



TOPVETS

Moosletter

October 2012

Brief News

MINDA Handheld Device

We now have a handheld device in which we can enter pregnancy testing results on farm. The device allows either a pregnant/empty recording or also allows us to enter aging data.

We will be carrying it with us when scanning herds. Entering data on farm saves double recording and could reduce this risk of making mistakes in entering records.

Dog (and Cat) Vaccination Run

The yearly vaccination runs are just around the corner. They will be happening early November as before. For all of you involved with the run last year we will be in touch. Anyone who wasn't involved but would like to have their animals vaccinated on the run, please contact us at the clinic. We will also be able to administer flea and worm treatments on the day.



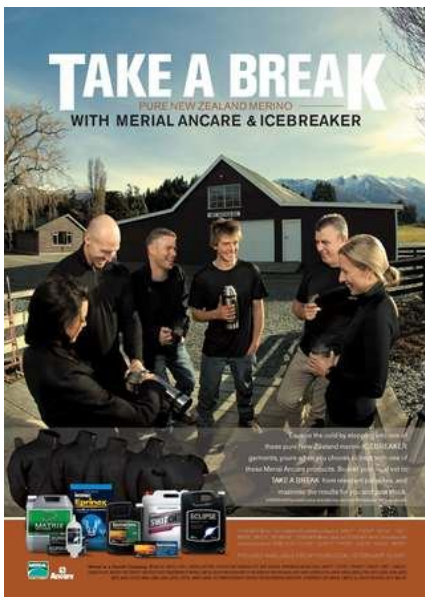
Hopefully you are all adjusting to daylight savings time ok.

Calving is done and dusted for the year for many of you and now our focus will be switching to mating.

It is crucial though as you move on to other jobs, not to forget your replacement heifers, the future of your herd. In the article inside we have some startling facts about heifer growth targets from a study looking at data from NZ dairy farms.

A quick reminder for those of you that borrow injection guns for use in CIDR programmes—can you please return them as soon as possible along with the unused GnRH and let us know how many doses you have used.

Merial Ancare Promotion



Merial Ancare is giving away NZ merino Icebreaker clothing (T-shirts/Tops and Jackets) with selected drench purchases.

Come in and see us today to discuss your drench requirements.

I N S I D E

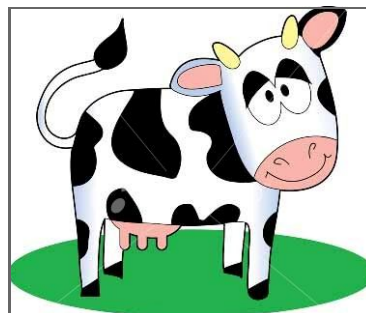
- Are dairy heifers achieving liveweight targets?
- Bearing Trouble in Ewes
- Bovine digital dermatitis.
- Foetal Loss in Maiden Ewes
- Laminitis in Horses
- Scouring Calves



Are Dairy Heifers Achieving Liveweight Targets?

A recent study has revealed that a large proportion of youngstock are not meeting industry target liveweights. Liveweight targets for heifers are well known and are based on their expected mature liveweights

Age	Target weight (% of mature)
6 months	30%
15 months (pre-mating)	60%
22 months (pre-calving)	90%



In summary, the study looked at animal liveweight records from the LIC database for animals born between 2006-2010. Records from 211,542 animals were included.

At 6 months of age 53% of animals were more than 5% below their target liveweight. It got worse....At 15 months 61% of animals were more than 5% below target weight and at 22 months 73% were more than 5% below.

Failing to meet liveweight targets can have a marked effect on reproductive performance. Heifers that are underweight are at risk of being prepubertal at mating, not a good start to their reproductive careers! It has also been shown in beef heifers that those bred on the pubertal heat have lower conception rates than those bred on the 3rd heat.

Although the number of liveweight records being recorded through MINDApro are increasing, overall less than 5% of animals have a liveweight record recorded before 730 days of age. To address heifer liveweight concerns, MINDA weights, a new liveweight reporting programme has been created and forms

Bearing Trouble in Ewes

This year we have heard of a lot of cases of ewes having bearing trouble. Bearings (prolapse of the vagina) most commonly occurs late in pregnancy and it is often twin/triplet bearing ewes that are affected. The exact cause is unknown but various risk factors are involved. Often 0-2% of the ewe flock is affected but incidences of 10-12% have been known. The occurrence of the problem also can vary from season to season.

Risk factors for prolapse:

- The biggest risk factor is number of foetuses—twin or triplet bearing ewes are more likely to prolapse than those with singles.
- Topography of pasture also plays a role—ewes grazed on sloping country are thought to have a higher incidence of prolapses. Wherever possible it is ideal to have triplet (and twin) bearing ewes on the flattest available pasture in late pregnancy.
- Shearing date—risk of prolapse is said to reduce if ewes are shorn in the 3 months before the ram goes out.
- Gain in weight pre-tup to scanning—more risk of prolapsing.
- Sudden introduction of pregnant ewes to lush feed. Feeding salt supplements or swedes late pregnancy (large bladder/higher gut fill causes higher intra-abdominal pressure.)
- Body condition—ewes in gross body condition will have excessive amounts of fat in the abdominal cavity increasing intra-abdominal pressure. Ewes in poor body condition also thought to be higher risk as they are likely to have poorer muscle tone and therefore may be more likely to prolapse.



Bovine Digital Dermatitis

Recently, a dairy cow in Taranaki has been diagnosed with bovine digital dermatitis (BDD), a relatively rare disease in New Zealand.

BDD is a lameness condition that is reported in a number of countries and affects mostly dairy cattle (although beef cattle can also be affected.) When first introduced into a dairy herd the disease tends to spread in an epidemic fashion and can affect up to 75% of the herd. First lactation heifers seem to be particularly susceptible. Typical lesions are usually found between the claws and bordering the coronary band just above the heel bulbs, most often it is the hindlimbs that are affected.

There is some uncertainty as to exactly what causes BDD but there has been some indication that a specific bacteria is involved.

BDD has the potential to spread and has a significant impact on animal welfare, production and reproduction. It is thought that once the disease becomes established on a farm it is nigh on impossible to get rid of.

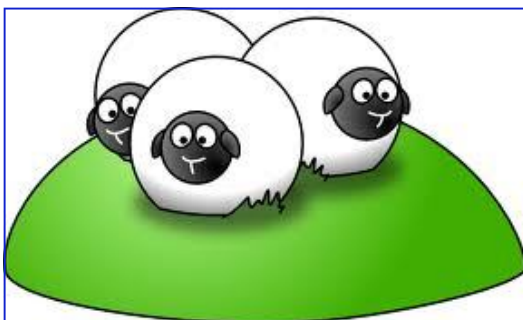
A meeting of a group of experts late in September was to work towards making recommendations on control and preventative measures for NZ, we are waiting to hear the outcomes of this meeting. If you see any sign of unusual lesions like those described above let us know.

Foetal Loss in Maiden Ewes

The wide use of ultrasound scanning of pregnancy diagnosis has allowed early identification of aborting ewes. An experienced scanner is often able to identify dead or resorbing fetuses before external signs of abortion become apparent. This has led to the discovery that in some flocks a higher than expected number of maiden ewes (hoggets in particular) are turning up at scanning with dead/resorbing fetuses inside.

Sheep abortions in NZ have been associated with various infectious causes, most commonly Campylobacteriosis, Toxoplasmosis and Salmonella Brandenburg which together account for 80% of abortions in NZ. Less common infectious causes of abortion include: Hairy Shaker Disease, listeriosis, fungal infections and a few other specific bacteria.

Investigations into foetal loss in maiden ewes are ongoing. A study done by a group of experts ruled out the known infectious causes of foetal loss as a blanket cause in the cases of foetal loss in maiden ewes that they looked at and they did not determine a specific cause.



Another infectious disease of interest is Neosporosis. Well known as a cause of abortion in cattle this parasite lives inside cells and could potentially be a cause of abortion in ewes also. Experimentally it has been found that ewes are susceptible to Neospora abortion if they are infected early on in pregnancy however but we need more information to know how significant this is for our sheep flocks.

It is also possible that a non-infectious process is involved with these maiden animals. Nutrition is one area that has been considered. An earlier study reported a higher incidence of spontaneous (non-infectious) abortion in ewe hoggets that were growing rapidly, as opposed to those with more modest growth rates. However, a subsequent study that looked into different feeding levels and rates of weight gain did not show an increase in foetal loss in the group fed for rapid weight gain so there is still a question mark over the significance of growth rates. Other theories out there include metabolic or hormonal changes but at this stage no-one knows for sure what is causing this effect in maiden ewes.

Laminitis in Horses

Laminitis is an agonising condition and the risk of an episode occurring is increased during spring when lush green pasture is growing.

Causes of laminitis

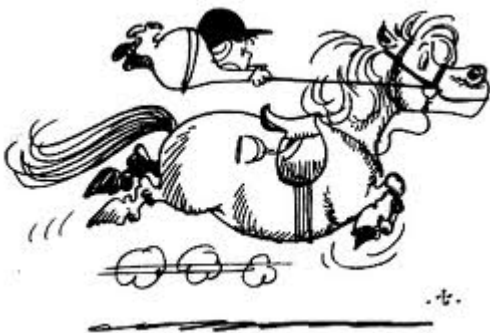
- Excessive food intake— especially lush pasture—the most common cause.
- Toxins released by bacteria involved in certain infections e.g. uterine infections.
- Trauma—e.g. repeated concussion on hard ground.
- Drug induced—for example after use of steroids for other medical conditions
- Cushings disease—affected horses are very susceptible to laminitis.

Signs to look out for:

- Reluctance to move or lying down more
- Lameness that isn't easily localised to one foot
- Hooves that feel hot, bounding digital pulse.
- Horse standing with front legs stretched forward and hindlimbs underneath.
- Shifting weight from foot to foot

If you notice any of these signs prompt veterinary assessment is recommended.

Prevention is better than cure. Although overweight ponies are common laminitis sufferers, any horse can be at risk. Avoid sudden changes in diet, pasture intake may need to be restricted at times of rapid pasture growth such as during the spring.



Mating Season Checklist

- Decide when to start and stop mating
- Review your heat detection programme and make sure everyone involved knows what to look for.
- Identify non-cycling cows early.
- Body condition score cows a couple of weeks before mating.
- Select your bulls—health check, test for BVD and vaccinate. Select bulls to minimise calving difficulty. Need extra bulls?
- Run bulls as a group prior to mating.
- Record insemination dates and sires.
- Check your 3 week submission rate
- Observe for heats in the paddock 2 hours after milking and again in the early afternoon.
- Don't delay mating once a cow has been detected on heat.
- Rest and rotate bulls regularly. Monitor them for lameness/breeding problems.

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