



Beef + Sheep Newsletter Spring 2022

CVC CLINIC NEWS

Welcome to the Spring newsletter for 2022!

We have been very busy the last few months delivering calves and helping producers manage their lambing ewes. Its great to see everyone animals doing so well. We have been putting our new egg count machine to the test, and its great to have lots of producers taking advantage of our updated service. This months newsletter covers weaner management, pink eye preparation, some footrot information and all you need to know about preserving long acting drenches in sheep. Happy reading!

Camperdown Veterinary Centre

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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

Managing your weaners for success!

As spring starts to kick off, many producers should be preparing to wean their young stock. Weaning is one of the most stressful events in a young animal's life, therefore careful planning is required to make it a success and avoid weight loss or disease outbreaks.

Weaning is generally performed from 2-3 months of age depending on the production system. There are many benefits of early weaning as from 2 months of age it is more energy efficient to feed high quality forage to a young calf than to a cow to feed the young calf. The same principal is also applicable to ewes and lambs. Earlier weaning converts more of the available feed energy into saleable beef or lamb by increasing the growth rate of young stock, increasing the sustainable number of breeders, allowing more opportunistic trading, or a combination of all these.

Proper preparation can help you avoid a disastrous weaning. Some keys to success are:

- Purchase your vaccination boosters – lambs and calves should already have had their first vaccine dose at marking and the second dose can be given at weaning.
 - For calves, 5-in-1 for clostridial diseases and 7-in-1 for clostridial diseases and leptospirosis. Additional vaccinations that may also be useful are a pink eye vaccine such as Piliguard and a Bovine Respiratory Disease vaccine such as Bovi-Shield MH-One.
 - For lambs, 5in1 (same as cattle) or 6in1 for clostridial diseases and cheesy gland. Additional vaccines for Ovine Johne's and arthritis may be indicated.
- Purchase your drench
- Prepare high quality pastures with low parasite burdens or nutrient dense feedstuffs prior to weaning to ensure animals have the resources available for weight gain.
- Prepare the yards being used for weaning by reducing dust and mud, especially if planning to wean in spring or summer.
- Ensure you have adequate time and staff to facilitate an efficient weaning process.



FOOTROT in SHEEP! What you need to know...

Footrot is increasing in prevalence in the south west of Victoria and it is crucial that sheep producers stay up to date with what to look for and some of the risk factors for spread of footrot.

What is footrot?

Footrot is an infectious disease of sheep, cattle and goats. It occurs throughout Australia but is most prevalent in the medium to high rainfall areas. Footrot is caused by a bacteria called *Dichelobacter nodosus* which thrives in moist, warm conditions such as spring in South-West Victoria. The footrot bacteria needs the feet of infected animals to survive.

The bacteria can survive indefinitely in pockets of infection inside the feet of infected animals, even under dry conditions. The bacteria cannot survive for more than 7 days in soil.

There are many strains of the footrot bacteria which vary in their ability to cause disease:

- Some strains never cause serious footrot in sheep, regardless of the environmental conditions. These are called **BENIGN STRAINS**.
- Other strains cause severe footrot lesions and spread rapidly in warm, moist environmental conditions. These are called **VIRULENT STRAINS**.



Footrot of sheep and goats is a **notifiable disease in Victoria however no quarantine measures are put in place**. This means that:

- outbreaks of footrot must be notified to an Inspector of livestock within 7 days
- it is illegal to sell infected sheep or goats other than for slaughter
- it is illegal to place footrot infected sheep in, or adjacent, to any saleyard or in any public place (including a road)
- infected sheep must be treated
- inspectors of livestock have the power to test and restrict movement of infected or suspect sheep and to ensure

How is footrot spread?

Footrot gets onto farms via the feet of infected sheep, goats or occasionally cattle. The disease can come from straying livestock, a recently purchased prize ram or from that bargain mob of wethers snapped up at the last sale. Farms are not infected with footrot, the animals on the farms are.

How is footrot diagnosed?

Lameness is often the first sign of footrot. There are several other conditions which cause lameness, which means it is essential to make a proper diagnosis. An incorrect diagnosis may lead to substantial economic losses due to inappropriate management. Differentiating between the different causes of lameness can be difficult and expert help should be sought to diagnose the cause of the problem.

A diagnosis of virulent footrot requires diagnosis by a veterinarian. This is a clinical diagnosis based on examining the feet of a large number of animals. Laboratory results may provide useful ancillary information to support diagnosis; however no laboratory test for footrot has 100% sensitivity or specificity. A laboratory test cannot be used on its own to establish a diagnosis of virulent footrot.

Control vs eradication of footrot

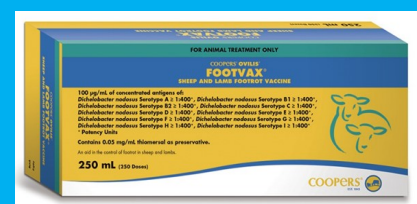
Depending on the time of year that footrot is diagnosed and where your stock is in your production cycle, either a control or eradication program may be recommended.

1. **Control** – control is undertaken to limit the spread of footrot while conditions favour survival. Control measures include foot bathing and vaccination. These measures are usually undertaken in autumn and spring.
2. **Eradication** – eradication is usually undertaken during summer as the bacteria does not like hot dry conditions.



Footvax

Footvax is a multivalent vaccine developed to aid in the control of footrot. Effective vaccination can provide a protection rate of up to 80% of the flock and cure around 60% of infected sheep. Following two vaccinations at least 6 weeks apart, sheep are protected against footrot for up to 10-12 weeks in merinos and up to 16 weeks in British breeds. Effective immunity is developed after the second dose.



Footrot is a very complicated condition to manage and all sheep producers are encouraged to contact us for advice if you are concerned about your stock.

Pinkeye season is coming!

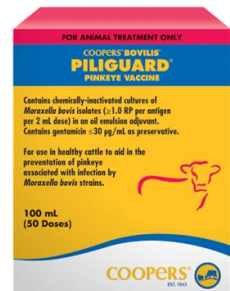
Pinkeye or bovine infectious keratoconjunctivitis is a highly contagious ocular infection of cattle most commonly caused by the bacterium *Moraxella bovis*. The bacterium produces a toxin that causes aggressive inflammation of the eye, often resulting in short term or permanent blindness in cattle. The bacteria *Moraxella bovoculi* has also been implicated as the causative agent on some farms in Australia.



Pinkeye can affect up to 80% of a mob, usually affecting young cattle during the summer and autumn months in Victoria. The important thing to remember about pink eye is that the infection is almost always started after trauma to the eye. Quite often feeding hay or grazing crops can scratch the eye surface making way for bacteria to start an infection. Immune suppression caused by co-mingling of cattle and stressors such as inadequate nutrition, heat stress and parasite burdens can also dramatically affect the impact of pink eye on a herd.

Always check the eyes for grass seeds or other foreign objects before treating for pink eye, as ongoing irritation will result in poor response to treatment.

COOPERS Piliguard® is a single dose vaccination registered for aid in the prevention of pink eye associated with infection by *Moraxella bovis* strains. The vaccine must be given 3-6 weeks prior to the start of the pink eye season. Annual re-vaccination is recommended to maintain protection.



For the best outcomes we recommended vaccinating in early October. Recommendations for vaccination of beef cows is included below. If you would like to discuss pink-eye prevention in your herd or order your Piliguard vaccine please do not hesitate to contact the clinic, so we can help you be prepared to beat the flies this season!

If you have had trouble in the past with the pink eye vaccine not working, you may have a strain that is not covered by the vaccine. CVC can assist with laboratory development of a farm specific vaccine by swabbing and culturing samples from affected eyes.

Pink eye in sheep

Sheep can also suffer from conjunctivitis in the summer months however it is usually caused by *Mycoplasma conjunctivae*, or chlamydia organisms. Sheep are not susceptible to pink eye caused by *Moraxella bovis* like cattle.



Dusty conditions, feeding of hay or straw, and grazing of stubble crops are all risk factors for the development of infectious ocular disease in sheep. Due to the shorter stature sheep are also very prone to grass seed foreign bodies causing traumatic damage to the surface of the eye. Unfortunately there is no vaccination available for use in sheep therefore management is key!

BEEF CATTLE	
SPRING CALVING	<p>Spring calving herds</p> <p>Vaccinate calves 3-6 weeks before the onset of the pinkeye season.</p> <p>In many southern herds the most convenient time to do this would be at calf marking (October).</p>
AUTUMNCALVING	<p>Autumn calving herds</p> <p>Vaccinate calves 3-6 weeks before the onset of the pinkeye season.</p> <p>If yard weaning is practised it will be essential to have vaccinated calves at least 3-6 weeks prior to weaning, to aid in the prevention of pinkeye after weaning.</p>
HEIFERS	<p>Replacement heifers (all herds)</p> <p>Vaccinate 3-6 weeks before the expected onset of the pinkeye season.</p>
NAIVE HERDS	<p>Naive herds and high value stud animals</p> <p>In pinkeye naive herds and high value stud animals, vaccinate all adult cattle, as well as young stock 3-6 weeks prior to the expected onset of the pinkeye season.</p>

Persistent acting drenches and the development of drench resistance – what can you do to help?

Persistent acting drenches are design to have two functions. One, to kill immature and adult worms at the time of treatment and two, to provide protection from infective larvae eaten during the period of protection.

Long-acting drenches usually provide protection for 90 days while mid-length treatment can last from 1- 6 weeks depending on the product used. Persist acting drenches used in Australia most commonly contain the actives moxidectin and abamectin.

While persistent acting drenches are effective and useful for providing ongoing protection to stock, they can be a risk factor for the development of drench resistance for a number reasons:

- Worms are exposed to the active for longer. This works in the favour of resistant worms that survive treatment as they are able to reproduce and increase in numbers.
- Persistent acting drenches have a longer time at the end of their protection period where the active concentration drops to a level where partly resistant worms may survive and reproduce.



Priming drenches

A priming drench is an effective short-acting drench given at the same time as a long-acting drench with the aim of clearing the animal of worms that are resistant to the long-acting product. The primer drench includes a product that is in a different group to the long-acting drench.



Exit drenches

An exit drench is used **two weeks after the end of the “persistent” products protection period**. The exit drench aims to kill larvae that have survived the persistent treatment and developed into breeding adult worms. Exit drenches are also known as “tail cutters”. An exit drench (like the primer drench) is an effective short-acting treatment (preferably a combination) that is from a different group to the persistent product.

Primer drenches and exit drenches should be used with long-acting drenches such as rumen capsules and long-acting injectables such as Cydectin LA.

Mid-length treatments such as Eweguard, Weanerguard , and Sheepguard need **exit drenches**.

An example of priming and exit drench use with a long-acting product:

Responsible use of long-acting products:



Checking the persistence of a product

Many persistent acting drenches are not necessarily effective for the period stated on the product label. To test the persistence of a product faecal egg counts can be performed at 14, 30, 60 and 90 days after treatment.

If you are ever concerned that a mid-length or long-acting drench is not working, please contact us to discuss with a vet as a drench resistance trial may be required on your property.