

Alien Calves

I had my second ever "alien" calf last week.



The calf has a condition called Hydrocephalus, where the fluid circulation within the head goes wrong. This results in an increase in the pressure in the head, so it swells. The problem, once you have worked out what you have got, is that the head is too big to fit out through the pelvis. This is definitely a vet job. The only options are a caesarean or to cut the calf up inside the uterus so it will fit.

Anyway we managed to get it out after a bit of a fight and the cow is doing well. Due to the brain damage the calf is always dead at birth.

A couple of other interesting calving's have been a uterine torsion. The calf rolls the whole uterus over making birth impossible. The cure is to roll the cow back around the calf to line everything up again and then to hope that the cervix has dilated so the calf can be born. (Interestingly alpaca will do this as well, several weeks before they are due to give birth. We roll the animal to get her back in line again and then leave alone, for a normal birth some weeks later).

We have also had to do a caesarean after a heifer developed an odd presentation that I was not prepared to try and pull as I was very concerned that the uterus would tear. She is also doing well.

Mark Anderson

Cattle Abortions

Some pregnancies are always lost through abortion. Generally in a commercial herd two abortions in a week of more than four in a season is considered abnormal. Unfortunately most causes of abortion are never confirmed. This is often because samples cannot be collected because the foetus is either never found or is found too late.

The ideal sampling is from both the dead foetus and the after-birth shortly after the abortion happens. Testing this year has been improved by the development of PCR DNA detection from the stomach contents of the foetus. BVD, Neospora, fungus and listeria can be tested for.

The common causes of late term abortion in cattle are Neospora, mouldy hay and macrocarpa. BVD at this stage tends to cause the birth of brain damaged shaky calves.

There is no current treatment or prevention for Neospora. It usually is sporadic but can be an outbreak with up to half the herd slipping.

Calf Aids

We have just received a supply of new gentler calf stomach feeders for sick calves. These are great for calves that will not suck. In addition we have some very nice insulated calf coats for sick or small calves.





TV Filming

Mark Young is involved as a Vet on a TV reality programme. They are filming currently so a film crew may show up with the vet, particularly if you have something interesting or dramatic. We are also contacting some Clients to set up some scenes that they want to shoot. Watch out for the show later in the year to see the Vets North team and local people & places.

(Autographed packets of worm pills will be available in store at a later date!!)

Haemonchus Worms

We are still seeing cases of haemonchosis in sheep causing severe anaemia and death. This is due to the warm moist Autumn and Winter that we have had. The weather has not caused the usual drop in pasture larval numbers that we expect. This may well result in an earlier and greater amount of parasitism in young stock in the Spring and early Summer.

If you have Liver Fluke in your stock, now is the time of year to treat. Fluke can reduce the performance of both sheep and cattle and will occur in alpaca. Liver Fluke need to be treated with specific drench which can be either oral or pour-on. These drenches do have a long meat and milk withhold time so planning is important.



Disease Prevention

The single best thing that you can do to reduce the risks to your cows at calving is to give daily magnesium. To work it must be given every day. In water magnesium treatment is unreliable as it makes the water taste bad so stock avoid treated water troughs to drink from puddles etc. Powder in hay or silage is OK but long acting Rumetrace bullets are the best for small blocks and run off situations.

The second disease prevention action is ensuring the pregnant stock have sufficient feed. Heavily pregnant sheep and cows that end up with no or very little feed are at risk of Sleepy Sickness or Ketosis.

Sleepy sickness of sheep is often fatal and occurs when heavily pregnant fat ewes are deprived of feed in late pregnancy. The ewes become "dumb", blind, stop eating, sit down and die. Treatment is twice daily dosing with Ketol, but is often not successful. Managing the grass access with the early introduction of supplements is the key.

Lambing Bag

Made to order, in a compact chilly bag that can fit on the bike. Bags include the following items & can be customised to include any additional items that you require.

- ◇ Bearing tape
- ◇ Intracillin La
- ◇ Ketol
- ◇ Iodine
- ◇ Lube
- ◇ Needles & syringes
- ◇ Bearing needles
- ◇ Hand sanitizer
- ◇ Glucalmag

Contact Chelsea or Arlene at the clinic or email:
chelsear@vetsnorth.co.nz

0800 VTS NTH

After Hours: 0274 957 986

68 Access Road, Kumeu - P: 09 412 9016 - Kumeu@vetsnorth.co.nz
45 Commercial Road, Helensville - P: 09 420 8325 - Helensville@vetsnorth.co.nz



www.vetsnorth.co.nz