

Flocknews September 2024

Research into oral lice management

Lauren McIlveen is a Veterinary Honours Student from Charles Sturt University (Wagga Wagga) doing research into oral lice management strategies. If you could please fill in this survey she would greatly appreciate to hear from our Campaspe region. Simply use the QR code to the right or the website link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LICESURVEY>



Teaser rams

What are so great about teaser rams? Well, if you join out of season (November – January) then you can use teaser rams to shorten your joining down to 5 weeks. A tighter joining has the advantage of: reduced tail of lambs, reduced time checking the lambing paddock and makes a more even cohort of lambs.

Do you have some rams that were kept back at lamb marking that need to be made into teaser rams for the upcoming season? Remember to touch base to book in a date to secure your position. If you forgot to keep some back, we might be able to help source some from a reputable brucellosis free accredited farm, so make sure to get in touch.



Keep monitoring those feet!

Limp sheep can be caused from many causes – footrot, scald, joint abscessed and so on. All types of lameness will lower production due to less time grazing, increased risk fly strike etc. Make sure to continue monitoring your mobs as we are now entering the time of year where the pasture is dense and wet causing scald concerns which can soon manifest into joint abscesses, toe abscess and footrot as the weather warms up. Foot concerns can be tricky to control, making foot monitoring and management important. Having a reliable footbath set up is really important and getting sheep accustomed to using this is critical. Footbathing with 10% zinc sulphate with a good set up – slow walk, at least 8 m long and depth to make sure feet are covered can be very helpful with basic foot scald conditions. Allowing the feet to dry for at least one our afterwards can help with effect. A tip to make sure the concentration is correct is to measure the foot bath solution with a hydrometer.



Pasture/fodder grazing management

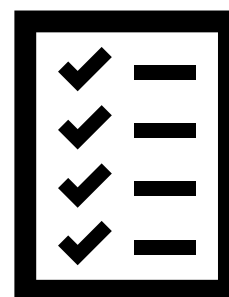
This year we have had some unfortunate health concerns caused by changed grazing management. As we change pasture types, graze fodder pastures and try new things it is important to check the risks associated with these. Frankie has done extensive study into nutrition and is currently doing a course through Sydney University focusing on ruminants to improve her consultancy skills in this area. As part of our services, we can discuss preventative paddock planning, pasture usage, as well as calculating food on offer and nutritional requirements (any supplementary feeding required?), to help set you up for success.



Check list pre-joining check list

1. Ram checks

Frankie has been busy checking rams setting producers up for success coming into joining. A good ram team is a very important part of a successful joining. It is best to do this 10 weeks prior to joining as we want the team to be ready 7 weeks prior to joining. The sperm cycle is approximately 7 weeks - what is made prior to joining will be used during joining. This can count as your annual farm visit instead of an annual compliance visit for drugs such as ram sedation so make sure to keep this in mind for optimal farm planning. A report is also given that will detail each rams attributes allowing you to make effective ram selection.



2. Ewe checks

It is important to check your ewes prior to joining as well. Paying particular attention to their udders. It is not recommended to do udder checks until 4-6 weeks after weaning to allow for udder involution (shrinkage) so make sure to keep this in mind.

3. Are you going to be using containment yards during joining or lambing?

Campylobacter is an infectious bacterial abortion agent that can lead to ewe reproductive wastage through a series of events including foetal reabsorption and abortions. It has been ranked as Australia's most common isolate for abortigenic pathogens (bugs that cause sheep to abort) and is therefore contributing to ewe reproductive wastage at a local and national level. The bacteria can be carried by adult ewes and shed in their faeces. Other sheep become infected when they ingest it during grazing pastures when ground supplementary feeding etc is carried out. Maiden ewes and ewe lambs are most at risk of infection as they have reduced previous exposure. Also, when sheep are pregnant and in close proximity such as in containment yards, this puts them at high risk as well due to increased contact/exposure. Coopers Animal Health currently manufacture a vaccination, 'Ovilis Campyvax,' which requires two vaccinations 4 weeks apart prior to joining. Vaccination is a good preventative strategy to implement in high risk scenarios.

We hope you found this edition of our newsletter informative and valuable for your flock's health and well-being. If you have any questions or need personalized advice regarding the topics we've covered—or anything else related to your sheep's care—please don't hesitate to reach out. Our team is here to offer support, share expertise, and ensure your sheep receive the best possible care. Your flock's health is top priority, and we look forward to assisting you with all your veterinary needs.