



SEASONAL HOOF PRINT

SHEEP, BEEF, DEER & HORSES



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Drenching Lambs – Toxicity Issues

As we are now in spring and lambing is well underway in most parts of the region, we need to start thinking about getting sufficient growth rates from our lambs in the next 3-4 months.

As many of you will be drenching your lambs over this period it is an important reminder that there are toxicity issues with drenching and your attention should be drawn to a few of the potential issues.

There are now so many different drenches available in the current market and it is easy to forget that some of the components can still be toxic.

- Levamisole – has a narrow safety margin and 2-3 times the recommended dose can be enough to kill sheep, especially lambs.
- Abamectin – We have seen toxicity issues in calves, but lambs are just as much at risk.



As both these actives are found in a number of combination drenches it is important to remember that lambs are very much at risk if attention to label recommendations are not adhered to.

We would most commonly be called to see isolated cases of calves or lambs that have collapsed or died due to toxicity after drenching. Thankfully flock toxicity issues are rare but can still occur in certain circumstances. Also be aware of overdosing as a result giving a lamb an extra dose especially when using a levamisole combination.



Heat stress and dehydration of lambs in hot conditions can also be an issue. Scouring lambs caused by a high parasite burden can easily become dehydrated when held off water due to yarding for long periods. These two scenarios are increased risk factors for toxicity issues.



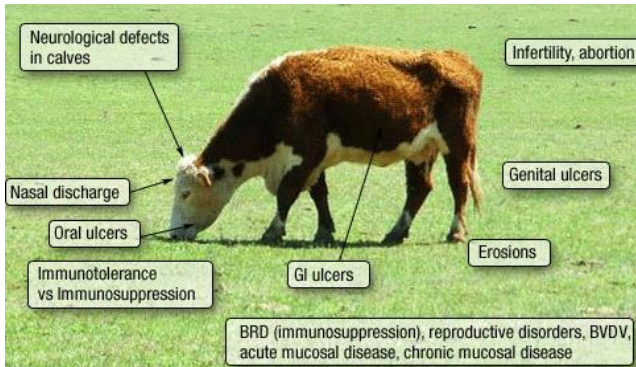
Using a combination drench for lambs is considered best practice and generally do not cause any issues. However, it is important you are aware of the risks. Always make sure you mix combination drenches well while still in the drum prior to transfer to your backpack. Please ensure you shake the drum each time you refill your backpack, as not all combination drenches are created equal, meaning some will settle out faster than others.

Lastly, if you have any questions on the use of drenches in your lambs including weaning, please call us at Vets on Alabama.

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea in Beef Cattle

Recent advances in testing have shown that BVD is a serious and widespread issue. We now know that at least 60% of dairy and beef cows have been exposed to BVD, which is causing significant production losses.

BVD infection in beef cows can cause reproductive wastage, weight loss and probably reduced milk yield. BVD also causes immune suppression, meaning cattle that have an active infection will be more likely to succumb to other diseases. BVD infection can have major impacts during mating and pregnancy. It can cause infertility, embryo loss, abortions (slips), small slow-growing calves, deformed calves, and the birth of dead calves. The most damage is done when BVD infects pregnant cows. If a cow contracts BVD in the first 4 months of pregnancy, she may give birth to a Persistently Infected (PI) calf. PI animals are the main source of infection within the herd.



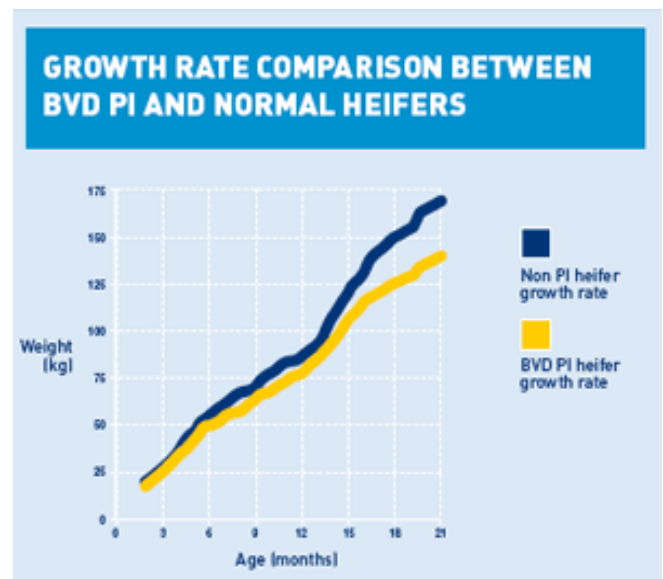
BVD effects:

- Bulls: suppresses the immune system; lower fertility.
- Calves: suppresses the immune system, scouring, pneumonia & reduced growth.
- Cows: suppresses the immune system, reduced production, reduced fertility, conception rate, early loss, later abortions, deformed calves, small/weak calves and PI calves born.

BVD economic model key points:

- You don't necessarily need both calf testing and herd vaccination (the linchpins of control), but you do need at least one to effectively control BVD.
- Clearing infection is really important, even if you are choosing to vaccinate.
- Testing all bought-in cattle is important and worthwhile.
- Securing your boundary fences is worth doing.
- The full biosecurity approach (testing calves, bulls, bought-in cows, actively clearing persistently infected animals, vaccinating bulls, calves and heifers, and improving the boundary with neighbours) minimised the cost of BVD.

BVD behaves differently in beef herds from the way it does in dairy herds. In dairy herds, calves – including PI calves – are removed from their mothers, only to return to the milking herd a couple of years later. This leads to a regular cycle of re-infection every few years. But in beef herds, calves and cows are kept together. This allows a much more dynamic spreading of the disease, back and forth between younger and older animals. This means that PI animals can be in constant contact with susceptible new calves, replacements, bulls and the breeding herd. The presence of a PI calf in a beef breeding herd can have devastating effects. This is because calves are at foot with cows at the stage of pregnancy when the cows are most susceptible to the effects of BVD infection. The calf spreads millions of viruses every day and can infect many cows, causing early fetal loss or the development of even more PI calves.



Please contact the clinic if you would like to discuss BVD and how it could affect you. We also have a limited number of free herd screening tests available. Vets On Alabama would like to be able to help in the prevention and or control of BVD on your property.

Source: BVD Steering Group

THE END OF BVD



Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) often goes undetected until it causes serious damage. Check for the warning signs and if a herd is at risk, follow the steps below to help put an end to the disease's potentially traumatic effects.

CHECK THE SIGNS

A farm is at higher risk of BVD if:

1. Untested or pregnant animals ever come onto the property (e.g. grazing stock, cows, heifers, calves, bulls, freezer beasts).
2. Heifers, cows or carry-over cows are away from the home farm during pregnancy.
3. The cows are ever in contact with cattle from other farms, such as a neighbour's.

TAKE CONTROL

1) TEST THE HERD

A blood test will tell you whether the herd has been exposed to BVD and whether any PI (Persistently Infected) animals are present.



2) ELIMINATE PIs

PIs are an infection risk to the rest of the herd; developing a plan to eliminate them is a vital step to managing BVD.



3) VACCINATE WITH BOVILIS® BVD

You might need to vaccinate the whole herd to start with. After that, only cattle brought into the herd will need a two-dose primary course, others just need a booster.



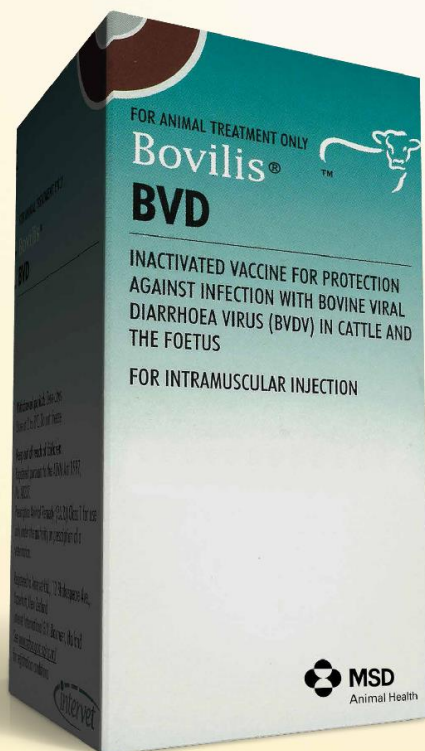
4) CREATE A BIOSECURITY PLAN

Ensure that no PIs are brought in to the herd, by:

- a) quarantining brought-in stock
- b) finding out the vaccination status of any animals coming into the herd (ideally only virus-free and vaccinated replacements should be bought).

5) CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE HERD

To keep on top of BVD, continuous monitoring, vaccinating and testing is essential.



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It's Tailing Time!

Some of you will have already tailed your lambs and some of you are yet to start lambing, but as we have had a few queries of late in regard to best practice, we believe it is important to keep you up to date with a few minimum standards when it comes to tailing your lambs this year.

Recently there has been more focus but on Animal Welfare and animal handling by central government to ensure that New Zealand keeps abreast of the international community and the welfare standards.

Tailing

- The procedure of tailing lambs should not be performed in a lamb that is less than 12 hours old.
- Lambs should be tailed within 6 weeks of birth.
- The tail length should be left at a length that covers the vulva in female lambs and the same length should apply to male lambs.
- Schering irons or the use of rubber castration rings are the recommended methods for conducting this procedure.



Castrating

- When it comes to castrating, please ensure that the correct size of rubber ring is used.
- Rubber castration rings should be applied before 4 weeks of age, however for most farms it is done at the same time as tailing. Therefore best practice would be to ensure it is done before 6 weeks of age.

Clostridial Vaccines



Protecting against the following diseases - Tetanus, Pulpy Kidney, Blacks Disease, Blackleg & Malignant Oedema

In lambs born from unvaccinated ewes – the lamb requires one dose of Lamb Vaccine at tailing time and a second vaccination 4 - 6 weeks later to coincide with weaning. Lamb Vaccine contains a Pulpy Kidney antigen and Tetanus Antitoxin. This gives immediate protection against tetanus and provides the initial dose for Pulpy Kidney protection.

All lambs that are remaining on the farm post weaning (including those born to ewes that received a 5in 1 vaccine pre lamb) should receive a vaccination of either Multine® 5in1 or Ultravac® 5in1 at weaning and a second vaccination 4 weeks later to coincide with drenching.

Scabby Mouth

Unfortunately Scabine® is unavailable in 2015 – therefore we have Phenax® classic from Virbac available. This product is presented exactly the same as Scabine® with 150 dose applicator and easy-flow needles. Application is the same requiring 2 scratches in the form of an X. A drop of vaccine is required for each scratch.

Scabiguard is also available on request.

Fly Control

Cyrazin®

For lambs less than 15kg – apply 20ml to the crutch area at the time of tailing.

For lambs over 15kg – apply 30ml to the same area.

CLIK®

- When tail has been amputated, apply 4mL over the crutch ensuring sufficient coverage of the open wound.
- When the tail has not been amputated, ensure sufficient coverage of the tail where the rubber ring has been applied.

Vetrazin®

Vetrazin Spray-On is for the protection of all breeds of long wool sheep against fly strike for up to 11 weeks.

- Apply 17ml of Vetrazin over the crutch area.

BREEDING YOUR MARE BY ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION

What is the success rate? What is involved? What is the cost?

Young mares and proven breeders bred to stallions with a good fertility record using chilled semen gives the best conception rates. Attempt to have your mare on a rising plane of nutrition and worm her just prior to the beginning of the programme and ensure selenium has been supplemented regularly. A realistic expectation of conception to the first insemination is 65-70% using chilled semen. The results from frozen semen are more variable, Once you have selected the stallion, make arrangements to ensure availability of semen, that transport arrangements will be no hassle and that you fully understand the contract.

Prior to commencing the AI program, a preparatory examination and scan of your mare's ovaries and uterus is important. Then it is important to closely observe her to determine when she is in season (oestrus). A more successful and reliable alternative is to inject her with prostaglandin to induce oestrus. To be effective this must be done a minimum of 5 days after your mare has gone out of season. She will normally start developing a follicle (fertile egg) 3-8 days later. This follicle is then monitored by regular scanning for size and softness as it develops. Timing of insemination is critical, for chilled semen it is aimed for a period of no more than 24 hours before ovulation, for frozen semen the period should be no more than 6 hours. The use of an injection of chorulon is effective in assisting ovulation.

We have the facilities at the clinic to examine your mare safely and to board her for the period from when she first comes into season, or 3 days after injecting prostaglandin, until she is inseminated. It is better to leave her at the clinic but you can make trips back and forth if you are most comfortable with that.

A pregnancy scan at 18 days post insemination to can confirm pregnancy, detect twins and if twins are present, it is possible to eliminate one at this time. Mares normally complete a cycle in 21 days so an 18 day scan should show the next follicle developing if she hasn't held. It is ideal to recheck the pregnancy with a scan at 42days. At this time implantation in the uterus has taken place, endometrial cups have formed and the pregnancy is much more ensured.

Planning when your foal will arrive is important to give it the best chance as settled weather and good grass growth minimise stress and problems. The gestation period is normally 11 ½ months but can vary between 10 ½ months to 12 ½ months. We plan to start our AI programs early in October.

The cost including preliminary examination, prostaglandin injection, 5 monitoring scans, AI and Chorulon injection, 8 days board at the clinic, and pregnancy scan at 18 days is \$650 incl GST. All costs for semen collection, shipping, storage and return of semen containers is to be arranged with the stallion owner.



SHEEP REPRODUCTION VACCINES

It is nearly that time of year again – Toxovax® manufacture begins in October for the season. Sheep Reproduction vaccines are an important part of controlling potential abortion issues in your ewe flock.

Keep an eye out for our Informational flyer in November in regard to Toxovax® and Campyvax® vaccines. Also don't forget that Androvax® could be a useful tool on your farm.

Lastly, we have heard of some issues with Salmonella Brandenburg in Canterbury, therefore we will need to be vigilant about this devastating cause of abortion.

Our production animal vet team are here to help – please give us a call at the clinic if you have any questions.

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