

Jan '15

Tirau Veterinary Centre Ltd

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Special points of interest:

- A big **congratulations** to Leanne and Sam who brought their son Harrison into the world last month. A whopping 9lb7!



- **Congratulations** also to Ursula and Mark on their recent engagement - at long last!!

- The earlier the better for **calf lept** vaccinations. The time between birth and first vaccination is a risk period for calves to pick up a lept infection and be lifelong carriers. A vaccination after infection will unfortunately not stop the carrier state and shedding of the bacteria and will leave you (and others) exposed when handling the stock for the rest of the animals lives.

Facial Eczema—The Disease

Facial eczema is a severely distressing, painful, often fatal and production limiting disease in stock of all ages. The spores of a fungus (*Pithomyces Charterum*) growing on pasture produce a toxin (*Sporidesmin*) which, when ingested by stock, damage the liver and bile ducts. Being a fungi it grows best in warm, moist conditions and more so where there is more dead matter at the base of swards. The damaged liver cannot rid the body of wastes and it is one of these toxins which causes the photosensitivity.

This is a 'tip of the iceberg' disease, it is estimated for every 3 in 100 animals showing signs of FE, about 70% of the herd may have subclinical FE. Huge losses are incurred due to decreased milk production, growth rate limitation, culling, consequent liver failure under stress and death.

Visual symptoms include a drop in milk production, restlessness, irritation, seeking shade, licking exposed skin ie muzzle and udder, thickening and peeling skin and a scour. A blood test can be undertaken which measures liver enzyme levels and indicates the degree of liver damage.

Prevention is the only option. Animals cannot be given treatments to repair facial eczema damage. If the damage is not too severe the liver can regenerate and repair but recovering animals require time, shade and good nutrition.

A cheap and effective method of monitoring spore levels on pasture is to bring in some grass samples and we will count the spores. Spore counts can vary dramatically from one paddock to the next and between different areas within one paddock. If you would like the weekly district reports emailed to you, please let us know by phone or email to tirauvetcentre@xtra.co.nz.



PREGNANCY TESTING

Book yours in this month for the most valuable information around ageing. After this month you have missed the boat with accurate ageing so get the information while you can.

Facial Eczema—Prevention

There are several different prevention options available (unfortunately nothing labour free, cost free and 100% eczema free yet!), each with various pros and cons and efficacy of prevention.

Whichever option you choose for your stock, it is crucial they receive the correct dose and are covered for the entire risk period. There have been many people who have persevered drenching the majority of the season to stop just a couple of weeks too early and have cows drop in late April/May.

On the flipside, administering zinc at such high levels for a long period of time is not good for stock either so we do not recommend you begin treatment too early. **Dangerous levels are**

typically reached in late Jan/early Feb and dosing should begin 10days prior to this.

Efficacy of binding sporidesmin varies significantly between the options with intra-ruminal bullets being the most effective (90%) followed by Zinc Oxide – daily drench or feed (80-90%) then finally Zinc sulphate through the water (60-70%). As you can see if possible it is much more preferable to bullet or drench/mix in feed with the latter option normally being the most cost effective.

For farms where dosatrons are the only practical option (ie Zinc Sulphate) you often also need to dust Zinc oxide onto pasture at high spore challenges to provide adequate protection



Son's Horrifying Letter

A father passing by his son's bedroom, was astonished to see the bed was nicely made, and everything was picked up. Then, he saw an envelope, propped up prominently on the pillow. It was addressed, "Dad." With the worst premonition, he opened the enveloped and read the letter, with trembling hands....

"Dear Dad. It is with great regret and sorrow that I'm writing you. I had to elope with my new girlfriend, because I wanted to avoid a scene with Mum and you. I've been finding real passion with Stacy, and she is so nice, but I knew you would not approve of her because of her piercings, tattoos, tight motorcycle clothes, and because she is so much older than I am. But it's not only the passion, Dad. She's pregnant. Stacy said that we will be very happy. She owns a trailer in the woods, and has a

stack of firewood for the whole winter. We share a dream of having many more children. Stacy has opened up my eyes to the fact that marijuana doesn't really hurt anyone. We will be growing it for ourselves, and trading it with the other people in the commune, for all the cocaine and ecstasy we want. In the meantime, we'll pray that science finds a cure for AIDS so that Stacy can get better. She sure deserves it! Don't worry Dad. I'm 15, and I know how to take care of myself. Someday, I'm sure we'll be back to visit, so you can get to know your grandchildren. Love, your son, Joshua. PS: Dad, none of the above is true, I'm over at Jason's house. I just wanted to remind you that there are worse things in life than the school report on the kitchen table. Call when it is safe for me to come home!