



CVC CLINIC NEWS

Welcome to the Spring edition of the Beef and Sheep Newsletter for 2023! During the month of August, we completed our annual dog vaccination runs and medication compliance visits. If you missed out this year, let us know and we will add you to the list for next year.

With El Nino officially being declared in Australia, it is predicted that spring in eastern Australia will have below average rainfall and warmer than usual days. It is important to be looking ahead to the pasture that is likely to be available in the coming months. Creating a feed budget from what you currently have and what is projected to grow will help determine whether your current stock numbers are going to require adjusting or supplementation in drier conditions.


Camperdown Veterinary Centre
1 Leura St, Camperdown VIC 3260
Ph: (03) 5593 1077

Opening hours:
Monday—Friday 8:30am—5:30pm
Late night small animal appointments and drug collection Monday, Tuesday and Thursday until 7:30pm
Saturday 9:00– 12:00 PM
Lismore clinic Tuesdays 10:00am-1:00pm
Our 24 hour emergency/afterhours service is always available.
Email: team@camperdownvet.com.au

RAM SEDATION

For Occupational Health & Safety reasons, sedation of rams prior to shearing has become standard practice. While enabling the shearers to do their work with less chance of injury, there are many issues with the dispensing and use of the sedative which must be addressed to protect owners, the dispensing veterinarian, and to ensure animal health and welfare.

To ensure all workers on-farm are aware of the correct dose and protocol for administration, as well as the safety considerations of handling the drug, we can provide printed, laminated handouts for display in the shed. We can also conduct staff training on-farm for safe injection sites on sheep as well as demonstration of other hands-on topics such as body-condition scoring.



CVC CAMPERDOWN VETERINARY CENTRE
(03) 5593 1077 www.camperdownvet.com.au

Acepromazine (Ram sedation) safety instructions

Dose Rate: 1ml per 30kg bodyweight of ACPZ. Older rams tend to be more sensitive and so may need a slightly lower dose rate. Weigh rams prior injection to make sure dosing is accurate.

Route: Deep intramuscular injection

Timing: 20-45 minutes prior to shearing.

Variable Response: Not all rams will respond the same, to the same dose rate.

Do Not Top Up: with a further dose if you think the tranquilisation is not sufficient. Wait until the next day and start again.

Side effects to consider:

Prepares: This drug has a known effect of relaxing the muscles which normally keep the penis retracted. Therefore, the penis may extend out and this leads to a greater risk of shearing injuries.

Blood Pressure: ACPZ will cause a fall in blood pressure.

Release of Shorn Rams: Injected animals should be able to stand and walk whilst sedated, but frequently do if not disturbed. Because the drug reduces strength and co-ordination, sedated animals should be handled gently, particularly when being pushed down the chute and counted out.

Do not:

- Drive the sheep more than a few hundred metres
- Leave the sheep in a paddock with dams, creeks or swamps

Hypothermia: Sedated rams find it difficult to thermo-regulate, therefore, in really hot or cold weather conditions, it would be wise to keep the rams in the shed post-shearing for up to 8 hours.

Risk of Human Injection
If inadvertently injected into a human, seek medical attention immediately, but do not drive. Advise the medical attendants that the drug injected is a Promazine derivative - acetyl promazine maleate.

How to safely give an intramuscular injection

- Using a fresh needle and syringe, draw up the appropriate dose of ACPZ based on the rams estimated weight.
- Hold an assistant behind the ram for you, preferably by the head and neck.
- Place the needle over the centre of the ram in the area indicated in the diagram below.
- Insert the needle deep into the muscle and attach the syringe.
- Once back on the syringe to check you are not in a blood vessel, you will see a splash of red in the syringe.
- Inject the full amount into the ram, then withdraw the needle and re-cap.





Image Source: Beef+LambNZ

If you are planning to use sedation this year for shearing rams, and you have not been in touch with us about it in the past 12 months, we will ask you to please read and sign a form when we dispense A.C.P. tranquiliser.

We also require a compliance visit within the past year before we can dispense sedation. Please contact us to organise a visit.



Oral Lice Treatment for Sheep FLEXOLT

If you missed our client night in June, MSD Coopers launched a new oral treatment for lice. Traditionally, lice eradication is best achieved with a backline treatment immediately off-shears. With Flexolt, all sheep (over 6kg) can be treated regardless of their wool length. It is still recommended to treat all sheep within the shortest time frame possible to achieve eradication, as there is no residual effects following treatment.

For more information, see the website: <https://www.coopersanimalhealth.com.au/product/flexolt/>

Pinkeye

Pinkeye is commonly used to label any eye disease of cattle that does not appear to be a cancerous eye. In the event of a herd outbreak, it is often labelled **infectious bovine keratoconjunctivitis (IBK)**. This indicates the **widespread incidence of disease in a mob**. Pinkeye can affect up to 80% of a mob, usually affecting young cattle during the late Spring, Summer and Autumn months in Victoria.

Clinical signs of pink eye may vary from mild conjunctivitis to severe ocular ulceration and blindness. **Prompt treatment as soon as a watery eye is noticed is recommended.** In cases of corneal (surface) ulceration, these eyes should be healed within 7 days – if not, the eye needs to be re-assessed.

Traditionally, IBK has been attributed to the presence of *Moraxella* species of bacteria. However, there has been speculation on the exact causes of IBK in recent years. Whilst bacteria may have an important role in the disease, equally significant is the mitigation of other risk factors. **Individual farms that have an IBK problem, can have vastly different causes of IBK.**

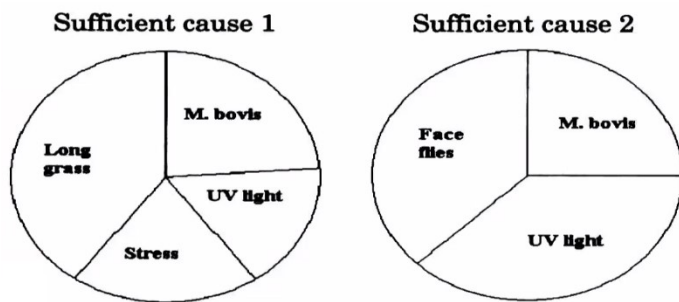


Figure 1. Schematic of hypothetical sufficient causes of infectious bovine keratoconjunctivitis.

American Association of Bovine Practitioners. Conference Proceedings. Annual Conference 2007

Key areas to consider in preventing an outbreak of pinkeye include:

- ◆ Age and general health (including trace mineral and Pestivirus status)
- ◆ Dust levels
- ◆ Fly population
- ◆ Standing feed (e.g. grass seeds, stalks) and hay feeding (e.g. ring feeders)
- ◆ *Moraxella* and other ocular bacterial strains present on the farm
- ◆ UV light
- ◆ Stocking rates and close contact, including yarding for husbandry procedures



1. Mild infection characterised by slight cloudiness and increased tear production.
2. Infection progresses with growth of blood vessels creating the 'pink ring' responsible for the name 'pink eye'
3. Advanced infection with central hypopyon (pus)
4. Globe rupture requiring eye removal.

Common initiating factors are trauma and irritation to the eye, cross-contamination of bacteria between animals, and a suppressed or over-working immune system.

In conjunction with management of the above factors, vaccination can help limit the spread of infection by reducing bacterial shedding by affected animals. The best time to vaccinate is once yearly in October, prior to increased fly numbers. Vaccination can be repeated due to high infection rates or in the face of an outbreak. Micro-organisms typically adapt to the environment in which they are found in resulting in regional variation of organisms, therefore custom-made autogenous vaccines may be a key to aiding in the solution of these issues.

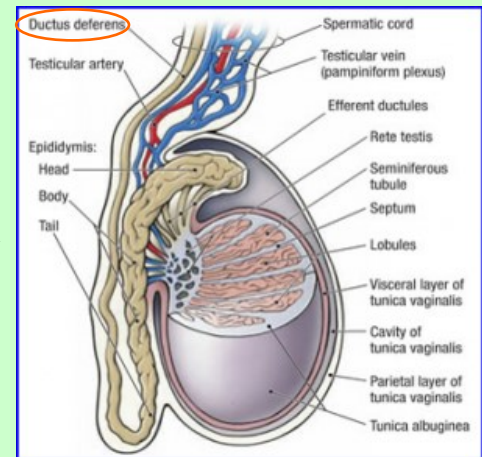
Breeding out-of-season: Using “Teaser” (vasectomised) Rams

Teaser rams are commonly used for the “ram effect” in ewes prior to joining. Ewes are stimulated to cycle so when the rams go in, they are ready for mating.

What are vasectomised rams?

Vasectomised rams have had a section of their cord that transports sperm (ductus deferens, see image right), surgically removed, rendering them infertile. They can still secrete and act under the influence of testosterone produced from their testicles (compared to wethers).

Rams chosen for vasectomy should be older than 4 months, over 30 kg body-weight, and have good teeth, feet/joints, and not carrying any disease (especially brucellosis).



<https://open.lib.umn.edu/largeanimalsurgery/chapter/how-to-vasectomy/>

How does the “ram effect” work?

Sheep are typically **seasonal-breeders**; in most breeds, oestrous cyclicity peaks in Autumn when day length is short and decreasing. Merinos often start cycling in November/December and peak in February/March before declining, whilst British breeds tend to cycle later between February and June (see below).

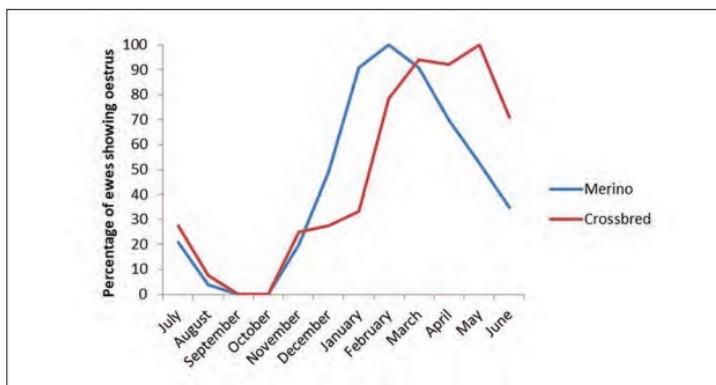


Figure 7.1: The incidence in Australia of oestrus in Merino and Border Leicester x Merino ewes run continuously with vasectomised rams (data averaged over two or three years). Drawn by KA Abbott. Based on data from Underwood, Shier and Davenport (1944).⁶

The rate of ovulation (and subsequently, conception) declines during the breeding season. Pheromones that are secreted by wool follicle glands cause secretion of luteinising hormone (LH) in ewes (which is necessary for ovulation to occur). These pheromones are dependent on androgen secretion i.e. greater testosterone levels induce a stronger effect on LH secretion and ovulation. The sight and sound of rams also improve LH secretion in ewes.

The “ram effect” is best achieved by keeping ewes and teasers/rams away from each other (sight and smell) for a month before mixing.

Why is the “ram effect” useful?

Oestrus is not usually behaviourally expressed during the first two ram-induced ovulations. These ovulation cycles are often short. By day 18-25 after the rams are introduced, there is a high incidence of oestrus.

By using teaser rams for the first 14-16 days before joining, breeding rams are not “wasted” on non-cycling ewes and put at risk of injury from fighting or lameness prior to being effective for conception. Stimulating cyclicity in ewes prior to joining can make the lambing period more compact, by improving conception on the first cycle the rams are added.

Testosterone injections (e.g. Ropel) for wethers are becoming increasingly difficult to obtain, and treated wethers are unable to enter the food chain. Vasectomised rams can also be re-used over several years without “re-treatment” (compared to wethers).

When should rams be vasectomised?

Rams chosen for vasectomy should have the **surgery done at least 6 weeks prior to use as teasers**. This allows for recovery from surgery and for sperm levels to decline (infertility to be achieved).

It is a good time to get your teasers sorted, so feel free to call us to book your rams in.

WEANING CALVES

The process of weaning calves has an important influence on the future interactions with people during their productive life. **A well-prepared weaner will reduce stress during subsequent husbandry procedures, limiting disease and injury.**

Yard-weaning can foster familiarity with the stock yards, human contact, and other individual animals they are to be paddocked with. Smaller and shy weaners can be separated into another group to prevent weight loss and ensure even access to food and water. Weaned calves should be put onto pastures of minimum 11.5MJ ME/kg DM and 15% crude protein. Consider supplementing weaners with additional feed if high quality pastures are not available. Feed quality should be monitored and animals weighed regularly over the months following weaning, especially as the season progresses.

It is recommended that calves be given a dose of 5-in-1 vaccine and drenched at weaning. Giving trace mineral supplements at weaning can aid in boosting their immune system during this stressful time. If you suspect or do not know if a deficiency is likely on your property, please contact us to discuss further testing.

Planning weaning is not just about the calves. Ensure cows are weaned with at least 2 months prior to calving to allow the udder to regenerate before the next lactation and to prevent further weight loss from lactation when nearing the end of pregnancy. It is generally more economical to feed high quality feed to weaners, than to rely on the small amount of milk they are consuming from their dams at the age of 6 months.

Guide to yard weaning (*More Beef From Pastures, MLA*)

“The following requirements must be met to implement yard weaning as a management tool.

- ◇ Well built, weaner-proof yards with solid opaque pen sides (rubber belting 1.2m wide is ideal).
- ◇ A reasonably sloped, well drained, non-bog surface.
- ◇ Pen stocking density of 4m² /head for 180–260kg calves, and 2.5m² /head for 100–170kg early-weaned calves.
- ◇ Weaners kept in the yards for 5–10 days (with the aim to have the majority back onto high quality pastures as quickly as possible).
- ◇ Cattle fed daily with high quality hay or silage (at least 11.5MJ ME /kg DM and 15% crude protein) – the feed does not need to be supplied in a bunk or trough and can be successfully fed through a round bale feeder.
- ◇ Good quality drinking water supplied in a trough.
- ◇ Shy feeders removed and managed as a separate group to prevent rapid and excessive weight loss.
- ◇ Routine human contact each day (eg walking quietly through the yard at least two or three times each day).
- ◇ In general, keep dogs away from the weaning yard.”

Pregnancy Diagnosis of Beef Cows

Pregnancy diagnosis is a crucial part of a production system as it allows planning for the season ahead. At CVC we offer bovine pregnancy diagnosis with both manual palpation and ultrasound.

The benefits of early pregnancy diagnosis (i.e. pregnancy diagnosis at no more than 8 weeks from when the bull is removed) include:

- Identification of early and late calving cows to determine the distribution of conception (what percentage of cows fell pregnant in the first and second oestrous cycles). This information can be used to **work towards having more calves on the ground earlier in the calving period**. This will help cows and heifers to calve earlier again the next year (more recovery time between calving and joining) as well as limit the spread of calf weights at marking and weaning.
- Early detection of **empty cows** allows decisions to be made about re-joining or culling.
- Formulation of **feed budgets**—feeding an empty cow for 9 months for her not to produce a calf, can be an expensive.

The further in-calf a cow is at pregnancy diagnosis, the harder it is to be accurate with foetal aging. **Between 6 and 16 weeks gestation, pregnancy diagnosis is very accurate and gives the best results.**

For autumn-calving herds, this means scheduling pregnancy diagnosis now!



37 Day Bovine Pregnancy



94 day bull calf head (24 cm mode)

Source: BCF