

## Rural round-up



**Mark Bryan**  
Director of  
Clinical Strategy

Hi all - welcome to the most recent evolution of our regular farmer newsletters.

Over the years, we've tried various formats to best communicate with our clients. Over 20 years ago, in the early days of VetSouth (when it was just a loose arrangement of Southland clinics), we used to produce a glossy quarterly 'VetTalk'. These were reasonably professional for their era, even though their organisation was still fairly amateur.

We also had separate sheep & beef and dairy monthly newsletters, which were a lot less glossy and rather sporadic, depending on the enthusiasm and time of a few very significant contributors.

We judged their success on the number of complaints we received. Those dairy farmers who were around back in the day may remember the issue featuring Janet Jackson's 'wardrobe malfunction' at the Superbowl, which caused some consternation at the time. Still, it helped drive home the message to protect teats at drying off, so I think it did its job (even though our mailbag of complaints grew somewhat).

Once we formed VetSouth properly, we pulled together our resources and tidied up our act a bit. The newsletters became better organised, less libellous, and more informative.

And so, this new version is another step in the evolution. Hopefully still informative, still interesting, but less likely to land us in court. Hopefully also more professional and more regular – and maybe something that you'll look forward to reading over a cuppa each month. Enjoy!

## Wrapping up repro results



by Claire Hunter & Elena Knupfer

**Thanks to all our dairy farmers who came out to help celebrate the wrap-up of the reproduction season at our two recent Repro Round-Up events in Gore and Winton.**

It was one of the best seasons we've had in a while, so it was great to highlight the results and come together for an awesome night off the farm!

This year we saw an increase in the 6-week in-calf rate to 69% across both areas. The not-in-calf rates were equally impressive, with the east averaging 14.7% (the lowest we've seen for nearly 10 years) and the west sitting at 14.45%.

We also got some great insights from our guest speaker, Ange Schimmelpfennig, a Reproduction Solution Advisor from LIC. She presented national repro statistics, which showed the good results we



experienced for the season were reflected across the country. She also delved into how calving pattern and heifer management can affect reproduction, as well as the influence of fertility breeding value.

A special thanks to some of our awesome farmers who presented their individual repro results, which encouraged some very valuable peer discussions!

To look further into your farm's recent reproductive performance and make a plan for next year, get in touch with your KeyVet.

## ON-FARM FOCUS



### DAIRY



- Book in your pre-calving PP+ check to discover your herd's trace element levels.
- Consider Rotavirus vaccination for your herd, at least 3 weeks pre-calving, to protect your calves from scours.
- Prep your cows for calving, beginning their feed transition 3 weeks pre-calving.
- Do you have all your calving supplies?

### BEEF



- Copper and selenium levels drop in cattle on crop - are yours ok?

### SHEEP



- BCS ewes at scanning - pull out lights.
- Ensure selenium levels have been checked within 12 months.
- Consider pre-lamb parasite management - talk with your vet.
- Pre-order clostridial vaccinations for the year to benefit from better pricing.

### DEER



- Copper is essential - is there enough on board for your stock?

### WORKING DOGS



- Consider a coat for your dogs to see them through the colder nights (especially your old or light ones).



# Getting the calving transition right

by Daniel Cragg

**One of the most critical periods in the life of a dairy cow is the calving transition period - the 3 weeks pre-calving and 3 weeks post-calving - when they go from being dry to lactating.**

Getting this right leads to fewer animal health issues and better performance when it comes to milk production and reproduction. Conversely, if done poorly, cows will lose excessive condition and often enter a state of subclinical ketosis (SCK).

On average, 75% of cows within New Zealand are affected by SCK at some stage over calving, with on-farm variations depending on management of this important period. A cow with SCK will be more likely to develop endometritis/metritis, have a reduced 6-week in-calf rate, produce less over the season, and often end up culled. Down cows with metabolic issues have a high chance of developing SCK.

To lower the risk of SCK, it's vital to revert the negative energy cycle that can happen when feeding winter

crops, which impact a cow's rumen. The main aim pre-calving is to build up rumen capacity again to enable her to eat enough grass/roughage when she calves. Some good options include transitioning cows while still on crop, reducing their crop ration and increasing baleage. Then, proactively drafting cows into springer mobs.

Once she calves, it's important to get her back to eating as fast as possible and doing everything practical to reduce her chances of developing metabolic issues. Offer her plenty of varied feed and reduce her time spent standing on concrete and bonding with her calf.

Minerals are also key. Consider dusting feed with the correct levels of magnesium and calcium, or using Calpro Bolus at calving (especially for high risk cows). Rumenox over the calving period is also proven to reduce SCK by 30-40%.



For more in-depth information about managing the transition period and the focus post-calving, check out my full article on our website: [www.vetsouth.co.nz/blog/](http://www.vetsouth.co.nz/blog/) or scan the QR code below.

If this period is done right, you'll be amazed at how easily the rest of the season falls into place for your cows!

Scan for Dan's full article



## Calving kit checklist

Calving is just around the corner – do you have everything you need?

- Calving chains or ropes
- Calving jack
- Lubricant
- Calcium boluses + applicator
- Metabolic bags
- Fluid therapies + pump
- Minerals
- Electrolytes
- Iodine
- Disinfectant
- Gloves
- Paint or leg bands

Stock up and save on quality supplies during our Calving Spring Order deals week, 5-12 July!



## Growing great calves together



by Sunita McGrath

**As every farmer knows, youngstock are your future.**

The better calves are grown, the more they will produce later on and the longer they will last in your herd – repaying you and more.

The main driver for achieving growth is vitamin G (grass) – good quality and plenty of it! So, you need to focus on managing your pasture, but this doesn't leave much time or brain-power for executing an equally important, robust animal health plan.

Our **Complete Calf Care programme**, which covers minerals, vaccines,

drenches, and trace elements, is designed to help make life a little easier for you.

By having a calf care plan in place, we can ensure that what your animals need is delivered to your farm, when you need it. There is no extra cost or minimum order requirement for the delivery service.

Ask your KeyVet about the programme at your winter consult or get in touch to come up with a plan.

Why did the cow win an award?  She was out standing in her field.

# Triple drench resistance is on the rise

by Angela Butcher



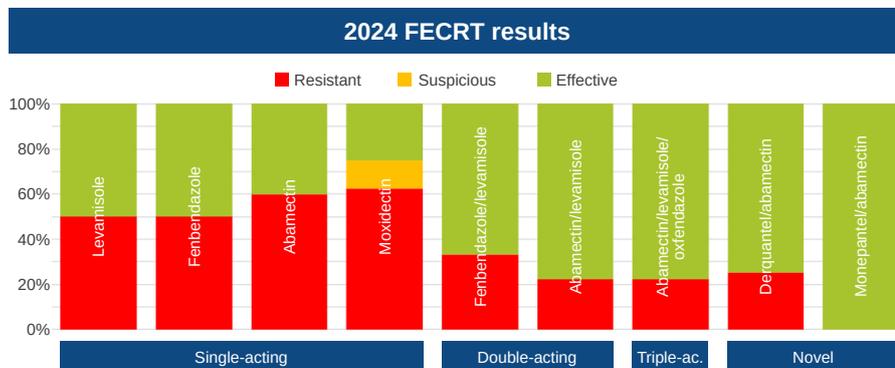
Another faecal egg count reduction test (FECRT) season has come to a close and we have had some concerning results, showing continued high levels of resistance to triple combination drenches and growing resistance to dual-actives.

We performed a total of 10 reduction tests in 2024. The graph below shows the results (please note, not all farms tested for every drench).

Resistance to the dual combination drench products has spiked from 18% across both products last season to 33% and 22% this year. Meanwhile, 22% of the 9 farms that tested a triple drench are resistant, which is again higher than last season's results. Even more alarmingly, one out of four of the farms testing a novel drench also showed resistance.

Triple drench resistance is not a death sentence, but likely will involve some management practice changes. The farms above are working closely with their KeyVets to ensure we can get the best out of the situation.

These results are a timely reminder of how important non-drench parasite management practices are and how important it is to continue monitoring drench performance on your property.



\*It is important to note that this is a small sample size and likely not fully representative of our area, but the results still give some very important insight.

# Hogget care through winter

by Donna Hamilton



Hoggets sometimes struggle through winter. When they should still be growing, many are just surviving. Here are a few key things to keep in mind:

- **Parasite burden** – have they carried parasites through from the autumn? A Faecal Egg Count (FEC) will be useful for checking.
- **B12** – many 'lamb' treatments have run out by now. Consider long/short-acting B12 to help them get the most energy out of their food.
- **Vitamins A, D & E** – these are the sunshine vitamins and can be useful for stock that are doing winter hard.
- **Feed** – a healthy gut is super important. Gradual changes are easier to cope with and benefit health and growth greatly.

# Avoiding leptospirosis in humans

by Lisa Roberts

**Flu season is upon us, but as farmers, we also need to think about another similar but more deadly disease: Leptospirosis.**

This zoonotic bacterial disease can infect cattle, sheep, pigs and deer, plus many other species, including humans, and is shed in the urine.

Lepto can initially make us feel like we have a particularly bad case of the flu, but it then tends to get much worse and can take months to recover from! Some symptoms can include fever, chills, headache, lethargy, aching muscles, vomiting, jaundice, meningitis and bleeding. It can even progress to liver and kidney failure if not treated.

To reduce the likelihood of you or any farm workers becoming infected with leptospirosis, you can: vaccinate animals, wear gloves, cover cuts/abrasions, not eat/drink/smoke until hands are thoroughly washed.

If you do go to the doctors with flu-like symptoms, ensure you tell them that you are a farmer (or have contact with livestock) and ask if it could be leptospirosis.

# Effective lice control in sheep



by Donna Hamilton

**Typically, lice control has happened on our farms in the winter when stock numbers are at their lowest but, does this give the best control? The answer is probably no.**

The most effective lice control, using externally applied products, occurs when it is applied to sheep straight off the shears. That means within 24 hours of shearing when using a backline applied product.

Some farmers favour using automatic jetting races but achieving full control with this method is difficult. If you are using a jetting race, do it as soon as possible after shearing, but expect that you may not get complete knock-down.

You may have heard of a new lice treatment - Flexolt – which is an oral

option and can be used independent of shearing time as it is effective on any wool length. So, if you shear in the summer, but want to dip for lice in the winter, this would be the best method for you. It may also suit your system if you shear groups at different times, e.g. hoggets/two-tooths/rams. This is a product that will need to be ordered in, so get in touch if you are keen for this.

It is important to rotate the use of chemicals used for lice control to avoid resistance developing. **So, don't use the same chemical for lice as you have for fly, or the same lice product year on year.**

To create a lice control programme that best fits your farm, talk to your KeyVet, or one of the team at VetSouth.

# Parvo in pups

by Hugh Hasselman

**Canine Parvovirus Disease is a highly contagious, infectious viral disease of dogs. It attacks the heart muscle, the bone marrow and the lining of the dog's intestines.**

Typical symptoms include vomiting, abdominal pain, and bloody diarrhoea, which results in the severe loss of body fluids and blood proteins, malabsorption of nutrients and increased secondary infections.

Often there are increased case numbers in the summer months, but this year the rise continued into the autumn. Most of the infections were in unvaccinated puppies, but we also treated several unvaccinated young adult dogs.

Parvo is mainly spread through ingestion of the virus in dog faecal material which has contaminated soil, kennels, truck decks, food and water bowls, your clothing, boots, and hands. Transplacental transmission is now rare thanks to widespread vaccination.

Symptoms develop 5-7 days after exposure, and faecal shedding of the virus continues up to two weeks after infection.

**Without treatment, the survival rate is as low as 9%. With treatment, this can increase to 60% - 90%.**

Puppies are most at risk from 6 weeks to 6 months of age, as their immune system is still developing, which is why they need a series of vaccine doses for optimal protection. Those with worm and flea burdens are also more susceptible to infection, so ensure that you have parasite control measures in place.



Parvo vaccination is highly effective and much lower cost than the intensive treatment needed for clinical cases.

Check out the recommended vaccination schedule for pups here: [www.vetsouth.co.nz/blog/post/80974/dog-vaccinations/](http://www.vetsouth.co.nz/blog/post/80974/dog-vaccinations/) or scan the QR code.



## Clinic corner

### Delivery dashcam

What do we do when our delivery driver for the East is off with a broken foot? Rope everyone in to take over the wheel! As well as our relief driver, who did the bulk of the work, our General Manager, Practice Manager, nurses, vets, techs and retail team all pitched in to cover the busy dry cow period and ensure no-one missed out on their on-farm deliveries. "In it together" at its finest!

Meanwhile, delivery driver Jenna over in the West is on track to have done over 3000 FREE deliveries so far this season, averaging 68 each week.

We think that's a pretty impressive effort! Perhaps it's best that we don't count the km's covered/petrol used...

*Note: Our farm delivery service in the West closes for 6 weeks over winter, but we'll be back on the road mid-July.*



### That'll do Hugh, that'll do!

Our resident working dog expert, Hugh, recently celebrated 40 years with us at VetSouth! What a fantastic achievement for him and an amazing win for us and all the lucky pups he has treated in his time. We thought this cake by Taylor Made Cakes captured his desk brilliantly!



## SPRING ORDER DEALS 2024

Calving Spring Order - 5-12 July  
Lambing Spring Order - 2-9 August

\*In-clinic days will be held across the region on specific days during the relevant expo week. See our website for details, [www.vetsouth.co.nz](http://www.vetsouth.co.nz).

Come along to your local clinic and fill your bellies with some tasty treats\*, have a yarn with your local vet and be in to win some spot prizes while **ordering your calving and/or lambing supplies!**

Check out our website for more details, or to order online.



## Our clinics

Balclutha  
Gore  
Winton  
Otautau

Tapanui  
Invercargill  
Lumsden  
Clydevale

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**0800 VETSOUTH**

Keep your pets happy and healthy with our small animal teams in Balclutha, Tapanui, Gore, Invercargill & Winton



*Proud to support:*

Albion Rugby Club, Ohai Nightcaps Rugby Club, Balclutha Squash, Central Southland Netball Centre