CVC CLINIC NEWS

Welcome to the 2022 Winter Beef and Sheep Newsletter!

The beef and sheep side of business has been going strongly for the last few months and producers have enjoyed some great prices for their stock, which is always good to hear. We have seen lots of down ewes this season and have assisted with difficult lambings, thus the main focus of this newsletter is lamb marking and management of metabolic conditions in ewes.

As producers start to get ready for joining, we encourage beef farmers to get their bulls fertility checked prior to the start of joining to ensure there are no unwanted surprises come calving next year. We have included some information about our "bull testing" procedures available at CVC.

We are also very excited to announce we have just purchased a new large animal faecal egg count machine. The new automated machine is a great edition to our practice and we look forward to providing a faster and more advanced service to our clients. Stay tuned for more information in the next newsletter!

Camperdown Veterinary Centre

1 Leura St, Camperdown VIC 3260

Ph: (03) 5593 1077

Opening hours:

Monday—Friday 8:30am—5:30pm

Saturday 9:00– 12:00 PM
(Food and drug collections ONLY, on call vet available for emergencies)

Our 24 hour emergency/afterhours service is always available.

Email: team@camperdownvet.com.au

LAMBING KITS

With lambing well underway we have been preparing 'Lambing Kits" for farmers to help maximise the health of their ewes and lambs. Kits can be tailor made for your needs. They can include antibiotics and anti-inflammatory pain relief where warranted, as well as disinfectant and gloves for good hygiene.

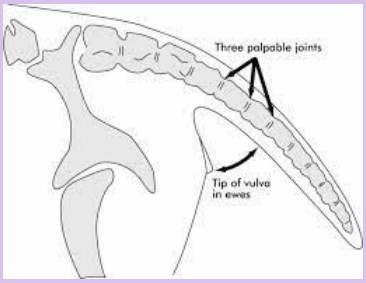
We have also had reports of increased numbers of down ewes prior to lambing. These girls are often scanned with twins and require extra TLC. We can include down ewe treatments such as 4in1 , propylene glycol and electrolyte solutions.

To discuss management of your twinning ewes as well as lambing kits please don't hesitate to contact the clinic.

LAMB MARKING

Lambing is now well underway on a lot of farms within the district. This means it is time to start planning your marking and consider the most effective ways to minimise mismothering and pain within your flock, as well as have a positive effect on post-marking weight gain. Ideally lambs should be within 2-12 weeks of age at marking. If your lambing period extends for more than 6 weeks it may be advisable to consider marking lambs in two sessions.

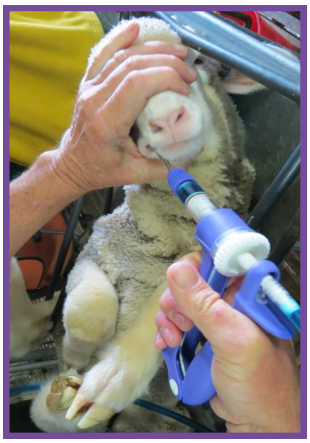
Tails can be docked using either a hot knife or ring. For both procedures we aim to dock the tail at the third palpable joint of the tail or the tip of the vulva in ewes. This length is to reduce flystrike however short tails result in higher incidences of rectal prolapse and vulval cancer. It is important to maintain good hygiene when marking, particularly when using a knife for any procedure. Chlorhexidine is the preferred antiseptic that can be used for this.



Over the last few years there has been a push for improved welfare when marking/muelsing. Particular wool companies may request that mulesing be performed with additional pain relief on board for lambs.

There are several different options for pain relief at lambing marking which are outlined below:

Buccalgesic/metacam:



- Anti-inflammatory pain relief (NSAID), Meloxicam.
- Decreases pain, swelling and pyrexia (high temperature).
- Single administration providing pain relief for 48 hours in either oral or injectable form
- Buccalgesic is a gel administered across the gums and Metacam is an injection under the skin
- **These products are prescription only medicine and must be sourced from your vet**

Trisolfen:

- Topical antiseptic/anaesthetic gel that sticks to open wounds
- Pain relief lasts 24 hours, reduces bleeding and risk of bacterial infection
- Does not require a veterinary prescription, can be purchased from your local rural store

Numnuts:

- Ring applicator combined with an injector that dispenses NumOcaine, a local anaesthetic
- Immediate but short acting, lasts up to 2 hours, excellent at reducing mismothering after marking
- **Prescription only, must be sourced from your vet**

Studies have shown Metacam/Buccalgesic when used at marking resulted in more comfortable lambs with decreased incidence of abnormal behaviour and movement when compared to non-treated lambs.

We recommend all lambs are treated with an NSAID (either injectable Metacam or oral Buccalgesic) at the time of marking. Additionally, if surgical procedures are used (mulesing or cutting testicles/tails rather than ringing) Trisolfen should be applied to the wound. If the Numnuts applicator and NumOcaine are used it is still advisable to use an NSAID. These multimodal methods of pain relief provide the best results for your lambs for both production and welfare aspects.

Management of "down" ewes

Hypocalcaemia

Hypocalcaemia is an abnormally low level of blood calcium. The disease is seen when the body fails to mobilise enough calcium from the bones to maintain normal blood calcium levels, or when certain compounds known as oxalates bind up the calcium. Hypocalcaemia in ewes generally occurs in the last month of pregnancy rather than during lactation. The clinical syndrome is usually precipitated by sudden changes in feed intake or by stress. Moving ewes to another paddock and mustering for husbandry procedures, particularly if the weather is cold and wet, can readily precipitate outbreaks, in this instance, generally, only a small proportion of the flock is affected. Occasionally the disease occurs in association with exposure following shearing and large numbers of ewes may be affected.

Older ewes are usually more frequently and more severely affected. Hypocalcaemia can be treated with calcium supplementation under the skin as outlined below. Failure to respond to calcium supplementation may be due to concurrent pregnancy toxaemia. Pregnancy toxaemia and hypocalcaemia tend to occur together as

recumbent ewes eat less and mobilise body fats to maintain energy.

Pregnancy toxaemia

Pregnancy toxaemia (also known as ketosis, twin lamb disease) is a metabolic disease seen in both sheep and cattle. This disease is due to inadequate food intake as a result of the increased nutritional requirements of late pregnancy. Changes to energy metabolism cause fatty acids and glycerol to be mobilized from body fat for production of energy. If the energy supply is insufficient, the liver becomes overwhelmed and ketones are produced.

Affected animals are usually pregnant ewes in the last month of gestation (often with twins) at either extreme of body condition (very poor or overly conditioned). Outbreaks are generally associated with a decline in plane of nutrition over some time followed by sudden periods of reduced intake or starvation caused by management changes (eg. yarding, transport, driving, sudden change in diet, cessation of supplementary feeding), reduced available feed quantity or quality, disease (lameness) or bad weather.

Signs of pregnancy toxaemia may include:

- Ewes isolating from the flock, dull and not wanting to move
- May be thin with large abdomen (multiple foetuses)
- Down and unable to rise or listless and easy to catch
- Later in the disease process there may be evidence of neurological signs (tremoring, convulsions, teeth grinding, star gazing)

Individual **treatment of down ewes** should include:

- 60ml 4-in-1 solution under the skin once to twice daily
- Oral rehydration solutions such as Vy-Trate or Lectade, 160 mL every 4-6 hours
- Propylene glycol (K-dex solution), 100 mL every 12 hours

Prevention of hypocalcaemia + pregnancy toxaemia in ewes

- Provide good quality hay.
- If there is a shortage of quantity or quality of pasture then supplementation with grain is required. If grain supplementation is utilised then it's essential to add ground limestone to cereal grains at 1% to address Calcium/Phosphorus imbalance.
- Monitoring condition scores to ensure that ewes are not too fat in early gestation is important but then have the ability to increase the plane of nutrition during the second half of gestation.
- A mineral supplement such as "Weatherpro Lambing Ewe" loose lick is recommended to supplement additional calcium and magnesium needs around lambing.

Veterinary Bull Breeding Soundness Exam

Bull testing is well underway for the 2022 season as producers get their boys ready for the joining period!

We recommend bull testing be performed 10-12 weeks prior to your mating start date in case any abnormalities are detected that require retesting or replacement bulls need to be sourced.

The Veterinary Bull Breeding Examination (VBBSE) is a standardised procedure designed to determine a bull's risk for reduced fertility. By determining their fertility risk we can make recommendations about a bull's ability to get cows pregnant.

The VBBSE consists of the following steps:

• **Physical examination**—This includes examining the bull's locomotion from a distance and in the crush. Body condition, eyes, teeth, legs, feet, testes, prepuce and internal reproductive organs are all assessed for any abnormalities that may affect their fertility. Scrotal circumference is measured using a Reliabull device. Scrotal circumference is used as an indication of a bull's daily sperm output and potential daughter fertility.

• **Penis examination—** An electroejaculator or rectal massage is used to get the bull to exteriorise the penis for assessment of anatomical abnormalities or disease.

• **Crush-side semen evaluation** - A sample of semen is collected using the electroejaculator and examined using our iSpem device or a microscope. The new iSperm device is an device which attaches to an iPad and allows immediate analysis of semen concentration and motility.

• **Vibrio vaccination & BVDV testing**—Bulls should be given a vaccination to prevent Vibriosis, a bacterial disease causing infertility and abortions in cattle. An ear notch can also be collected from each bull to determine if they are a carrier for Bovine Viral Diarrhoea Virus (Pestivirus)

• **Semen morphology**—Semen may be submitted to a specialist laboratory for morphological examination. Morphology can identify microscopic abnormalities which may prevent sperm from fertilising an egg and resulting in a pregnancy.

• **Serving ability assessment**— This is performed in a yard with heat synchronised cows to observe the bulls successfully mating. Serving ability tests are used to identify bulls that have difficulties mounting, poor libido or penile defects that prevent successful matings. This step may not always be performed depending on the situation.

If you would like to book in your bull testing or speak to one of our vets about your bulls, please do not hesitate to contact the clinic.

Snail Bait Toxicity in Dogs

Snail and slug baits contain Metaldehyde which is EXTREMELY toxic to dogs and cats. We have already had multiple dogs present this season from snail/ slug bait toxicity. Unfortunately, many of these dogs arrive at the clinic deceased due to the fast nature of the toxin.

Snail bait is highly palatable and as little as 1 tablespoon of farm strength snail/slug bait and less than one cup of the backyard garden variety bait is enough to kill your dog within 20 minutes of ingestion. Generally, dogs are affected more than cats as cats are much fussier eaters.

Once ingested, metaldehyde binds to the receptors in your dogs' nerves causing them to seizure un-controllably. This inhibits the dog's ability to breathe properly resulting in rapid death. Ongoing seizures also raise their core body temperature stopping the normal function of organs resulting in multi-organ failure.

Initial signs that your dog may have eaten snail bait include strange behaviour, vocalisation, increased respiratory rate/ panting, increased salivation and agitation.
This then progresses in to seizuring and death.

While there is no antidote for snail bait ingestion, our vets can give medications to help reduce the seizures and body temperature to help stabilize your dog while the toxins are excreted from the body.

If you/ your neighbours have snail bait out and your dog starts acting strange or you've seen your dog ingest bait, bring your dog to the clinic immediately. Ingestion of snail bait can kill really quickly and time is of the essence in treating these cases.

It is really important to store any unsured bait out of reach of dogs and cats and clean up any spills where pets/ work dogs have access to. Do not use dogs in baited paddocks or let dogs off lead unsupervised when you know there has been baiting done in the area. We cannot stress enough how toxic snail/ slug bait is to cats and dogs and how little needs to be ingested to cause death in your pets.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the clinic on 5593 1077.

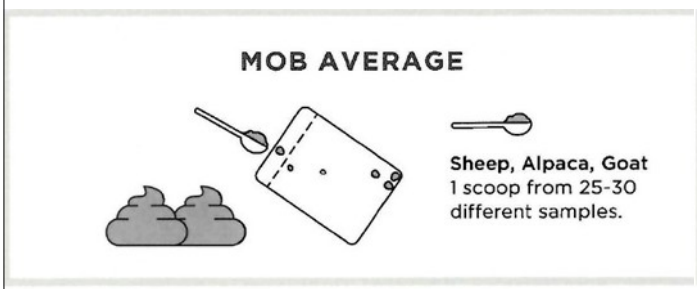
Livestock Parasite Faecal Egg Count Testing at Camperdown Veterinary Centre

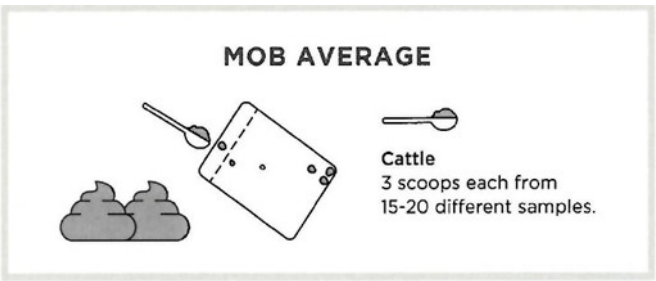
In June 2022, Camperdown Veterinary Centre invested in new technology to provide faster and more accurate results for our clients undertaking parasite monitoring in their livestock and horses. The **FECPAK G2 System** (pictured below) is an automated system which photographs images of faecal samples and uploads them to a New Zealand based laboratory database where a trained technician calibrates the image, counts the parasite eggs and returns an egg count within a 2 hour time frame. Our veterinarians can then interpret the result, along with the animal history provided to recommend the best treatment and individual management program for your animals tested.

The biggest advantage of this system compared to the traditional, in-clinic microscope based system of performing worm egg counts is that it is faster and it provides greater accuracy through an alternative sample preparation technique.

Collecting Samples On Farm

We now ask that you collect samples in SNAP LOCK PLASTIC BAGS as shown below.





We recommend submitting 3-5g (approximately 1 teaspoon) of each fresh sample you locate in the paddock (25-30 samples in the same bag). Please store all sample bags in the fridge until they can be submitted to the clinic – a maximum of 2 days.

For further information on collecting samples watch the videos at this link: https://www.techion.com/FECPAKG2