the final whistle goes!

Like all good rugby tests, we started off with a hiss and a roar. Summer was good and autumn and winter were relatively reasonable. Then all hell broke loose, and with the weather challenges came disease. Salmonella in adult stock, hypothermic lambs, worms and coccidiosis for everything in between, and mastitis.

It's true that vets like disease – up to a point. The interesting and unusual case; problem solving a herd issue; making things right for a client... but this spring has seen disease on an almost biblical scale. This moved very quickly from interesting to sad and thoroughly depressing. Difficult for you as farmers and clients, and challenging for us as vets supporting you through it.

I'm proud of how our teams have rallied around our clients and each other through this past year. I'm concerned when they talk of farmers breaking down in front of them. I'm sad when I do the maths on profitability for a sheep farmer. And I'm gutted when a diagnosis comes in for another client who doesn't deserve another kick in the teeth.

But, I'm glad that I live in the Deep South; in a community that still cares and still values our farmers and the work you do. And I'm glad we continue to support each other and that we'll make it (just) to '25.

## Watch out for flystrike!

by Holly Hender

**Last year was a tough season for managing fly. As the soil has warmed up, flystrike is unfortunately back on our radar. Warm and wet weather provides the perfect conditions for blowflies – and we've had a lot of rain!**

Early protection not only protects your flock, but also gives you peace of mind over the holiday season. Managing your risk will help your lambs thrive, and your ewes recover from a tough spring.

Looking at the next couple of months, it is important to closely monitor your stock so you can take action before you have a problem.

When deciding on the best prevention treatment for your farm, it is important to choose products based on wool length and when you are planning to shear.

If you aren't planning to shear until the New Year, you may still need prevention to cover your flock through



till then, so chat to your KeyVet about the best plan of action.

Shearing in 4-6 weeks isn't a reason not to protect your stock – it just means you might do it differently!

For information on how to prevent flystrike using either 'non-chemical'/ farm management tools or chemical products/dips, as well as tips on how to treat cases of flystrike, read the full article on our website.

Scan for Holly's full article.



## ON-FARM FOCUS



### DAIRY



- Ensure calves are meeting weight targets and drench at appropriate intervals once weaned.
- Continue following your mating plan.
- Keep an eye on bulls to make sure they're not overworked.
- Treat any lame cows promptly.
- Consider tail scoring and locomotion scoring to find out if your herd has any problems.
- Book in scanning dates.

### BEEF



- Weigh and drench calves, plus give clostridial vaccinations.
- Regularly check on bulls out in the paddock during mating.
- Prep for marking.

### SHEEP



- Prep for weaning!  
*For the lambs:* Clostridial vaccination, drench, B12 and fly prevention.  
*For the ewes:* Weigh a sample, BCS, fly prevention and initial uddering (repeat 4-6 weeks post-weaning).
- Order Toxo/Campy vaccines for two-tooths.

### DEER



- Last chance to book in supervisory visit's for accredited farmers.
- Remove velvet.
- Weigh yearlings; drench if necessary.

### WORKING DOGS



- Watch out for signs of heatstroke on hotter days.



# Scanning season swiftly approaching

by Keryn Cresswell & Christine Utting

It may seem too early to start thinking about pregnancy testing, however, now is a great time to get dates and times booked in the calendar.

## When to scan

In cows, the best time to age a pregnancy accurately is between 42 and 90 days after mating. We usually recommend two scanning sessions:

- A first scan in January to age the earlyies and heifers.
- A second re-check scan a while later to confirm the emptyies and age the lates.

## Why early age scan?

Knowing accurate calving dates enables you to make informed plans. You can create separate mobs for winter and draft better into your springers come calving. This will help you nail the crucial calving transition period.

Aged scanning also enables us to calculate 3-week and 6-week in-calf rates, to see how well you are meeting targets. Working out the success of the repro programme you've used will influence your decisions for next season.

## Would wearable tech impact scanning?

Technology such as collars or tags can calculate the likelihood of a cow being pregnant based on her pattern of heat behaviour. It can also predict which cows are likely to be empty.

Our take on whether scanning is still beneficial is:

- None of the tech can claim to be 100% accurate. It is common to see cows that still show signs of being on heat, yet when scanned they are found to be in-calf.
- The only way to be sure of pregnancy is to ultrasound the cow and visualise the calf. Skipping this could mean you miss out on key details and cull the wrong cows.

## What to expect from scanning

Any information gathered by us during scanning will be compiled into a report and also uploaded into MINDA. Following this, your KeyVet can provide a more in-depth analysis.

So, get your scanning booked in with us today!



## A tail to tell?

Behind the scenes at VetSouth, our teams have been assisting in a four-year, nationwide study to understand cattle tail health in New Zealand, looking into the prevalence of tail damage in dairy and beef herds.

The results show:

- **Adult dairy cattle:** The median prevalence of tail deviation was 9.5%; 0.9% for trauma, and 4.5% for shortening. Southland cattle scored much higher for overall tail damage, at 29%!
- **R2 dairy cattle:** The median prevalence of tail deviation across all 7739 heifers scored (from eight regions) stood at 1%.
- **R1 dairy cattle:** There were only three calves in total (out of almost 9500 calves scored) with evidence of tail trauma.
- **Beef cattle:** 986 beefies were scored in Southland and 2144 in the Waikato region and the overall prevalence of tail damage was 4%.

In conclusion, the overall proportion of cows identified as having damaged tails stood at 11.5%, which is not acceptable for NZ. As such, the recommendation is for an industry-wide programme to reduce these figures.

Scan to read a full description of the study and the results.



# Weighing it up across the south



by Brittany Buchanan

Our trained vet techs have been out and about weighing calves through our **Weigh It Up** programme.

Weighing allows you to be more accurate with weaning and drenching, plus it helps you better understand how your animals are tracking at crucial stages of their development.

We can weigh calves in calf sheds, dairy shed yards, or yards at grazing blocks with our portable scales. While they're in, you can also do any drenching and vaccinating.

Clients have the option of all weights being uploaded to MINDA directly. Afterwards, a summary email is sent with results and graphs showing how calves are tracking.

**Call 027 281 1661 for more information or to make a booking.**



# Udder basics

Get a firm grasp on how and when to udder your ewes this season!

by James Benstead

With the bad weather this spring, the lambing season has been particularly hard in many aspects; including farmers experiencing more cases of mastitis than usual.

Mastitis occurs as bacteria enter the udder resulting in an infection, causing swelling and inflammation.

Uddering ewes to pick up mastitis should be done by gently squeezing

both sides of the udder while the ewe is in the race, feeling for generalised hardness or lumps of one or both quarters. Lumps in front and behind the udder can be normal in ewes, however, lumps within udder tissue itself are abnormal.

If identified early (hot, swollen udders) mastitis may be able to be treated with antibiotics, however, typically ewes that are found with chronic infections are unlikely to be treated successfully and should be culled.

It's best to udder ewes around 4-6 weeks post-weaning, as studies have shown it identifies approximately double the amount of mastitis ewes compared to uddering at weaning alone! This prevents more ewes with mastitis making it to mating.



These studies also show lambs born to mastitis ewes are 3-4 times more likely to die, and lambs that survive average significantly less weight gains.

Ewes with mastitis should be identified, marked and culled to prevent issues in future seasons and to maintain optimum health within your flock.

## Book your rams in for a 'service'



by Angela Butcher

We don't need to tell you how tough this year has been! The season's constant fight against some pretty terrible weather has taken its toll on farmers and stock alike.

Now that we are finally starting to get a glimpse of the elusive Big Yellow, it's time to start looking ahead to lamb finishing and next season's tupping. With this in mind, let's get your vet on-farm to get their yearly ram action!

The reason we insist on performing this annual ritual is to ensure your mating season runs smoothly, with no nasty surprises at scanning time.

Some of the most common issues we find during **Ram Run** that can cause issues with your rams' fertility and ability to perform over mating are:

- Mono-orchidism (only one testicle present)
- Cryptorchidism (no testicles present)
- Micro-orchidism (one or both testicles are underdeveloped)

- Unevenly sized testicles
- Epididymitis (lumps/inflammation in the surrounding tubes)
- Scarring and damage to the testicle or scrotum
- Scrotal mange.

We also cast a quick eye over the rams and lay a hand on their back to body condition score them. There are many other conditions we can easily pick up that can have a significant impact on fertility.

Ram Run is also a great time to make teasers. Rams chosen for vasectomy should be young, strong, and healthy.

Ram palpations are best performed a minimum of 6 weeks prior to mating.

This allows enough time for infertile or unsound rams to be treated or replaced.

To ensure your ewes get nothing but the best next mating, book the boys in for a cheeky feel – you won't regret it. **Give us a call and reserve your spot for next year's Ram Run (around February 2025, dates TBC).**

## Grazing new grass paddocks

by Donna Hamilton

New grass paddocks offer great feed quality and low parasite burden – a recipe for great lamb growth!

However, they also have the potential to make any drench resistance really bad, because if you drench onto this pasture and worms survive, you will end up with a parasite population that is 100% resistant!

Refugia is essential on new grass paddocks. We MUST put some parasites on here that have not been exposed to drench, but, we also need to benefit from this low challenge area.

There are a lot of options for this. Below are some that farmers like:

1. **Run undrenched ewes over the paddock for the first quick tiller-grazing.**
2. **Put some undrenched ewes in with lambs for grazing.** Use your light ewes – they will pick up in condition being fed like a lamb, win-win!
3. **Run undrenched ewes in after the lambs.**

There are other options too, which we are very happy to explain and discuss with you further at any time.

You spend a lot getting the grass in, so let's ensure you can make the most of it without compromising your drench status!

Cross-grazing at its best on one client's farm, outside of Gore!  
Proof that friendships come in all shapes, sizes and species!



# Working dogs in summer

by Hugh Hasselman

The summer brings some heavy workloads on farms and high energy requirements for farm working dogs. **Feed them a high fat, high protein diet to reduce musculoskeletal injuries and increase endurance.**

Burning all that energy creates increased body heat which becomes more difficult for them to regulate in hot weather. They only have a few sweat glands, in the pads and nose, and depend on evaporative cooling of exhaled moist air, panting, and air movements over the body surface. All of these involve the loss of body water.

To maintain hydration on hot, heavy work days, Huntaways are likely to need at least 2.5L of water and Heading dogs 1.5L. **Allow your team regular opportunities to rehydrate throughout the day (and night).**

**Watch for early signs of heat stress, such as starting to underperform, slow**

**return from a run, ignoring commands, lying down, and seeking shade.**

Significant heat stress will begin as body temperature increases, with symptoms such as wet pads, increased respiration rate, panting, reluctance to move, drooling, vomiting and disorientation.

Heat stroke is increasingly likely if the dog has a prolonged elevation of body temperature above 40.6°C, with the rapid onset of multi-organ dysfunction, organ failure, collapse, and death.

If you have a dog in heat stress, call your vet for urgent attention AND immediately start to cool them down, using these steps:

1. Don't fully immerse your dog in water as they may be neurologically impaired and could inhale water and drown.
2. Take your dog out of direct sun and into deep shade, if possible.
3. Wet their coat and skin thoroughly with cool water. Soaking towels can be a way to disperse water to the skin. Remove the towel to allow air movement and evaporation. Repeat.
4. Do not use ice as this may cause shock, rebound hypothermia, and



further organ injury in an already compromised dog.

5. Transport them as soon as possible for veterinary care.

Some key things to remember to avoid heat stress include:

- Never leave a dog inside a vehicle in warm weather.
- Plan work schedule to avoid extreme heat of the day.
- Keep their hair clean and knot free.
- Maintain flea and worm control treatments for healthy skin and better thermoregulation.
- Feed a consistent diet during heavy work times as a dog with gastrointestinal upset will be more susceptible to heat stress.
- Conditioned dogs have better thermoregulation – be watchful of young dogs on their first big outings.

## Clinic corner



### Tis the season... for events!

#### A Gala Day to remember

Thanks to everyone who came along to our Gala Day to celebrate the opening of our Findlay Road small animal clinic and stables. It was a roaring success, with over 500 clients, locals (and pets) through the door! We hope you all enjoyed the clinic tours and fun competitions. Keep an eye on Facebook for details of the winners.



#### Family fun in Winton

Our crew was at the Winton Open Day, which was a great day out for the whole family. We had games, competitions, plenty of animals to get up close with, and even a Prince... We were in the parade too (VetSouth and Weigh It Up)!



#### Join us at your local A&P Show

We're excited to once again take part in upcoming A&P Shows around the region. We love getting out and chatting to farmers, so head over for a yarn, some tasty BBQ food and see what deals we've got on too!

7th December 2024 - Wyndham  
1st February 2025 - Gore  
1st March 2025 - Southland

## Our clinics

Balclutha  
Gore  
Winton  
Otautau

Tapanui  
Invercargill  
Lumsden  
Clydevale

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Keep your pets happy and healthy with our **small animal teams in Balclutha, Tapanui, Gore, Invercargill & Winton**



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