

## Rural round-up



**Mark Bryan**  
Director of  
Clinical Strategy

Sadly, this will be my last contribution to Paddock Press. Later this month I'll be officially finishing up my day-to-day work with VetSouth.

Over the years our communications to clients have taken various titles and formats: 'VetTalk', 'Dairy Notes', 'Field Notes'; monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly; rough paper, glossy paper, online, etc. They've always been mostly well-received, and I've appreciated that.

These days with the amount of information people are exposed to everyday, I find it remarkable that we still have great numbers reading our newsletters. I guess everyone needs something to read on the toilet! With our whizzy marketing team, everything that's written in our newsletters is now also reproduced on our website, so it's never lost to eternity. In fact, many of our articles have found themselves near the top of some relevant Google search lists and they're read by viewers from well beyond Southland and Otago.

It's been a privilege to be able to write stuff for people to read, and it's been an honour to know that people actually do read it and sometimes even act on it! We're so thankful for you supporting us.

I'll miss the feedback – both positive and negative – that communications always bring. Those of you who've been around as long as me might remember the time when we got complaints for showing Janet Jackson's nipples following her 'wardrobe malfunction' at the Super Bowl. It might have been mildly offensive, but at least we emphasised the importance of udder health.

Most of all I'll miss communicating with our rural communities. But you'll be in good (better!) hands and I'll see you around. Thank you for everything.

## The countdown is on to Southern Field Days

by Georgia Lammie

**We'll be at Southern Field Days next week. Visit us at site A8 & A9 in the Agri-Centre for a yarn!**

We'll have knowledgeable vets and other key staff on-hand for a chat. Come catch up with familiar faces or meet more of our team.

Learn about our farmer partnership and loyalty programmes, check out photos of our team at work, and enter our prize draw – we're giving away daily prizes and one major prize.

The big prize consists of a Kärcher petrol water blaster and a \$500 VetSouth voucher.



The daily prize packs are made up of an insulated lunch bag, a VetSouth/Resilience Agenda mental fitness diary, some VetSouth merch, a dog lead, local snacks, and some other goodies.

Simply pop to our site to be in to WIN!

We'll also have reps available from Heartland Feeds and Black Hawk. Have a talk to them about nutrition for positive production in your stock or endurance in your working dogs, and see if your animals are getting all they need in their feed.

You can pick up a free 'Drug Fridge' sticker too. These are a simple tool to help our delivery drivers (and your staff) know where to put RVMS and other refrigerated animal health products at your shed. Learn more about our delivery services on the back page.

## ON-FARM FOCUS



### DAIRY



- Complete early aged scanning and organise re-check scans – there's still time to book in with us.
- BCS cows to check they are coming through summer well.
- Look out for lameness and treat any lame cows promptly.
- Continue following your drench and mineral plan for calves and consider weighing them with our Weigh It Up programme's portable scales.

### BEEF



- Keep growth rates high in calves through drenching, clostridial vaccination, and trace elements.
- Plan for scanning – book in with us.

### SHEEP



- Udder ewes (good to repeat now 4-6 weeks post-weaning to identify any issues).
- Ram palpations.
- Continue fly prevention for all stock.
- FEC test two-tooths and lambs.
- Campy vaccination.

### DEER



- Yersiniavax and drench for fawns.
- Finish velvetting and return completed NVSB book to us by 31 March.

### WORKING DOGS



- Remember monthly tablets for Sheep Measles prevention.
- Watch out for signs of heatstroke.



# Selenium supplementing in cattle

by Kate Irving

Selenium is an essential mineral for cattle of all ages. It's used for immune function, growth and fertility.

Signs of selenium deficiency can include poor growth, reduced fertility, decreased milk production, and white muscle disease (stiffness and weakness in very young animals).

There are multiple forms of selenium supplementation available to farmers: oral, injectable and pour on.

Most cows will be supplemented orally with selenium via the dosatron, which is an easy way to administer selenium to the whole herd.

Youngstock are mainly given injectables or pour ons that are administered when they're yarded. However, pour on products can have varied absorption as the dose can be altered by external factors (such as rain washing it off or animals licking it off each other). This makes them less effective. Therefore, **injectable selenium is the recommended form for individual administration.**

There are a range of injectable products. Some are straight selenium and some are combined with B12 – and they all have different durations of effectiveness. It's important to know which one to use when.

**Short-acting selenium only lasts for 4-6 weeks. It's usually given regularly to youngstock throughout summer,** often at the same time as drenching. Sometimes it's given to cows when they come back to the farm after grazing away over wintertime.

Long-acting selenium lasts up to 12 months. It's usually given to youngstock before winter to cover them for the entire cold and wet season.

Remember, selenium toxicity from over-supplementing is a risk. This can be

caused by choosing the wrong product, inaccurate dosing, or using multiple forms of selenium at once.

**We can do blood tests to determine what your stock's selenium levels are and if supplementation is required.** Testing allows you to target treatment with the right product at the right time.

In summary, there are many types of selenium supplementation available, but product choice and timing are very important. Get in touch with your KeyVet if you'd like advice specific to your animals and farming system.

## Discussing Johne's disease

by Kath Aplin

At the end of last year, VetSouth teamed up with LIC for two workshops in Winton and Gore about Johne's disease. Local farmers at various stages of their 'Johne's journey' joined some of our large animal vets and Kara Dawson – LIC's Johne's specialist – to learn about practical ways to control the disease and the testing options available.

We heard from farmers who have tackled high levels of Johne's in their herd and managed to bring the disease under control. All agreed that controlling Johne's is neither cheap, quick nor easy – but it is well worth the effort.

With no vaccine or treatment on the cards, controlling this disease involves testing your herd, culling cows, and preventing calves from getting infected. The right control measures will vary from farm to farm. It's all about being practical and pragmatic, finding the biggest wins for your own system.

Completely eradicating Johne's disease is probably unachievable, however the stories we heard from farmers during these events showed that it's definitely possible to bring Johne's in your herd down to a level where it's under control and not pulling down productivity.

If you didn't make it to one of the workshops, don't worry, arrange a catch up with your KeyVet to make a Johne's plan for your own herd.

## What's inside a cow's hoof?



by Kath Aplin

At our recent on-farm lameness training sessions, we've been inspecting some live cows' feet – and also looking at some dead cows' ones!

**Being able to look inside a cow's foot really helps grow your understanding of how to trim a hoof.** Done right, trimming helps restore the balance of the foot, but done wrong, it can cause more harm than good.

Here's what a cow hoof looks like inside:



You can see how the bone sits with even pressure over the sole of the hoof. Being able to examine this really helps you see how hoof length can affect the balance of the foot and what can go wrong. For example, an overgrown toe would tilt the bone backwards, putting pressure on the heel.

You can also see how easy it would be to over-trim the sole, particularly when using a grinder. Taking a couple of millimeters too much off could leave a very thin sole, with more potential for stones to penetrate through to the sensitive tissue underneath.

**Our on-farm training days are a great way to upskill your team in a very practical way.** They're all about building on what you already know and picking up tips – in this case helping you to get lame cows back on their feet quickly.

Call the VetSouth Winton Farm Services team on 03 236 6090 ext. 8054. for more information or to book.



# Vitamin B12 for lambs

by Emma Middlemass

Vitamin B12 is an essential trace element for growth in young lambs.

Lambs low in vitamin B12 can have reduced growth rates, ill-thrift, dull coats, and reduced appetite. Although they may not appear clinically unwell, these lambs often fail to reach their growth targets, resulting in lighter weights and longer finishing times.

Severe B12 deficiency (not often seen in our modern farming systems) results in runty lambs in extremely poor condition, despite good feed levels.

In simple steps, the cobalt-vitamin B12 relationship can be described as:

1. Cobalt, a micromineral found naturally in soil (or put on pasture), is taken up by plants.
2. Sheep consume the plants and therefore ingest cobalt.
3. Rumen microbes convert the ingested cobalt into vitamin B12.
4. B12 supports energy metabolism, growth and appetite. Deficiencies can lead to poor growth rates.

Pasture type and quality have a marked affect on the amount of cobalt

available for lambs, with pastures high in legumes often containing superior levels of cobalt.

Clinically, we often see issues with high parasite burdens and low B12 liver stores going hand in hand – they seem to predispose each to the other.

Plus, the growing awareness of parasite resistance, and the resulting changes in parasite management, may mean you're giving your lambs different amounts of minerals than you used to. You may be using a novel drench that doesn't contain minerals, or adopting grazing strategies designed to reduce drench use.

Farms that are not hitting their growth rates, or have shifted to systems with less mineral oral supplementation, should be aware of the importance of B12 in lambs and consider appropriate supplementation to meet requirements.

**Long-acting injectable B12 (such as SmartShot) provides six months of increased and adequately maintained B12 levels for lambs.**

Interestingly, studies have shown that a single long-acting injection given pre-mating in ewes can provide their lambs with adequate B12 levels until one month of age.

**Long-acting injectables reduce labour and time, as they replace the need for multiple short-acting injections.** However, short-acting B12 injectables are still a good option, and can be given monthly to help maintain levels.



In short, changes in management and drenching practices may mean it's time to review your B12 supplementation.

For further discussion about your lambs' mineral status and growth, have a chat with your KeyVet.

## What causes Yersiniosis?



by Lisa Roberts

Yersiniosis in deer is characterised by green, watery, bloody scours which rapidly leads to death if untreated.

This highly infectious disease is caused by bacteria that is widespread in the environment, can be carried and spread by wildlife and farm animals, and survives well in soil, water and pasture, even in winter.

New Zealand experience has shown disease onset may be triggered when deer are exposed to stress.

Many typical stressors occur at, or soon after, weaning – making it a prime time for disease. These include yarding, mixing of deer groups, a sudden change in feed, and transport.

Cold, wet, windy weather is also a big stressor. In bad weather fawns can quickly lose body heat because they have very low fat reserves and their coats do not provide good insulation. They also stop eating as they seek shelter, leading to less activity in the the intestines which allows Yersinia organisms to produce more toxins.

To avoid an outbreak of Yersiniosis, try to reduce the effects of stressful events and preventatively vaccinate fawns with Yersiniavax.

Ideally, this would include two shots of the vaccine 3-6 weeks apart, with the second one completed at least one week before weaning.

## Reducing lambs' pneumonia risk



by Emma Middlemass

One of the most common issues seen in lambs around weaning is chronic, non-progressive pneumonia (commonly known as 'viral pneumonia').

This can be caused by bacteria, mycobacteria and certain viruses. Symptoms are often subclinical, but lambs may have trouble breathing, pant excessively, cough with exercise, and die. Sometimes dead lambs are the first indicator of this on a farm.

Lambs with pneumonia are more likely to develop pleurisy (when lungs stick to the chest wall). **When more than 20% of the lung surface is affected by pneumonia, growth rates are halved. These lambs are often downgraded or condemned at the works.**

Some on-farm factors that increase the risk of pneumonia in lambs include stress, shearing or drenching at weaning time, high temperatures and humidity, overcrowding, dust, poor ventilation, excessive exercise, low immunity, and high parasite burdens.

Stress and other risks when weaning predispose lambs to the development of viral pneumonia. Affects can be seen within 7-10 days of weaning (often with sudden deaths), and can continue for many months afterwards, with slow growth and failure to thrive. Prevention is better than cure, as there is no treatment once lambs are affected.

Check out the full article on our website for some key do's and don'ts to help you reduce these pneumonia risk factors on-farm this weaning.

# Delivering to your farm

by Georgia Lammie

Save on fuel and time – get us to deliver your animal health products to you on-farm for free!

We know being a farmer is busy work. Our friendly Farm Distribution drivers are on the road every day of the week to help get you the products you need without having to leave the farm.

Our two main drivers, based out of our Winton and Gore clinics, head in a different direction each day. A weekly schedule of runs to the different farming areas we service ensures we'll be past your farm's gate once a week.

Keira, our Winton driver, takes her delivery van up to Lumsden and Mossburn, across to Tuatapere, down to Orepuki, out to Hedgehope, and all areas on the way. Kerry, our Gore driver, takes her delivery ute out to Balfour, up to Heriot, across to Balclutha, down through Edendale to Tokanui, and everywhere in-between. They both cover Invercargill surrounds.

Simply ring the Winton or Gore teams or text them your order before 9am on your delivery day and our Farm Distribution staff will pack up what you require and drop it off to you for no additional charge.

We can make special deliveries across West and South Otago from our Tapanui and Balclutha clinics as needed. Plus, with vets and vet techs always out and about across the countryside, we may be able to arrange



a drop-off on a different day than your regular delivery day if it's urgent.

Products we deliver include RVMS, drench, working dog food, and more. We can also collect stock poo samples to be FEC (faecal egg count) tested or hoof knives to be sharpened back at the clinic.

Get in touch with your local clinic to find out more about our delivery days in your neck of the woods.

## Share your feedback about this newsletter!

Be in to WIN

It's been 18 months of VetSouth's Paddock Press newsletter and we're keen to hear your thoughts to help us keep it useful and interesting for you.

Fill out our short survey about the newsletter by scanning the QR code below and **go in the draw to WIN a \$500 VetSouth voucher** for products or services!\*

Scan for the survey



\*T&Cs apply. One entry per client. Survey closes on Sunday 8th March and winner will be contacted via phone by Sunday 15th March.

## Clinic corner



### Preparing for tupping

Our vets are beginning to get out on sheep farms for our annual Ram Run. They've been palpating and checking over breeding rams to assess their suitability, and vasectomising teaser rams. Ram Run continues in February, so call us ASAP if you're not yet on the list to get your boys checked.



### Creative natives

At the end of every year we gift native plants from a local nursery to our farming clients. Look how this farmer has creatively arranged the ones he's received over the years!



*This epic crew from our Gore clinic (with Craig from Blackhawk and Rig and Keltie the dogs) won 'Best Site' at the 2025 Wyndham A&P Show in December!*

*Thanks to Natwick Photography for the photo.*

## Working with you

Keep your animals happy and healthy with our expert teams in **Winton, Gore, Invercargill, Tapanui, Balclutha, Otautau, Lumsden, Clydevale & Milton**

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