JANUARY 2022

Veterinary Centre EwesNews

Getting the Best out of Your Genetic Investment – Looking After Rams

Dave Robertson BVSc BSc – VETERINARY CENTRE Oamaru

Why do rams drop dead or fade away? Why do they get replaced?

These were some of the key questions in the Veterinary Centre Ram Health Study conducted in 2016.

The health and longevity of commercial ram teams is an area where farmers can invest a small amount of time and attention to make a big impact.

Having healthy rams that last, means you can focus more on culling for production based traits rather than preventable ill thrift or diseases that are not a genetic basis.

Key areas of ram ill thrift and loss were:

- Body condition and fitness
- Worm Control
- Fly prevention
- Feet soundness
- Teeth wear
- Injuries and sudden death

Ram loss and culling is often not due to their genetic merit but rather the management and husbandry of those ram teams.

General Advice for Rams this January

A Veterinary Centre Breeding Soundness check of your ram team is a worthwhile exercise. Our shop managers will be organising ram runs in the new year. Put some Clik on their heads and crutch to prevent flystrike; get any lame rams sorted sooner rather than later – ask about tilmovet for the team if footrot is widespread; give them a booster of clostridial vaccine – a simple prevention for sudden death. Rams that are still in light condition now relative to the rest of the mob are not likely to be as effective as the rest. Check their age and teeth. Avoid mixing 2 tooth rams with older rams until after mating. If you are mixing new rams box them all up in a small pen overnight and let them out onto decent feed in the morning. This helps prevent major battles and injuries.

James Lindsay, Torresdale suffolks, Nenthorn Valley Middlemarch. inspecting some of the Gore stud fair entries with Veterinary Centre Vet Natascha Vivian and final year vet student Sally Hill.

James still had rams in the flock from the original study back in 2016. Even though he runs a large commercial flock in a challenging climate, ram health and welfare is an essential part of the business.

DAVE'S HAIKU

Choosing a Weaning Drench

Triple will do, but bring in some poo
(10 days later)
A novel is best, but then give it a rest.

IN THIS ISSUE

Abortion Storms

Two Diseases Two Vaccines

Toxoplasma is present on 100% of New Zealand farms, and Campylobacter on 88% [*1] – but both are equally important. These two diseases can cause abortion storms with losses up to 30%, or more, of lambs[*2,3].

Preventing them takes two vaccines. Maiden ewes require 1 dose of Toxovax and 2 doses of Campyvax4 ahead of mating.

An annual booster of Campyvax4 is recommended in subsequent years, and completed before mating.

ToxoVax

- Controls the risk of Toxoplasma. **Live** vaccine.
- Up to 8% higher lambing percentages (3% national average).
- Vaccinate at least 4 weeks prior to first mating.
- One shot gives a lifetime immunity.
- **MUST BE ORDERED AT LEAST 4 WEEKS IN ADVANCE OF TREATMENT** to ensure availability.

CampyVax4

- Controls the risk of Campylobacter.
- Increase lambing by an average 9%.
- Protect maiden ewes with TWO shots 4-6 weeks apart, and one booster shot in previously vaccinated ewes.

Example for early April mating

2 Tooth/Hogget Pre-mating Animal Health Programme

5 Feb	5 Mar	5 Apr
• **CampyVax4** First Sensitiser Shot (1ml/subcut) • **ToxoVax** 2ml Dose Intramuscular	• **CampyVax4** Second Booster Shot (1ml/subcut) • **Flexidine** 1.5ml Dose Intramuscular	• **Put the Ram out!**

1. Dempster et al (2011), NZ Veterinary Journal, 59:4 155-159.
2. Wilkins et al (1992) Surveillance, 19:4, 20-23.
3. Sahin et al (2017) The Annual Review of Animal Biosciences. 5: 9.1-9.22.

Goats – No Kidding

Vanessa Love BVSc
VETERINARY CENTRE Ranfurly

Sheep dominate the fibre industry worldwide, however goats produce two of the warmest and most luxurious fibres-cashmere and mohair. With New Zealand farmers looking for new ways to diversify, the goat fibre industry is a growing field with farmers from Marlborough to Wyndham venturing into goat fibre production, meaning fine fibre can be produced across the country, not limited to Merino suited areas.

Goats fit into many farming systems from beef finishing to extensive sheep properties. They're browsers, meaning they like to eat what is often considered unproductive pastoral areas where sheep typically would not thrive. For some farms up to 10% extra stock units can be added as goats without reducing sheep or cattle numbers. Apart from high fibre returns, they can help control pasture weeds and scrub, improve clover cover and pasture utilisation by capital stock allowing faster growth rates. They can provide a valuable source of parasite refugia for sheep.

Cashmere production is highly heritable meaning crossing a feral doe and a cashmere buck is likely to produce a pure white cashmere kid (F1) that will shear close to 16 microns and 200-400g of fibre annually-incredible genetic improvement in one generation. From here the yield and micron will improve over the generations.

Selective breeding means goats are hardier than they were when first farmed in the 1980s, and we know a lot more about their health issues and management. Internal parasites, lice, trace element and feet concerns all apply and can be managed. Dagging and crutching aren't required and bearings and flystrike are very rare. The drenching schedule is similar to sheep, with kids regularly drenched and does/bucks done once or twice yearly. Goats travel longer distances each day than sheep and move in mobs so lower stocking rates are preferred. Goat meat has no sex, age or carcase finish specifications and the schedule is fairly stable. Cull fibre goats can be processed at several meatworks.

A wide variety of farms can have profitable low input doe and wether flocks as part of their integrated cattle and sheep management plan. Your local vet can help discuss care and animal health planning for goats and work them into your overall farm plan.

New Zealand Cashmere is a new partnership between David & Robyn Shaw with 35 years of cashmere farming experience and Woolyarns who operate the only cashmere processing plant in NZ. Cashmere is 7% of the global luxury fibre industry, pricing this season is secured from $110/kg-$150/kg.

There is no minimum amount that New Zealand Cashmere will buy, if you are interested in discussing fibre production on your farm contact ... Olivia Sanders (olivia@nzcashmere.com / 021 235 4493).

UDDERING EWES

Daley Watson-Krawitz BVSc – VETERINARY CENTRE Waimate

On average 5% of ewes in breeding flocks have defects in their udders or teats. The effects of these defects can be quite dramatic on the following year's production for that ewe.

Lambs born to ewes with defective udders were 3-4 times more likely to die and the ones which did survive were found to grow 25g/day slower. The combined effect of both of these is that **a ewe with a defective udder weaned on average 11kg less lamb** than their healthy flockmates.

Most often uddering ewes takes place at weaning as this is a convenient time to do it. However studies at Massey University have shown that the number of ewes found with udder issues doubled 4-6 weeks after weaning, and these defects persisted into the next season.

This increase is due to things such as post-weaning mastitis and also the fact it is easier to find defects in a dry udder.

It is therefore recommended that the best time to udder ewes is 4-6 weeks after weaning.

Uddering ewes is a quick process once you get used to it, and can be done in the race. Things to look for are generalised hardness, lumps within the udder tissue, teat damage, missing teats or a 'pencil lead' feeling core within the teats. (Lumps just in front or behind the udder do not appear to be an issue)

Uddering ewes 4-6 weeks after weaning is the best time to find defects and remove these ewes which are unlikely to be productive units next season. It is also a great time to check teeth and feet, allowing enough time to consolidate ewe numbers before mating.

If you would like any further information or assistance when checking your ewes feel free to contact one of our Blue Cross Vets.

Fly Strike Control Options
with increased early fly pressure

George Smith BVSc BSc – VETERINARY CENTRE Oamaru

Good grass growing conditions has led to optimal pre-Christmas fly conditions. Farms across the practice area are beginning to report increased fly pressure. Long grass going to seed, excess moisture and high humidity levels have led to perfect environmental conditions for an early start to the fly strike season. Cyrex in recent years has become a significant part of many fly strike control programs. Cyrex (Cyromazine + Spinosad) provides long term fly protection via Cyromazine and instant kill of lice and maggots via the Spinosad component. Recently the label claim for Cyrex via the Jetting application method has changed. The label claim is now 3-8 weeks protection instead of 12 weeks. This is due to the amount of active chemical being applied via the jetting method (very difficult to saturate animals with the active ingredient).

An alternative to Cyrex is Cyrazin KO (Knock-out) which contains Cyromazine and Ivermectin. The Cyromazine provides long-term fly protection and the Ivermectin which is a potent topical ectoparasite provides instant kill, therefore making Cyrazin KO effective against live maggots and lice. Allows farms to reduce reliance on the heavily used Spinosad family which is coming under increasing pressure.

Due to current environmental conditions and future forecasts, it is important to remember that products containing Cyromazine have the potential to be washed out if significant rainfall events occur within 7 days of application.

Due to favourable early fly strike conditions, there is a good chance that the fly season could potentially be long and drawn out. Should this be the case, farms wanting long term control and increased protection and peace of mind through the summer period should consider the use of Clik/ Clik Extra. Clik and Clik Extra is a ready to use pour on formulation containing Dicyclanil as the active ingredient which is proving to be very popular. Click Extra has a label claim of 14-26 weeks. Farms applying Clik/ Clik Extra to ewes have had very good success in recent years due to the extended level of protection.

Product of the Month

Cyrex LIQUID

Active ingredients

- Cyromazine for long term protection
- Spinosad for instant kill

Features

- Effective against flies, maggots and lice
- Combination power of 2 actives to mitigate resistance.

Length of protection

- Up to 12 weeks protection (requires full saturation)

Application

- Dilution rate 1 litre makes 500 litres of wash
    - At least 2 litres of wash required per sheep and an additional 0.5L for each month of wool growth up to a maximum of 5 litres per sheep.
    - Suitable for all breeds of sheep.

Withhold

- Meat withhold 7 days

Pricing $0.21 per litre (excl gst)

NEWETRITION

PEM *aka* B1 Deficiency in Lambs

Lucy Cameron BVSc BSc
VETERINARY CENTRE Waimate

Blind, dejected, staggering, star-gazing, convulsing lambs – many of you will have had cases like this over the years. There are a few possible causes, but most often these signs are due to a disease of the brain called **polioencephalomalacia or PEM.**

Commonly known as "Vitamin B1/thiamine deficiency", it is in fact usually caused by a change in the rumen environment leading to the production of thiaminases, which destroy vitamin B1/thiamine before it can be absorbed. Thiamine is an essential part of cellular energy metabolism for all animals, and without it certain cells malfunction and swell up. Cells in the brain are particularly badly affected, and as they swell they are squeezed against the skull, leading to the characteristic signs.

Anything that alters rumen metabolism can predispose lambs to PEM, for example:

- **Change in feed** especially from poorer stalky feed to lusher pasture
- **Feeding out grain** – high starch diets are risky e.g. feedlots
- **Weaning** and the rumen adjustment and feed changes that come with it
- **Feeding brassicas** – high dietary sulphur is a risk factor

Immediate treatment is vital for a good outcome – IV or IM injections of vitamin B1 at least twice daily for the first 24 – 72 hours will be necessary in most cases. Thiamine powder can be drenched if many cases are being seen. If you suspect PEM in any of your lambs this season, contact your nearest Blue Cross Vet Centre to discuss treatment options and management of risk factors.

Get Teasers Done in January

Celia van Kampen BVSc
VETERINARY CENTRE Oamaru

For hogget and 2 tooth mating or early mating of mixed aged ewes, teasers can be very useful. Putting teasers out will get ewes cycling, and can have a synchrony effect if done early enough. With hoggets, more will take the ram in the first cycle if run with teasers prior to joining.

If you are intending to do a laproscopic A.I. program with the Veterinary Centre this year, teasers are essential. Teasers are usually put out at a rate of 1:10-15 ewes for AI or alternatively 1:255-800 for "ram" effect.

Teasers can also be used to select the most fertile ewe hogget replacements, even if you're not mating hoggets. Research has shown that cycling hoggets are more fertile and productive as adult sheep.

Get your teasers made **AT LEAST 9 WEEKS** prior to ram joining, so if your mating April 5, you would put teasers out March 18, so need them "fixed" before the start of February! If you're getting some done for hoggets, you may as well put them out with the 2 tooths first.

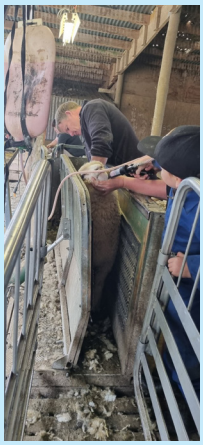
Rain, Hail or Shine its Weaning Time at Waikorua

Aroha Te Hiko BVSc – **VETERINARY CENTRE** Oamaru

On a soggy mid-December day, three generations of Lee's are out to help wean the lambs on this Coopworth finishing/stud farm. Both lambs and ewes are in excellent body condition after the substantial spring grass growth this year.

Lambs were vaccinated with 5-in-1 at tailing, and with a weaning percentage of 190% this year, this has reduced clostridial disease losses. Vitamin B12 and selenium injection are given to lambs at weaning to boost their production. All lambs benefit from a crutch at weaning especially coming into fly season, with only dirty ones getting a prevention dose of Cyrazin. Refugia is achieved by putting drenched lambs back into the same paddock they were in previously with the un-drenched ewes who will provide a susceptible worm population.

Selective breeding is an important part of John Lee's Waikorua Stud. Increased parasite immunity and good feet are a priority and any animals with these issues will be on the cull list. Ewes' udders are checked twice, first at tailing where any defects are noted, then again at weaning where all defects are culled. Older ewes get their mouths checked and culled if teeth are worn. All ewes are in great condition this year which gives more options for specific breeding selection.



John Lee crutching with grandson looking on.