



EWES NEWS



The big picture & finer details of farm profitability

Dave Robertson BVSc BSc
Oamaru Veterinary Centre

There are all sorts of metrics that measure the success for a farming operation. The formal ones bankers use such as EBITRm, gross farm revenue and farm operating expenses define the business success. On their own these terms seem disconnected with the toil of farming. However it is interesting to drill down into these financial metrics a bit more to see how they are driven by things like agronomy decisions, lamb growth rate, lamb survival, conception rates, death rates and

animal health. Bankers, accountants, vets and agronomists advise in isolation to each farm and have a slightly different focus. Imagine the clarity of purpose for a farm business if we all got together and spoke the same language – it maybe a consultancy package worth paying for. . .

This graphic nicely puts the animal health area in perspective, in that it is at the very heart of all the financial result metrics. A worm issue will effect live weights which

effects feed conversion. Poor body weight ewes at set stocking will have poorer lamb survival and reduced weaning weights. Low selenium in cows will lower conception rates reducing repro and feed conversion efficiency with more late calves etc

In the winter months of “getting through” with what feed you have what are the key animal health “drivers” that will keep pushing the financial “results” in the right direction?

Measurements that relate to key functions of a sheep and beef farm



"RMPP | Taking ownership of your financials" <https://www.rmpp.co.nz/page/taking-ownership-of-your-financials/>

Product of the month

24-7 SMARTRACE Boluses for ADULT Sheep

- Selenium ▪ Iodine ▪ Cobalt
- Active Life of at least 3-4 months following administration
- Single Bolus Application
- Available in packs of 50 boluses



\$2.15 plus gst per bolus

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Waimate Sheep and Beef Road Show Waihao Forks Hotel. Tuesday 29th June 6.30 pm

Euan Tait - Parasitology - slowing resistance on your property and protecting the effective drenches we have at our disposal.

Finja Schmidt - Working Dogs - getting the most from your most valuable staff members and the “Woof WOF”.

Lucy Cameron - “Ewetrition” - a discussion around fodder beet feeding in sheep and Trace Elements.

Daley Watson-Krawitz - Beef cattle fertility - tightening up the calving spread following a tough, dry season this year.

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Scanning Deer

Luke Smyth BVSc
Oamaru Veterinary Centre



With portable battery powered scanners the scanning of hinds for pregnancy has become much easier. Rectal scanning allows earlier diagnosis of pregnancies, identification of "late" and empty uterus/"dry" uteri to be visualised.

To achieve the best possible outcome from scanning there are a few things to consider

Timing of scanning. Hinds can be diagnosed in-fawn from 30-35 days pregnant until around 120-130 days pregnant. After 120 days, the pregnancy tends to drop down into the abdomen making visualisation of the pregnancy difficult. Hinds should be scanned 35 days after the stag has been removed from the mob, this means the

majority of hinds should be scanned from early June through to early July.

Facilities. Sufficient restraint of hinds is necessary. Deer crushes are the ideal setup but with quiet hinds and an extra person to help with deer handling, swinging doors, races and small pens can all work well.

Permanently identify dry hinds. Dry hinds should be tagged with either a coloured fold over sheep tag or a slaughter tag, this saves a lot of confusion further down the track when aerosol marks wear off! If you are planning to scan your hinds for pregnancy or are unsure about your facilities or the help required please talk to one of the Veterinary Centres experienced deer vets.



Pregnancy scanning ewes

Daley Watson-Krawitz BVSc
Waimate Veterinary Centre

With mating of most of our ewe flocks over for the season the attention now is how to maximise the number and weights of lambs born as well as the condition of ewes through lambing and lactation. With the number of conceptions locked in for the year the outcomes of those pregnancies and production of the system relies on adequate feeding levels.

A key tool to be able to do this is to know the pregnancy status (empty, single or multiple) of the ewes as they require different levels of nutrition.

Scanning should take place between 40-100 days of pregnancy. With a 3 cycle mating this means booking the scanner for about 40-50 days after rams have been removed to be able to differentiate singles/twins/triplets.

Scanning allows separation of these groups for preferential feeding and selection of lambing paddocks. This has many benefits:

- Sale of dry ewes. Reducing winter feed demands and getting rid of an unproductive stock unit.
- Increased birthweights of lambs and subsequent survival rates due to better feeding of ewes during gestation.
- Reduced losses from starvation and exposure to the elements via selection of sheltered lambing paddocks for multiples.
- Improved lactational performance of ewes via better body condition at lambing and feeding during lactation. This results in greater pre-weaning growth rates of the lambs.
- Ewes in better condition at weaning time, resulting in less feed demand over summer period trying to get ewes to optimal condition for next mating.
- Can improve reproductive performance from selecting twin lambs as replacements which are likely to be genetically more fecund/higher ovulators.

Beyond these benefits it gives good information allowing you to look at where your system can be improved/where losses are occurring. If flock performance is less than ideal it makes diagnosing where issues may be significantly easier. I.e Ram problem, ovulation/conception issues, early embryonic loss/late term abortion, losses over lambing.

If you would like a chat about the reproductive performance of your flock then please feel free to get in contact with us at the Veterinary Centre.

Reducing ewe bearings



Dave Robertson BVSc BSc
Oamaru Veterinary Centre

A vaginal prolapse study involving around 2000 ewes in North Canterbury

has shown some promising results. Half of the 2000 ewes were treated with vitamin ADE at different stages.

The treated mixed age ewes had significantly less bearings compared with un-treated controls. In the two treated groups the risk of a bearing was reduced to 25% and 37% of that treated controls.

This is similar result to the LSD trial that one of our Otago clients did two years ago. She reduced her bearing rate by 2/3rd in LSD treated ewes.



Why would this mineral have an effect? Bearings are very multi-factorial. They are a function of abdominal pressure and vaginal wall integrity. The changes in pressure comes from variation in rumen fill, abdominal fat, bladder fill, uterus size and development.

The smooth muscle function and tone is effected by calcium levels and previous trauma.

Vitamin D increases the absorption of Calcium from the diet and helps with bone and kidney mechanisms to do with calcium regulation. Some forms are derived from sun light, other forms from certain feeds. Vitamin D is lowest in the winter when sunshine hours are lower. Mid-winter shearing has shown to reduce the risk of bearings in multiple bearing ewes. Is this because their skin is exposed to more sun light and more vitamin D? We assumed it had something to do with increased metabolism, burning abdominal fat and moving around more. Perhaps it is both. If you are a bearing risk farm you could try injecting your twinning and triplet ewes with Vitamin ADE after scanning.



Ewes and rams in Haka



Pre-lamb Animal Health Planning

Euan Tait BVMS
Waimate Veterinary Centre

With lambing not too far away, maximising the potential of your flock will be at the forefront of your thoughts.

As for drenching, you can maximise this potential by targeting the sheep that are going to need it most. The use of long acting products is not without risk in terms of resistance but will give the best return on investment in lighter ewes, animals under nutritional/production stress (i.e. twins) hoggets and 2 toothers. A good level of refugia, created by leaving the better condition sheep or singles, undrenched, is a very effective tool of delaying resistance. These refugia animals should be well marked, preferably with an ear tag, for good monitoring. They can then go on to provide refugia after weaning in a different stock class. Monitoring the efficacy of these long acting products (and any drench) is very important in our fight against resistance. With respect to mineral supplementation, pre-lamb iodine is important especially for those sheep being wintered on brassicas. Iodine supplementation is involved in wool and milk production, maintaining pregnancy and will help lamb survivability – so a good return on investment is seen. While Flexidine pre-tup is considered the gold standard, VetLSD or oral iodine supplementation 8 and 4 weeks pre lamb will also provide an adequate increase at this stage. Vitamin D supplementation at scanning has been

proven beneficial in decreasing bearing numbers and may be worthwhile if this is an issue on your property.

The pre-lamb period provides a great opportunity to get the most out of your flock with strategic animal health planning. Making informed decisions on drenching

policies and mineral supplementation can provide significant returns, while also safeguarding the future of drench products. Please get in touch with one of our sheep and beef team if you wish to discuss your animal health plan further.

“Newetration”

Lucy Cameron BVSc BSc
Waimate Veterinary Centre



Fodder Beet for ewes & hoggets this winter

Fodder beet is a high energy feed and a welcome sight this winter with not much of that to go around. When feeding it out though, it pays to remember that it's not a well-balanced feed, and so depending on the class of stock it's being fed to, some tinkering of the diet may be necessary. Fodder beet's main attribute is energy, in the form of sugar, but it falls short when it comes to providing much in the way of fibre and protein. Extra fibre is easy to sort and you will all have this covered whether it be with silage, straw or a run-off paddock.

Young growing animals, and pregnant & lactating animals need more protein than fodder beet alone can provide:

- Hoggets need **12 – 14%** protein in the diet
- Ewes in later pregnancy need **16 – 18%** protein
- Fodder beet averages **9 – 14%** protein, with bulbs generally 7 – 9%
- Fodder beet leaf can reduce later in the season, dropping the protein level even more

Ewes grazed on fodder beet & hay in mid to late pregnancy had smaller lambs than ewes grazing on ryegrass. More of their lambs died between scanning and weaning, and growth rates from birth to weaning were lower. This was thought to be due to the lower protein levels in the diet and/or a lack of specific amino acids important for foetal development.

Fodder beet is also low in phosphorus, a vital mineral for skeletal growth and



function. Phosphorus is plentiful in leafy green feed, and a supplement such as grass or lucerne silage, or a grass paddock is essential for young sheep and beef stock on the crop.

If you're grazing your ewes or hoggets on fodder beet this winter:

- feed additional **protein & fibre** – a good protein supplement such as grass or lucerne silage/baleage – straw or cereal silage will not provide enough protein
- be aware that **leaf can reduce** significantly as the season goes on, further reducing protein levels
- **shifting breaks daily or every second day** means they get access to the higher protein leaf regularly – but make sure they're not eating only leaf and banking up bulbs behind them
- if available consider a softer, **lower dry matter variety** with more leaf e.g. Brigadier
- **vaccinate for clostridial disease** (5-in-1/Covexin)



Who's the real boss?

Service testing your bull team prior to the bull sales is useful information.

The average working life span of a beef service bull is 3.5 years.

45% of unsound bulls go out for another season (when not service testing annually).

It is also an opportunity to review the other 5 key areas of beef herd performance.

JUNE REMINDERS

- Selenium LA and copper for cattle.
 - Get horns tidied up.
- Animal health and prescription drug review with your vet.
 - Lice and worm control plan for the coming season.
 - Nitrate test crops.



Nationwide Kennel Cough Outbreak reaches North Otago

Ellen Hodder BVSc
Oamaru Veterinary Centre

There is a New Zealand wide outbreak of Canine kennel cough and the North Otago region is currently experiencing a sharp rise in cases. Canine kennel cough is a contagious respiratory disease specific to dogs, which affects their health and performance. Like the human cold, it is caused primarily by a virus with many different strains. However, the illness can be made worse if bacteria present normally within the dog's nose and windpipe invade the respiratory system. It is spread through direct contact between dogs or contact with contaminated surfaces. Common transmission locations include kennels on farm, training classes, dog trails, dog parks and beaches.

Onset of the disease can take 3-10 days to develop from time of exposure. An uncomplicated course usually runs between 7-14 days. Signs include frequent fits of a loud cough, retching or hacking and nasal discharge. Dogs are otherwise well and eating normally and will recover on their own. The disease can have far more serious effects in young, old or unwell dogs. Affected dogs can continue to be contagious for up to a month. Kennel cough vaccination will reduce the severity of disease and we are strongly encouraging people to ensure their dog's vaccination is up to date. Most of our clients' dogs are vaccinated



but do note that annual vaccination is required. In an outbreak scenario such as the present, vaccination of dogs not done in the past 6 months is recommended.

If your dog is currently showing signs of Kennel Cough, please isolate your dog and contact your vet clinic for advice. If the Kennel Cough is causing your dog to be unwell (e.g. fever or lack of appetite) please call us for an appointment as treatment may be necessary. We ask that you call ahead to book an appointment and keep your dog on your vehicle until a vet is available.



Footrot control and management: Troughing & Paring

Dave Robertson BVSc BSc
Oamaru Veterinary Centre

Dry cold conditions are a good chance to get a good hoof inspection in before shearing/scanning etc.

Paring feet is for diagnosis and finding dormant pockets of infection. It will also make your next tip prior to set stocking quicker and cleaner. Avoid bleeding at all costs, it makes sound sheep lame for several days/weeks after.

The flap between the hooves is often a good hiding spot for sleeping infection. Hoof trimmers are good for taking away long, loose tissue but a hoof knife to flick out that inside flap of the hoof. A specially designed grinding disc is even better...if you're careful.

Troughing tips:

10-20% zinc works through contact with the hoof. It will cure score 1-3 lesions and some grade 4's.

Expect cure rates of footrot to be in the order of 70% if going well. It is the main weapon and slowing spread of footrot.

Leave sheep standing in a 10%-20% solution for at least 10 minutes. Alternatively a long, slow walk through a 10% solution followed by half an hour standing on a dry surface is reasonably effective. **Zinc sulphate mixed at 10-20%** with 1-2% **Sodium Lauryl Sulphate (SLS)** added is more effective if the sheep stand in the solution for about an hour. The SLS is a wetting agent that can increase the penetration of the zinc by up to 7 times. Zinc

will penetrate about 1mm into the soft horn of the sheep's feet under these circumstances, This treatment method usually gives about three weeks protection during the spread period. Zinc will 'strip' from such footbaths when sheep are doing the "long soak", hence a **hydrometer** can be used to maintain the zinc concentration above 10%. A specific gravity > 1.050 is what we're after.

Formalin causes chemical changes in the feet which interfere with the absorption of zinc. Previous footbathing with formalin will interfere with the penetration of zinc into the foot for about eight weeks. During this period zinc will act only as a surface disinfectant and will not penetrate into the foot.

We can get in the recognised wetting agent SLS on request. It comes in 20L containers, using 1-2L per 100L solution. Don't ask me about the efficacy of all the other wetting agents in your HAZCHEM 2 shed...I have no idea about their appropriateness, efficacy or residues. We also stock hydrometers.



Has this healed? Needs that crack cleaned out a bit more to be sure

