

Rural round-up



Brad Shaw
Mixed Animal Vet
(East)

The last few months we've been in the thick of calving and lambing alongside you, sharing in the associated challenges and triumphs these times bring.

It's the time of the year where us vets are often out on-farm, up to our armpit inside a cow. From conjoined twins to inside-out calves, assisted calvings are not always straight forward.

Calving a cow isn't about brute force; it can be a delicate puzzle to solve at times. You have to have eyes at the end of your fingers to 'see' what is going on inside. It can be a thrilling challenge trying to get the calf birthed and it's so satisfying (and a huge relief for all) when it finally slides out.

As vets we have a few different tools in our belt to give us an advantage. One of these is the fetotomy. No doubt most of our dairy or beef farmers have seen this in action. In cases where the calf is not viable, it can really turn the tide during the battle to get the calf out and save the cow.

At the time of writing this, calving season is coming to an end for another year – I hope it went smoothly for you.

Hopefully our sheep farmers have been experiencing a successful lambing season too, and those of you lambing late are managing well through the changing spring.

On a final note, wasn't it good to have better weather in late winter and early spring compared to last year? Although as I look out the window it's currently pouring with rain... but with any luck it won't set in too long and we'll have a great spring and summer.

Our programmes

by Georgia Evans

We believe great animal health performance comes from a strong partnership between the farmer and their vet clinic.

That's why we have programmes to support and reward this relationship.

OviGold is our partnership programme for sheep and beef farmers. Through regular check-ins and animal health reviews, your vet will gain a better understanding of your farm. Other benefits include tests for selenium, timely faecal egg counts, and ram readiness checks, so you can make informed decisions that will boost your stock's performance.

OviGold also offers members great savings of up to 7% on many essential animal health products and a 6% discount on sheep or beef vet fees.*

KeyVet Gold is our reward programme for dairy farmers. We value your loyalty and investment in proactive and preventative services

that improve animal health outcomes and benefit your farm management. To recognise this, we offer discounts on restricted veterinary medicines (RVMs) when you use these services.

KeyVet Gold is available to those who have been our client for at least one year and have utilised three or more qualifying services (disbudding, metrichecking, scanning, teat sealing, body condition scoring, trace element testing, and more). You'll receive a 7.5% discount off RVMs and save 10% on prescribed Dry Cow Therapy.*

Production Profile Plus (PP+) is our dairy trace element monitoring programme. Trace elements are vital for herd performance, but they can be a time and money drain. By testing, we can provide supplementation advice to target your stock's actual needs and catch any mineral problems early.

PP+ programme consists of three visits at key times (pre-calving, pre-mating, and pre-drying off) to take blood and liver samples to test copper, selenium and magnesium levels.*

Ask your KeyVet about signing up to any of our programmes this season.

*Exclusions and T&Cs apply.



ON-FARM FOCUS



DAIRY



- Follow your vaccine and drench plan for calves.
- Ensure heifers, cows and bulls are in optimal condition for mating.
- Keep an eye out for spring lameness and mastitis.
- Heat detect to identify non-cyclers and plan an intervention programme.
- Book a repro consult with us to create a mating plan.

BEEF



- Consider fertility testing your bulls.
- BVD booster shots for bulls and cows.
- BVD vaccination for heifers – two shots, 3-8 weeks apart, finishing four weeks before mating.
- Priority feed your heifers to promote cycling after calving.

SHEEP



- Have you ordered all your tailing supplies?
- Drench check FEC animals that had a long-acting drench before lambing.
- Create a season plan with your vet for B12 supplementing/testing.

DEER



- Velveters, get your shed cleaned up and your Supervisory visit booked in.
- Remove velvet from stags/spikers.
- Set stock fawning mobs onto high quality pasture.
- Prioritise growth of yearlings.

WORKING DOGS



- Remember monthly tablets for Sheep Measles prevention.

Intervening this repro season

by Bianca Mackintosh

With most of the calves out, the focus now turns to getting them back in!

Those of you with wearable technology will likely have turned your attention from transition rumination to cycling rates (maybe obsessively staring at your screen to watch the number of cows cycling going up).

Meanwhile, those who are sticking with 'tried and true' manual methods of noting cycles will be due to get tail paint or scratchies on and start their pre-mating heat detection (slowly watching the bright colours on the herd change).

However, despite your best efforts to get all cows cycling early, some just won't. Non-cycling cows continue to negatively affect the reproductive performance of dairy herds.

We know that early treatment of non-cycling cows results in better reproductive outcomes. There have been some fantastic developments to our existing repro intervention programmes in NZ over the last couple of years. While our old programmes achieved good conception rates,

the addition of extra doses and volumes of prostaglandin (PG) in new non-cycler programmes has resulted in significantly improved conception rates.

Don't worry though, the standard programmes are still available for those wanting to keep the cost of treatment to a minimum. But for those wanting to push for even higher conception rates and better return on investment, then there are plenty of routes to explore with these enhanced programmes.

We also have an exciting new option for fixed time AI in yearling heifers.

Studies into this option have shown a staggering 16% higher first service conception rate and 13% higher 6-week in-calf rates when compared to a typical CIDR programme for heifers.

There are so many ways we can work together and intervene to improve your herd's repro season. **There's no 'one size fits all' approach, the best results come from choosing the right programme for your animals, goals and budget with your KeyVet.**

So, figure out who's not cycling and make a plan for mating time. For those with automated heat detection technology it is easier than ever to identify and target groups for treatment. For those without technology, the paint still works!

Arrange a **repro consult** ahead of mating with your KeyVet and get a plan for your farm sorted. Let's make this repro season a great one.



A big congratulations to the lucky winners of the major prizes from our calving Spring Order Deals week in July! Waimumu Downs were stoked to win the \$500 VetSouth voucher and Van Sante Trust were thrilled to bag the Selekt Starter Pack.

Should you phantom scan?

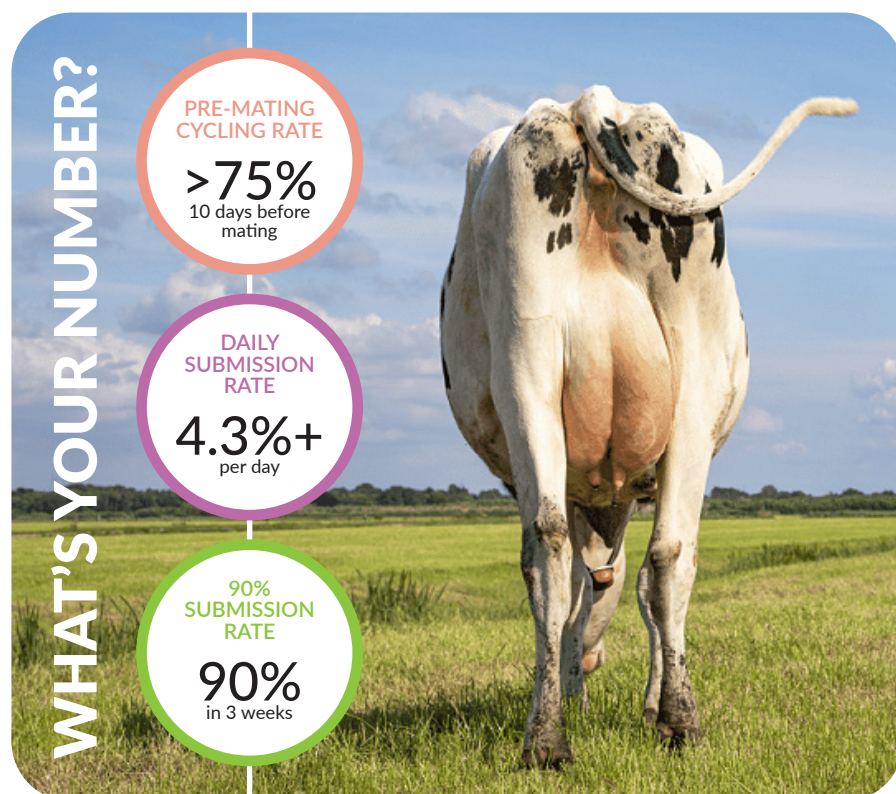
by Sunita McGrath

Phantom cows... what's the deal? This is when a cow has been put up for insemination and doesn't show signs of heat within 35 days. So, you assume she's pregnant, but then at the final scan she's empty – immensely frustrating.

The causes are multifactorial. There is strong evidence that problems in the herd like endometritis (dirty cows), BVD, low body condition scores, and high numbers of non-cycling cows increase the risk of phantom cows, but they also likely have a genetic predisposition.

Identifying these cows means an early scanning session. Timing is critical. We can then use a hormone plan to get any cows found to not be pregnant cycling again, giving them a chance to get in calf before mating ends.

Get in touch with your KeyVet if you think you have a phantom cow problem. We all know the cost of an empty cow and if this method can get a few extra cows in calf for you, then the return on investment will be a good one!



Giving your lambs their first drench

by Donna Hamilton

With lambs now on the ground, you might be thinking: When should I give my lambs their first drench? And what type of drench do I use?

Once lambs develop their rumen, they can host internal parasites. From then on, their immune system responds to incoming larvae, and we see young stock with reduced appetite, poor growth, and scours – all as outcomes of immune system stimulation.

We've been talking to lots of farmers about how to avoid parasites, and how to modify their system to favour the animals, not the parasites. However, we know that drench still has its place in an effective parasite management programme.

At pre-weaning/weaning time the largest number of lambs are drenched compared to any other part of the season. This drenching has to be needed and effective.

Farmers often know when it's needed. They can see symptoms or can predict when challenge will be high, based on



what's been in the paddock previously. A simple FEC (faecal egg count) test through us can help with this decision making and check if it's really required.

We know many farmers still drench four weeks before weaning, but also many that are moving to drenching only when required (and this might not be at weaning). So it's worth considering timing for your lambs this year – weaning time may be easier when not having to drench all the lambs as well.

Some farmers have now done drench testing on their flock to know what is effective. If you haven't, we recommend using a triple drench and following up with a post-drench check (a type of FEC using 10 samples collected 10 days after drenching). It's important

to consider that spring/early summer parasites are different from autumn parasites. So, if you have done drench testing before, but it was in the autumn, it may pay to ask your KeyVet for a recommendation this spring. Knowing the effectiveness of your drench ensures you are using the right product, making the most of your animal health spend, and not creating resistant parasites.

If you're using a novel drench this season (i.e. Startect or Zolvix Plus), remember there are no minerals in these products! Selenium and B12 can be supplemented separately or in combination with a clostridial vaccine. See the article on B12 treatment below for options.

Vitamin B12 treatment options



by Donna Hamilton

In the last issue of Paddock Press, we featured an article with the results of vitamin B12 testing on local lambs conducted earlier this year, as well as options for getting your stock tested.

Now let's take a look at what your options for supplementation are once you've tested.

Smartshot is a long-acting B12 injection. It can be administered while lambs are in for tailing, or any time following that. The dose rate dictates how long it will last. At tailing time the full recommended dose is 1ml, and this would give 6-8 months of B12 requirements. However, many sheep farmers use a dose rate of between 0.5-1ml, giving variable lengths of cover. There is a version of this product that includes long-acting selenium.

Prolaject is a short-acting B12 injection. It can be given monthly to young stock to help maintain adequate levels. It's available with or without selenium. It comes in two concentrations – so check which you prefer to administer.

Another option is **Ultravac 5+1** which comes with B12 or B12 and selenium.

We have many clients who will be using less mineralised drench this year, either because they need to use more novel drench that doesn't contain minerals or they are using grazing techniques to reduce their drench requirement.

These farmers should consider the impact of less vitamin B12/cobalt and selenium going into their animals and revisit their supplementation plan to ensure growth is not limited by a mineral deficiency.

Rearing beef calves this year?

If you're hand-rearing beef calves this year and feeling overwhelmed with all of the animal health needs to keep a track of, give us a call.

Our Complete Calf Care programme is designed to make life a little easier for you, covering all of the vaccines, drenches, minerals and trace elements your calves need during their first 12 months – helping you get them off to a great start.

We can tailor the programme's plan to suit you, including as many or as few products as you'd like, scheduled at times that work for your stock.

We'll then give you a call when those key dates are coming up and ensure what you require is delivered to your farm. All for no extra cost!

Clinic corner



Mark Bryan is moving on

Twenty years ago this November we formally created VetSouth. It was initially a merger of Gore & West Otago Vets (in Gore) and Central Southland Vets (in Winton). We then brought in Southern Vet Centre (in Invercargill) 10 years later.

The goal was to create a sustainable veterinary business for the people of Southland and southern Otago. We're far away from things down here, both people and products, and this brought challenges.

Collaborating and creating VetSouth has helped us better meet those challenges along the way and allowed us to continually provide you with top-class, sustainable animal health support.

Unfortunately, we can't make people sustainable. Sadly we're saying a very fond farewell from the business to one of the founders of VetSouth, Mark Bryan. Originally from Scotland, Mark has been in Southland for almost 30 years, initially helping to grow the Winton vet clinic before being a key driver behind forming VetSouth in 2005.

Mark was a mixed vet back in the day, although his focus evolved to be more on dairy and sheep. He completed a Masters in Epidemiology in 2004 (before Covid taught the world what an epidemiologist was) and used that to incorporate a significant amount of

clinical research into our workstream. That in turn allowed products and procedures to be tested in southern conditions rather than up north, to the benefit of many of our clients.

More recently he has been instrumental in the continued growth of VetSouth, developing West Coast Vets on the same model, and continuing to expand the employee-shareholder model as VetSouth developed into VetNZ and, in 2023, grew into Comhla Vet. Comhla Vet now has clinics, staff and local shareholders across both the South and North Island's of New Zealand, and also Australia.

Many of you will have encountered Mark over the years – either listening to him speaking at events, spotting him in the farming papers, merrymaking alongside him at a Scottish ceilidh, bumping into him on a mountain, or being exposed to his views on the merits and misfortunes of the Scottish rugby team.

Mark has always been passionate about being a vet, and about the crucial role that vets play in rural communities. This year, he was awarded the Presidential Award from the New Zealand Veterinary Association for 20 years of voluntary contribution to the Association.

He's adamant he isn't retiring. So instead he's finishing up with VetSouth in February next year to embark upon a Masters in Psychology, focusing on veterinary wellbeing.

"VetSouth is going fantastically and has a superb set of leaders in place. We have outstanding teams across all the organisation and in each clinic. I'm keen to continue to support the profession and rural communities through this new journey. VetSouth will always be part of me – the people, the clients, the farms are all special and it's been a privilege to have been able to work alongside you all" says Mark.

All of us here at VetSouth would like to thank him for his incredible input over the past 30 years. He's a great vet, a great leader, and a great friend.

We will arrange a suitably bonnie Scottish leaving function at some stage in early 2026, so keep an eye out for that. This isn't goodbye forever – no doubt we'll all continue to see Mark popping up around the place in the future!



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:

Meet the Need
Dressage Southland
Waikoiko Cricket Team