



## SEASONAL HOOOF PRINT

SHEEP, BEEF, DEER & HORSES



Issue: 008 – Summer 2015/16

Ph: (03) 578 6965

### Preparing for El Niño

*Adapted from MPI brochure.*

Forecasters are predicting that the strong El Niño conditions of spring 2015 will continue over summer and into autumn 2016. El Niño 2015/16 may be ranked amongst strongest El Niño events recorded.

During El Niño, New Zealand generally experiences stronger or more frequent winds from south-west in spring and west in summer, typically leading to cooler temperatures, more rain in the west and drier conditions in the north and east. With that in mind we can anticipate a very dry summer here in Marlborough. El Niño will increase the chances of more frequent and extreme adverse weather events, so we need to think about how we will manage our way through.

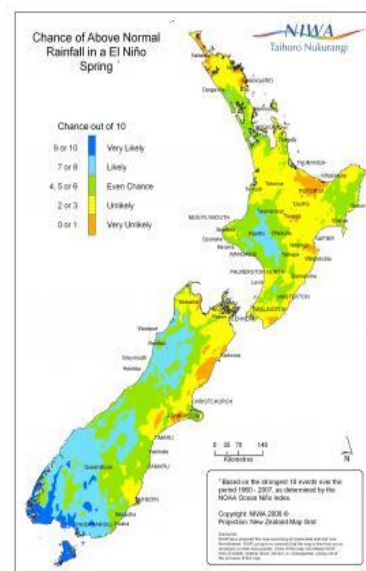
**Hope for the best, but plan for the worst!!!**

**What can we do?**

#### In This Issue:

- Preparing for El Nino
- Preventing Abortions in Sheep
- Ram Palpations/Brucella Ovis
- Deer Handling Facilities
- Stag Anaesthesia
- Beef Cow Scanning!
- Optigrow
- Ryegrass Staggers-Horses
- Sheep Measles

- Have a plan in place with set dates for decisions depending on climate conditions. Discuss your plan with your trusted advisors and update over time.
- Make decisions early and take action.
- Pastoral farmers (Most of us in Marlborough) – feed supplies are key. Based on your up-to-date feed budget, conserve true feed surplus and assess the potential for summer feed the remaining stock as well as possible to maximise income.
- If available, use irrigation water efficiently and plan for water restrictions.
- Have a robust and realistic budget and monitor it.
- Monitor seasonal forecasts, and extreme weather and fire warnings.
- Talk to experts, such as your bank, accountant, vet & other professional advisers and don't forget peers who have survived this El Niño pattern before. The team at Vets on Alabama will be happy to discuss your situation and assist in planning for the worst while hoping for the best!
- Make time for yourself, your staff and your family. Sometimes a few hours away from the business can make a huge difference.
- Look out for your neighbours.
- Look after your animals – regular monitor stock condition.
- Ask for help if you need it.
- If you are unsure where to go for advice or assistance contact the Rural Support Trust at [www.rural-support.org.nz/](http://www.rural-support.org.nz/) to find out what options are available.



# Preventing Abortions In Your Sheep Flock In 2016

Studies conducted in New Zealand reveal that *Toxoplasma gondii* is present on 100% of sheep & beef farms and *Campylobacter fetus fetus* was found on 88% of farms. Given this result – there is a pretty good chance that these two organisms are present on your property. Therefore the use of Toxovax® and Campyvax4® vaccines make economic sense to help secure your lamb returns in 2016.

## **TOXOPLASMOSIS – THE PROBLEM      TOVOVAX® - THE SOLUTION**

Toxovax® is generally a one shot for life vaccine, administered to first time lambing hoggets or two toothys up until 4 weeks prior to the ram being introduced (including teaser rams). It is important to be aware that if this year's Two Toothys were vaccinated as Hoggets you may want to consider revaccinating, especially if this stock class was stressed last Summer / Autumn due to feed shortages, parasites etc. that could have lead to a poorer response to the vaccine in these younger animals.

Toxovax® must be ordered at least 8 weeks before your ram introduction date (4 weeks before you want to vaccinate), as this vaccine is manufactured to order. Toxovax® is delivered to the clinic on a Tuesday morning and must be used within 10 days, however the sooner you administer this vaccine after collecting it the better.

## **CAMPYLOBACTER – THE PROBLEM      CAMPYVAX4® - THE SOLUTION**

First time lambing ewes require 2 doses of Campyvax4® prior to the introduction of the ram (or an annual booster to mixed age ewes) in order to prevent possible early embryonic loss.

The early losses are much less common than an abortion storm in the last 6 weeks of pregnancy. An annual booster is advised for mixed age ewes. As long as you are vaccinating outside of 4 weeks pre the ram's introduction, Toxovax® and Campyvax4® can be administered at the same time for one of the vaccinations. Please also note that it is best if you inject each vaccine on opposite sides on the anterior part of the neck.

Where these diseases exist – which is almost everywhere; using Campyvax4® can result in a 9% increase in lambing percentage. Using Toxovax® can result in up to 8% increase in lambing percentage (national average: 3% increase). Using Toxovax will also reduce the incidence of dry ewes by an average of 14%. For a ewe flock of 2000, this equates to 300+ additional lambs. This figure does not take into account the benefits of preventing an abortion storm.

**PLEASE ORDER YOUR SHEEP REPRODUCTIVE VACCINES WITH US AS SOON AS YOU KNOW YOUR REQUIREMENTS. THE EARLIER YOU ORDER, THE MORE LIKELY WE ARE GOING TO BE ABLE TO HAVE VACCINE (Toxovax®) WHEN YOU WANT IT.**

For more information please go to [www.vetsonalabama.co.nz/#!/sheepbeef/c1n9u](http://www.vetsonalabama.co.nz/#!/sheepbeef/c1n9u)  
or call the clinic on (03) 5786965

## **2015/16 Pricing**

### **CONTROL THE RISK OF TOXOPLASMOSIS**



### **CONTROL THE RISK OF CAMPYLOBACTER**



#### **Toxovax® - 2ml dose**

100ml (50 doses):	\$186.65 +GST
200ml (100 doses):	\$357.74 +GST

#### **Campyvax4® - 1ml dose**

100ml (100 doses):	\$65.13 + GST
200ml (200 doses):	\$292.65 + GST

**IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THESE VACCINES ARE KEPT COOL – THEREFORE PICK UP YOUR VACCINE ON YOUR WAY HOME TO MINIMISE TEMPERATURE CHANGES IN YOUR VEHICLE.**

**TO HELP WITH THIS VETS ON ALABAMA ARE GIVING AWAY A CHILLER BAG AND A FREE VACCINATOR GUN WITH EVERY PURCHASE OF TOXOVAX®. \*\*While stocks last**

## Deer Handling Facilities – Develveting

As we enter into December, it is now velvetting time again. If you have not already- then it is important that you have a look at the state of your deer shed and facilities prior to develveting.

Any protrusions such as gate hinges and gudgeons should be cut off to avoid injury. The floors of sheds should be in good condition, clean with minimisation of dust and provide a good footing.

Ventilation is very important in your deer shed, especially given the hot dry Marlborough conditions. Stags exposed to greater than 22°C during develveting may suffer from heat stress - please refer to the anaesthesia article below for more details.

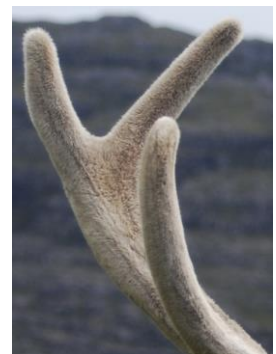
Ideally stags should be drafted into mobs on a weekly basis as they drop their buttons. The size of these mobs should be relative to the yarding capabilities of your shed. If mob sizes are too big there is a high risk of increased stress and the potential of damaging the velvet.

This is an important and skilled job, if you observe anything that cannot be rectified please call us for assistance.

## Stag Anaesthesia

*Compiled from Dr Ian Scott Chairman NVSB article*

Lately, the National Velvetting Standards Body NVSB has been pointing out that there is an exponential increase in the anaesthetic risk when using even low levels of xylazine sedation. These can happen even for seemingly simple tasks such as trophy antler measuring or ear tag removal. Stags with fully grown or late stage velvet heads which have yet to harden or partially strip are high risk animals.



The effects of xylazine sedation are to lower blood pressure and tissue oxygen perfusion and this, combined with other less understood factors, result in the rapid inability of stags to maintain the equilibrium of head posture (exaggerated by antler weight) and the affected animals can rapidly progress to a 'rye-neck' like condition.

Milder cases may recover over a few days to weeks but severe cases rapidly lose balance, become recumbent and die. Rapid reversal or high levels of reversal do not correct the damage, but routine reversal of all anaesthesia is recommended.

It is recommended that farmers dealing in the trophy market develop handling facilities adequate to measure and remove ear tags from stags without sedation, and that sale stags have velvet removed using local anaesthetic only. Withholding sedation until antlers start to strip will reduce dramatically the anaesthetic risk with trophy stags.

All stag anaesthesia undertaken late in the velvet season Dec-Feb. must be done with a clear understanding of existing air temperatures. Stags under xylazine have reduced respiratory rates and because of this they lose the ability to control core body temperatures. Sedated stags often become recumbent again after leaving the shed despite reversal being used and if they sit in direct sunlight and death through heat stress can follow. Sedated stags are not logical in selecting shady areas in which to sit despite trees being in the paddock. Hence, evening sedation allows night time to fully recover.



Yarding stags with full antler can be a life and death situation for the stags involved (and the owner) should they be trapped by another stag. These animals can be presented for treatment in an agitated and stressed condition. Sedating these animals with high underlying levels of lactic acidosis (the outcome of stressed respiration) can ultimately lead to cardiac arrest. **Under no circumstances should these stags be sedated until respiratory rates have been normal for some time.**

Dealing with stags post rut for a range of conditions such as lameness or abscesses, injuries etc can lead to complications. These animals have been in a catabolic state for an extended length of time, are very thin and liver function may not process anaesthetics in the expected manner. Fat reserves are depleted so drug redistribution profiles change. Doses required to achieve anaesthesia can be lower and response to reversal reduced.

**Take care!!**

## Ram Palpations/ Brucella Ovis



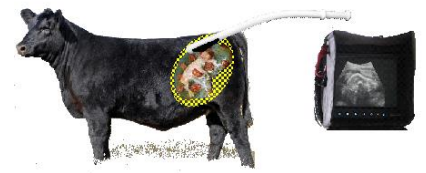
Ram fertility can be affected by two diseases – *Brucella ovis* and *Actinobaccillus seminis*. These diseases can spread by homosexual behaviour between rams. There are brucellosis accreditation schemes that have been put in place for ram breeders to ensure two tooth rams are blood tested before selection.

Even if you are not a breeder, it is a good idea to have your rams palpated prior to mating to ensure that they do not have any signs of epididymitis lesions or injuries as this could reduce fertility and spread disease amongst your breeding rams.

## Book Your Herd In For Scanning

Our team of veterinarians have the ability to ultrasound scan your beef cows, having the added advantage that they are skilled at ensuring manual re checks are as accurate as possible. They know exactly what they are looking at or feeling to give you confidence of the best possible pregnancy diagnosis. Having a vet scan your cows will also allow you to have any health issues attended to while yarded.

Vets on Alabama have multiple veterinarians and a wealth of experience at scanning cattle in the practice. Please book in your cows for scanning in early 2016 to ensure we can scan your herd when you need to.



## Optigrow Checks

Selenium, Cobalt and copper levels should be checked in lambs – especially as Marlborough is known as having low selenium levels! Knowing your status will help you to make the correct decisions around trace elements. We are here to help in this area – please call the clinic to have your stock blood tested or arrange when a draft of lambs goes for processing. The appropriate forms are available from us – please phone 03 5786965.

## Perennial Ryegrass Staggers In Horses



This is a seasonal condition that can cause a lot of stress to both the horse and its owner. It is caused by lolitoxin – a fungal produced toxin that is commonly found in pastures containing ryegrass during the summer and autumn months when it is warm endophyte fungi will grow rapidly. The toxins will concentrate in the lower part of the leaf sheath, but also accumulate in flower heads and seeds.

Affected horses will start to show varying degrees of clinical signs 7 – 14 days after exposure, from becoming difficult to handle and a little “spooky”, to pronounced head nodding, splaying of legs and a greater tendency to stumble. Hind quarter paralysis can occur in extreme cases.

A very quick recovery is normally observed once the horse has been removed from the contaminated pasture to a “safe” paddock (one that does not contain ryegrass or one that has been planted with a low or modified endophyte) or into a holding yard. During the recovery period, misadventure is the greatest hazard, therefore it is important to keep the horse as quiet as possible and away from hazards such as ditches and dams. Hay may be fed, but be wary of Ryegrass in Meadow Hay which can contain the same endophyte toxins.

There are products available for you to feed “at risk” horses that may minimise toxin absorption. However it is important to have a chat with your vet before commencing using one of these products. If you have any questions in regard to ryegrass staggers or are concerned about your horse, please call the clinic on (03) 5786965 to speak with one of our vets about your situation. We are only too happy to help you try to avoid having issues relating to ryegrass staggers during this Summer and Autumn period.



## Sheep Measles – Still An Issue In Marlborough

With more and more sheep moving around the district, partly as a result of multi vineyard grazing the incidence of sheep measles is on the increase again. Sheep measles is the common name for Cysticercus ovis (C.ovis). It is important to remember that this parasite causes the carcass to be trimmed or rejected at the processing facility. The health of your sheep flock will not be affected- therefore the first time you know you have a problem is by looking at the processing sheet or you will get a call from an MPI Veterinarian



You can help reduce the risk of sheep measles.

- **Worm Your Dogs Regularly** – Use Popantel® wormer every three months. If sheep measles have been identified on the property, please worm your dogs with Droncit® tablets monthly.
- **Clean Up Dead Stock** – Scavenging allows this parasite lifecycle to continue.
- **Visiting Dogs** – Make sure dogs entering your property have been wormed 3 days prior to visiting. This includes pets and working dogs.
- **Feeding Farm Meat** – All meat being fed to dogs must be handled correctly to ensure that any cysts are killed. Ensure all feed meat is frozen at -10°C for at least 7 days prior to feeding to your dogs. If you feed offal ensure it is cooked properly.

For more information, please visit [www.sheepmeasles.co.nz](http://www.sheepmeasles.co.nz)

### Christmas / New Year Holiday Hours

December 21st – 24th	Normal Hours
December 25th – 28th	Closed – Duty Vet Available
December 29th – 31st	Normal Hours
January 1st – 4th	Closed – Duty Vet Available
January 5th onwards	Normal Hours

***We wish to thank you for your continued support in 2015 and look forward to seeing you in the New Year.***

***From all the team***



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Email: [vets@alabamaroadvet.co.nz](mailto:vets@alabamaroadvet.co.nz)



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PROUDLY AVAILABLE FROM YOUR LOCAL VETERINARY CLINIC.

\*WITH QUALIFYING PURCHASES WHILE STOCKS LAST. PROMO ENDS 22/12/15

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