

Rural round-up



Holly Hender
Mixed Animal Vet
(East)

A strong sense of community is one of the most important factors for a thriving rural area – and here in Southland, we really excel at this.

After graduating as a vet at the end of 2021, I moved to Gore without knowing a single person in Southland. It was a daunting time, but three and a half years later Southland truly feels like home – largely thanks to my involvement in Gore's local Young Farmers club, Waitane.

We get together monthly for formal meetings, we organise fundraisers and community events, and we even recently went on a 17-person, eight-day group trip across the ditch! We range in age from 18-30 and while there are many farmers among us, we have other rural professionals as members too.

The Otago/Southland branch has just held the 57th FMG Young Farmer of the Year Grand Final. Cam Smith, a dairy farmer from Thornbury Young Farmers club, did our region proud by coming fourth overall and winning the Agri-skills award from the practical day in Winton. The competition winner, Hugh Jackson from Waikato/Bay of Plenty, has previously been a member of the Thornbury club as well! Both Cam and Hugh are a testament to the quality of farmers we have in the deep south.

Of course, none of it would have been possible without the regional Young Farmers committee, countless volunteers, and the incredible support of local businesses who came together to help showcase our beautiful region. The event was a huge success and a great display of the talent, dedication and drive of our younger generation.

Farming in the South is in great hands!

Turn it over

by Donna Hamilton

Parasites affect all animals that graze grass.

In the past, drenching has been the only way to manage this – but in all species, we are seeing parasites become resistant to drenches. So, we need to consider other ways to manage parasites.

Be it a paddock where lambs have grazed, calves have fed, or fawns have lived, there will be parasites there from previous grazing. Removing these parasites will help the next lot of animals grazing. We can 'remove' them by burying them. Turning the ground over with a plough, discs, or other cultivation will reduce the parasite load.

Some paddocks may have had a lot of parasites dumped on them during the autumn – if they are due for pasture renewal, great! If you're expecting ewes to shed undesirable parasites during lambing, putting ewes in these paddocks will mean these parasites



will be buried shortly. It's especially something to consider if long-acting drench is used. Also, preparing these fields for crop will mean that your lambs will not be grazing them after weaning, when they are very susceptible to last autumn's burdens. Make the most of burying parasites!

New fodder/grass provides a great opportunity for low parasite feeding, which is a real bonus for young susceptible stock of all species. However, we do need to be careful with this and refugia needs to be considered so you don't create a zone of only resistant parasites.

If you don't know what some of these terms mean, or you need help making the most of these opportunities, please reach out. We would love to help!

ON-FARM FOCUS



DAIRY



- Provide trace elements to support cows post-calving and as they move into peak milk production.
- Ensure calves get 3-4L of Brix-tested >22% gold colostrum within 6-12 hours of birth.
- Keep up good hygiene practices around the calf shed.
- Consider our Complete Calf Care programme to cover calf drenches, vaccines and trace elements.
- Book in disbudding for the calves and metrichecking for the cows.
- Keep an eye out for spring mastitis.

BEEF



- Transfer off crop pre-calving.
- Does your herd need a clostridial booster vaccination?
- Consider a pre-calving lice drench.
- BVD vaccinate animals who haven't previously been vaccinated.

SHEEP



- BCS ewes – increase quality and quantity of feed offered, as energy requirements lifting towards lambing.
- Test for selenium if you haven't in last 12 months. It's essential and deficiencies are common.
- Supplement with selenium (check dose, they are not all the same).
- Supplement ewes with iodine to avoid unnecessary lamb deaths.
- Are pre-lamb drenches required? Check in with us before committing.
- Vitamin drench close to lambing.
- Look out for our lambing Local Vet Yarns this August and get your lambing supplies sorted with our Spring Order Deals!

DEER



- Test dry hinds at the works for copper and selenium – is there enough on board for your stock?

Colostrum key to calf rearing

by Emma Middlemass

The ultimate aim of calf rearing is to make the calf as strong and healthy as possible. Colostrum is key to this.

I'm sure you know that colostrum is the first milk a cow produces after calving, which is essential for building a calf's immune system – but what about gold colostrum? It's the very first colostrum that the cow creates and is rich in energy, proteins, and vital antibodies.

This is the best type of colostrum to get into your newborn calves. The more antibodies a calf receives, the stronger and healthier it will be.

There are four 'Qs' when it comes to feeding colostrum:

Quickly

The first 6-12 hours after birth are when the best absorption of antibodies happens. If a calf has to wait a whole day for that first drink of colostrum, then they won't get enough antibodies, as the gut wall 'closes' after 24 hours and can't absorb them.

For this reason, we recommend twice daily pick-ups – the sooner you can collect them and ensure they receive that all important colostrum, the better.

Quantity

Each calf should get a minimum of 10%

of their body weight in gold colostrum during their first 12 hours of life, e.g. 4L if the calf is 40kg.

If they won't suckle, gently tube feed them to ensure they get what they need.

Quality

Before feeding newborn calves, test each batch of gold colostrum with a Brix refractometer. Calves under 24 hours old should receive colostrum that measures 22% or higher.

To get this quality, milk newly-calved cows as soon as possible, don't mix this first milking colostrum in with other colostrum, and try to use gold colostrum the same day it is collected.

If your colostrum is measuring less than 22%, you need to feed more within their first 12 hours to ensure they get enough antibodies. You could also look at mixing in a product like Launchpad18 to enhance the antibody levels.

Cleanliness

Everybody knows that cleanliness around young animals is important, but wet weather and high workloads can make standards start to slip. It's so crucial though that you maintain good colostrum management, as bacteria getting into the colostrum will quickly lower its quality and the amount of antibodies it contains.

Clean buckets, feeders, and other equipment with hot, soapy water after every use. Keep lids on buckets of colostrum closed. If you need to store colostrum longer than a day or two, add a preservative like potassium sorbate.

If these four 'Qs' aren't achieved:

Failure of passive transfer (FPT)

The transfer of immunity via colostrum is often referred to as 'passive transfer'. FPT is when a calf doesn't ingest enough antibodies in the timeframe.

Insufficient antibodies leads to a weaker immune system and an increased risk of poor growth, disease and death. If these calves become part of the herd, they may struggle to be good producers.

Total protein (TP)

We can check for FPT by analysing blood samples from calves. We look at the concentration of TP and this gives us an indication of whether they received enough gold colostrum at birth.

It's an easy test that we do in-house, giving you results quickly. If the TP is low, the antibody levels of those calves can't be changed, but there will hopefully be time for you to adjust your practices for the rest of spring.

Have a yarn with your KeyVet if you would like advice about colostrum and calf management, and let us know if you would like any TP sampling done on calves this year.

We're here to help this spring

Complete Calf Care

Get your calves off to a great start with our Complete Calf Care programme. Designed to help make life a little easier for you, it covers minerals, vaccines, drenches, and trace elements for your future milkers over their first 12 months. Get a plan in place with us and we can ensure that what your animals need is delivered to your farm when you need it – for no extra cost.

Wearable tech health alerts

Do you have wearable tech on your farm (collars, ear tags, or boluses)? If you're not sure what to do with your health alerts over spring, we have helpful flow charts available. Just ask and we can get one to you. This provides a framework for you and your staff to work through, giving you confidence to manage the sick cows your tech is finding. However, if she doesn't get better or you think there's something quite serious going on, call your KeyVet!

What's best for housing calves?



by Emma Middlemass

- A shed that's sheltered from the wind and rain so it's warm, with good ventilation and natural light – remember to disinfect it regularly.
- Pens for healthy calves with **solid partitions** separating them (stopping pen-to-pen contact limits the spread of disease).
- An **isolated pen** for sick calves.
- Enough **space** for every calf – 1.5-2.5m² per calf is recommended.
- Clean, dry **bedding** that's a comfortable depth.
- Hay and **meal** troughs (these are crucial for rumen development).
- Fresh drinking **water**.
- **Cleaning stations** for staff and equipment.
- An all-in all-out system, where similar-aged calves stay in one pen their whole time in the shed to reduce the spread of disease.



Clostridial disease defence

by Ben Bottcher

Why vaccinate?

Clostridial vaccination for your sheep is a crucial preventative measure against a range of lethal bacteria in the environment, including diseases such as tetanus, pulpy kidney, and blackleg.

Clostridial diseases cause high rates of sudden death, as lethal toxins accumulate quickly to a dangerous level before treatment is possible. Therefore, vaccines are key for [clostridial management](#) and starting vaccination at a young age is best.

When to give vaccinations?

We recommend giving the first dose to lambs at tailing, then a booster at weaning. Hoggets need a booster during the winter and spring seasons to help maintain protection.

From then, most annual vaccines are given pre-lamb to boost colostrum antibodies and protect ewes during lambing. This can be given 2-4 weeks before lambing, but earlier may also ok – check your plan with your vet.

Which vaccine to use?

Ultravac 5-in-1 is the traditional clostridial vaccine and it comes in a range of formulations, some with added selenium and vitamin B12.

Note, the B12 option contains only a small amount of selenium (1mg), as it's primarily designed for lambs. The

+Se option contains more selenium (5mg), but this may still be insufficient depending on your stock's needs. Trace element monitoring by your vet can help ensure levels are optimal.

Unfortunately Ultravac 6-in-1 is no longer available in New Zealand.

However, more recently developed and locally manufactured is Covexin 10, a 10-in-1 which covers all of the clostridial diseases we see in sheep and cattle in New Zealand. It is growing in popularity as the next step in clostridial management and particularly in reducing sudden deaths from *C. sordellii* and *C. perfringens* type A, especially over winter and on crop.

We're more than happy to discuss a vaccine schedule and selenium requirements for your flock. Get in touch for tailored advice.

Parasites around lambing time



by Donna Hamilton

With a very wormy Autumn this year, we expect there are a lot of parasites on our farms at the moment. We rely on the immunity of adult stock to mop these up and reduce the larval challenge.

When immunity is strong, stock will eat larvae, but these won't progress into mature parasites. Or if they do, they produce fewer eggs and these eggs are less likely to survive once they are passed. That's why we say these high-immunity animals are net consumers of parasites.

However, during the stress of lambing, immunity drops. Ingested larvae can mature, and the mature parasites start producing a lot of eggs that are passed by the animal. The environmental

temperature then affects the likelihood of these eggs surviving. Cooler weather (under 10°C) helps reduce how many of these eggs develop into larvae.

There are short and long-acting drench options to help your ewes fight parasites. Short-acting kills the worms that are already in the animal, while long-acting targets incoming worms – but only if that particular drench family works against them.

We're regularly talking with farmers about their options, aiming to drench only adults that need it. Body condition and feed availability are key factors to consider, and your farm management plays a part as well.

We'd love to talk this through with you as lambing approaches – give us a call for a chat.



Lambing kit checklist

Lambs are starting to hit the ground around the region – do you have everything you need?

- ☐ Tags with imprinted numbers
- ☐ Iodine spray
- ☐ Colostrum/milk powder
- ☐ Stomach tube
- ☐ Woollen or plastic lamb covers
- ☐ Anti-inflammatories/pain relief
- ☐ Dextrose 40%, needles and syringe
- ☐ Electrolytes and energy supplements (e.g. Ketol)
- ☐ Metabolic bags (e.g. Glucalpos)
- ☐ Minerals
- ☐ Clostridial disease vaccines
- ☐ Drenches
- ☐ Disinfectant and antiseptic powder (e.g. Stalosan F)
- ☐ Gloves

Stock up and save on supplies during our lambing Spring Order Deals!

Scan between
1-10 August to
order online.



Local Vet Yarns

Join our vets for a free feed and yarn about getting lambs off to a great start.

6 August - Owaka
7 August - Drummond
13 August - Gore
14 August - Heriot

Check your inbox for details and to RSVP.



The danger of milk powder and farm dogs

With calving and lambing underway, remember to keep an eye on any farm dogs who might be inclined to go on the hunt around the sheds for a snack.

Some milk powders, particularly those intended for production animals, may contain coccidiostats (to prevent the parasitic infection coccidiosis). However, coccidiostats can be lethal to farm dogs!

If you think your dog has gotten into a milk powder bag or helped himself to leftover made-up milk, or you notice signs they're unwell, it's crucial to seek assistance from your vet straight away to improve the odds of recovery.

SPRING ORDER DEALS 2025

LAMBING: 1-10 AUGUST

Stock up on supplies for spring. Pop into your local clinic or order online, and be in to WIN a \$500 VetSouth voucher!

T&Cs apply.



Scan while deals are on to conveniently order online.

Clinic corner



Celebrating calving Spring Order

It was great to have a yarn with those of you who came into clinic during our Calving Spring Order events in Winton, Gore, Tapanui and Invercargill in July.

Thanks to everyone who took advantage of our deals by placing product orders, and to those good sports who got involved with the competitions. It was also lovely to welcome so many 'little farmers' and have some family fun in the clinics.

We're looking forward to seeing our sheep clients at our Lambing Spring Order events at the start of this month. Come along for free food and a hot cuppa, a chance to pick the brains of our vets, and discounts on everything you need for spring!

Backing young farmers

We were stoked to support the FMG Young Farmer of the Year competition in our home region this year.

The Otago/Southland Regional Young Farmers grand finalist Cam Smith visited the Invercargill clinic before the event and our team grabbed a quick snap with him and his furry pal.

He really did the South proud, winning the practical day Agri-skills award and coming fourth overall – good on ya mate, top effort!



They see me rollin'

We love to see the ways you turn up at clinic for your KeyVet consults!

Over the wintertime, we're busy completing KVCs with our dairy farmers, reviewing how things went on-farm last season and getting a plan together for the season ahead.

Working with you

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

CALL 0800 VETSOUTH



Follow us
@VetSouthNZ



Proud to support:

Young Farmers Grand Final
Dairy Holdings Conference
Grasslands Conference